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For Immediate Release

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Johnstown, PA - U.S. Rep. John Murtha will be the featured speaker at tomorrow's Johnstown Central Labor Council/AFL-CIO breakfast meeting, which is one of four meetings being held across the state to thank Members of Congress who are co-sponsors of the Employee Free Choice Act and long-time supporters of labor.

The legislation would enable working people to bargain for better wages, benefits and working conditions by restoring workers' freedom to choose for themselves whether or not to join a union. The bill currently has over 230 co-sponsors, including 11 Democratic Members from Pennsylvania.

The problem with the current law, the National Labor Relations Act, is that it gives employers all the control of the union-election process, Murtha said. For instance, if a majority of employees sign cards to unionize, the company has to agree to allow a vote. Then the company can schedule a vote several months out and use that time to campaign against the union.

The Employee Free Choice Act would give workers a fair chance to form unions to improve their lives by:

- * Allowing them to form unions by signing cards authorizing union representation.
- * Providing mediation and arbitration for first-contract disputes.
- * Establishing stronger penalties for violation of employee rights when workers seek to form a union and during first-contract negotiations.

Murtha released the following statement that includes other important issues to labor and working people in advance of the meeting:

"Last November, the American people spoke very clearly that they wanted change in Washington. In large part, the election was a referendum on the Iraq war. The public was ahead of Washington. They saw that the reasons for going into the war were not valid, and that the war is hurting our military and our country. It has hurt our readiness. It has hurt our national security, because it limits our ability to respond to future threats."

"But four years of war in Iraq has also hurt us fiscally. We will pay the price for this war for a long time to come. It has already cost over half a trillion dollars and is estimated to cost a trillion dollars. There is no question that this will have an

enormous impact on our domestic budget, as well as our economy, in the long term."

"Every day, we spend \$267 million on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. And every day, as we continue to spend this money on a failed policy in Iraq, we are seeing more people lose their health care here at home. We are seeing more jobs moving overseas as businesses take advantage of cheap foreign labor, in China and other developing countries. Since 1989, we've sent 3 million jobs to China. For the fifth straight year, we've seen a new record trade deficit: \$764 billion in 2006. And we're seeing more and more money being invested overseas."

"The Administration keeps trying to argue that their tax cuts have helped economic growth. How can they say the economy is better when 7 million more people are without health care than when the Bush Administration entered the White House? Maybe it's better for Wall Street, and for CEOs, but it's not better for the average American."

"In the past several years, Congress and the Administration have done far too little to protect our workers and stop the flow of good-paying jobs overseas. Labor was an essential part of the voice for change last November. Labor has always led the fight to protect our jobs and our workers, and I'll continue to stand beside them, fighting hard for the average American who is working to take care of a family."