

May 4, 2007 Murtha: Impact of Bush Budget Cuts on the Head Start Program

For Immediate Release

May 4, 2007

Note: The President's proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2008 significantly cuts domestic programs while continuing to spend nearly \$9 billion every month for the war in Iraq. Each week throughout the month of May, Congressman Murtha will explain how these budget cuts hurt our families and communities throughout the 12th Congressional District. While the President continues to insist on remaining in Iraq indefinitely with no timetable and no strategy for success, we continue to spend over \$300 million a day. His budget attempts to pay for this failed strategy by cutting some of the nation's most essential programs.

Murtha: Impact of Bush Budget Cuts on Head Start

Washington D.C. - This week Congress voted to reauthorize Head Start, a program that virtually everyone feels has worked very well. The Head Start program, which has existed for over 40 years, helps kids from three to five years of age to develop the skills they need in early reading and math in order to prepare them for kindergarten. It helps ensure that they get health checkups and good nutrition, which is essential for child development. Research shows that for every dollar spent on early childhood development, we save between \$4 to \$17 in reduced education, social service and law enforcement costs later in a child's life. Head Start significantly closes achievement gaps for disadvantaged children.

But programs like Head Start are in trouble.

The President's proposed budget for next year cut the Head Start program's nationwide annual budget by \$107 million from this year's funding level. By the time you've had lunch, we will already have spent that much money in Iraq today.

According to the National Head Start Association, if the President's budget were approved, it would mean that over 30,000 children would have to be cut from the program nationwide, including over a thousand children in Pennsylvania.

Supporters of the President's budget cut argue that cuts are needed because the program is being abused in some instances. In the recent Floor debate reauthorizing Head Start, some argued for additional bureaucratic controls in order to prevent Head Start grantees from abusing the program. I would like to see the same demand for accountability for the tens of thousands of private contractors in Iraq who have been paid billions of taxpayer dollars.

By cutting programs like Head Start, which have worked for decades to help our nation's children, the president is ensuring that future generations of Americans will begin paying for this war before they are old enough to spell Iraq.