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For Immediate Release

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Washington D.C. - Congressman John P. Murtha, Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, announced that yesterday the House of Representatives passed a \$53.6 billion fiscal year 2008 Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations Bill that includes funding for local police departments and law enforcement programs.

The appropriations bill includes funding for the Southwestern Pennsylvania Law Enforcement Technologies program. This program allows police departments in Somerset, Fayette, Greene, Cambria, Westmoreland, Indiana, Armstrong, Allegheny and Washington Counties to be eligible for grants to upgrade computers and communication devices, purchase police cruisers and equipment, and to provide necessary training to ensure officer safety.

"Small police departments throughout our area are hard-pressed to find the funding necessary to buy modern equipment that is essential to the effective management of emergencies, disasters or even routine calls," Murtha said. "They work tirelessly to keep our communities safe, and I'm pleased to be able to support their efforts."

Also included in the appropriations bill is \$500,000 to continue development of an Electronic Crime Prevention and Investigation (ECPI) curriculum at Waynesburg College, Greene County, in collaboration with the National Forensic Science Technology Center. This curriculum will aid law enforcement agencies by establishing a standard national protocol to prosecute criminals who are using laptops, cell phones and digital cameras in criminal activity. Online courses will provide training materials on the collection, preservation, and analysis of digital evidence for law enforcement and the military.

The appropriations bill also includes \$500,000 for the Corrections Learning Environment, a web-based tool being developed at Concurrent Technologies Corporation in Johnstown. This project will continue efforts to provide state and local corrections departments around the country with the ability to share information, communicate evolving policy, disseminate lessons learned, and to provide job-supporting resources to corrections officers.

The FY08 Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations Bill also makes key national investments into:

* Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Grants: \$725 million, \$693 million above the President's request, to support local law enforcement agencies. The Congressional Research Service (CRS) estimates that 2,800 new police officers can be put on America's streets with these funds.

* National Science Foundation, Education and Human Resources: \$822 million, \$72 million over the President's request, to support quality math and science education including \$36 million for scholarships to encourage young scientists to become math and science teachers.

* FBI, Salaries and Expenses: \$6.5 billion, \$148 million above the President's request, including \$71 million for counterterrorism and criminal investigation efforts, allowing the Bureau to hire an additional 272 agents.