

Murphy Pushes for Improving Buy American Laws in Hearing on National Security Implications of Federal Purchasing Overseas

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - Today, Congressman Chris Murphy (CT-5) participated in a hearing concerning manufacturing policy and the country's national security, an issue he has elevated in Congress with his "Buy American" legislative agenda. Murphy has introduced two bills driven by his visits to Connecticut manufacturers to ensure that American tax dollars are spent on American-made goods, while supporting jobs here at home.

"U.S. taxpayer dollars should be used to buy U.S. goods, pure and simple. This hearing was very important to shed some light on how we are compromising our economic and national security by signing so many federal contracts with overseas manufacturers. Outsourcing federal work - especially defense contracts - costs jobs and puts our military supply chain in the hands of foreign governments," said Murphy.

Since World War II, manufacturing jobs have declined from 40% of domestic employment, to just 11% today. In Connecticut, Murphy has seen firsthand how the award of contracts to foreign entities have hurt companies like Ansonia Copper & Brass in Waterbury, which is the last remaining U.S. manufacturer of a specific type of tubing used by the U.S. Navy. Murphy's two bills would help companies like Ansonia Copper & Brass by closing loopholes in federal Buy American laws, providing assistance to companies which are the last domestic supplier of critical goods, and ensuring that the impact on American jobs could be considered before a federal agency awards a contract.

Testifying at the hearing were experts from the Economic Policy Institute, the Industrial Union Council, the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, the National Defense Industrial Association, the Wessel Group, the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, and the Alliance for American Manufacturing.

Murphy asked the panel about Ansonia Copper & Brass, and its tie to our national security. He then raised the issue of the real impact of a contract going overseas, in job loss, unemployment compensation from the government, and payroll taxes.

"The true cost of sending these contracts overseas is staggering, and is compounded by the fact that once these jobs are lost, they are gone forever. We should have a laser-like focus on contracting with American manufacturers who can then contract with local suppliers to fill orders," said Murphy.

The hearing also touched on the need to steer young people toward engineering, math and science so that they are prepared for the high-skill manufacturing jobs of the future. Murphy noted that Farmington manufacturer J.F. Fredericks Tool Company, Inc. has had a "help wanted" sign outside their facility for months, but have had trouble finding skilled workers to fill their open jobs.

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