

September 15, 2006 Legal services grant to help victims

For Immediate Release

Sept. 15, 2006

Legal services grant to help victims

Johnstown, PA - U.S. Rep. John Murtha announced today that the Southwestern Pennsylvania Legal Services, Inc., located in Washington, PA, has received a \$250,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women.

"I've always been a strong supporter of funding programs that assist victims of domestic and sexual violence," Murtha said. "I supported the 1994 Violence Against Women Act, which has provided a billion dollars in funding to communities over the past decade to help prevent these crimes against women and to help the victims. I'm confident that with the help of these funds, this legal services organization will continue providing quality legal assistance to the victims in western Pennsylvania."

The funding will be used to improve the scope of legal services to victims of domestic and sexual violence, through direct representation and victim advocacy which enhances victims' safety and strengthens their economic security.

Project goals and objectives include:

- * Developing an outreach project to isolated rural areas
- * Instituting a referral system for legal services to SPLS by its consortium partners
- * Training SPLS staff
- * Creating a toll-free hotline for victims
- * Establishing an ongoing process for interagency review

The Southwestern Pennsylvania Consortium for Victims of Domestic and Sexual Violence is a seven agency collaborative providing legal services to residents of Fayette, Greene, Somerset, and Washington Counties.

