

Rep. Murphy Calls for Strong "Buy American" Provisions in President's Jobs Plan

WASHINGTON-Congressman Chris Murphy today sent a letter to President Barack Obama, urging him to include strong Buy American provisions in the jobs plan the President intends to announce before a joint session of Congress on Thursday, September 8th.

"I applaud you for focusing on the immediate crisis facing our country and our economy - jobs," Murphy wrote. "The dysfunctional debate surrounding the debt ceiling distracted Washington from our most urgent issue, which is the persistently high unemployment and underemployment. As part of your jobs plan, I urge you to make structural changes to our government procurement policies by strengthening Buy American provisions for all government purchases, including proposed infrastructure investments."

America's federal procurement process is outdated and full of loopholes, leading American taxpayer dollars to be funneled to overseas companies that capitalize on cheap labor and lax environmental regulations. As private companies have outsourced their production, so has the federal government. Federal statutes that were created to steer taxpayer dollars to American companies, such as the Buy American Act, are doing nothing to stop the persistent reliance on foreign manufacturing.

Murphy added, "Our past failures to adopt strong Buy American provisions have cost countless American manufacturing jobs. I urge you to rectify this by changing our government procurement policies to ensure that Buy American truly means American made."

Full text of Rep. Murphy's letter to President Obama:

September
7, 2011

The
President

The
White House

Washington,
D.C. 20500

Dear
Mr. President:

I applaud you for focusing on the immediate crisis facing our country and our economy - jobs. The dysfunctional debate surrounding the debt ceiling distracted Washington from our most urgent issue, which is the persistently high unemployment and underemployment. As part of your jobs plan, I urge you to make structural changes to our government procurement policies by strengthening Buy American provisions for all government purchases, including proposed infrastructure investments.

Unfortunately, our federal procurement regime is outdated and full of loopholes, leading American taxpayer dollars to be funneled to overseas companies that capitalize on cheap labor and lax environmental regulations. As private companies have outsourced their production, so has the federal government. My office conducted a study showing that over the last four years, the Department of Defense issued 161,000 waivers of the Buy American Act, which led to \$53.5 billion going to overseas manufacturers, costing the United States as many as 600,000 jobs. Each time a federal agency issues a waiver of the Buy American Act, it hurts our industrial base, costs American jobs and increases government spending on unemployment, Medicaid and other safety net programs.

In addition, respondents to a survey of manufacturers that I conducted say that the federal government needs to do more to work with the small and medium sized manufacturers that employ tens of thousands of people in my state. They also report that growing competition from countries like China in the past decade has cost them jobs. Despite these challenges, manufacturers in Connecticut are poised to hire new workers and feel confident in the future.

Our past failures to adopt strong Buy American provisions have cost countless American manufacturing jobs. I urge you to rectify this by changing our government procurement policies to ensure that Buy American truly means American made.

Sincerely,

CHRISTOPHER
S. MURPHY

Member of
Congress

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