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For Immediate Release

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Washington D.C. - Congressman John P. Murtha commended the House of Representatives last night for passing the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) Reauthorization Act of 2007. The bill reauthorizes CHIP, which expires on September 30, 2007, for five years and provides health care coverage for more than 10 million children.

CHIP was established in 1997 to provide health care coverage for children in families who earn too much to qualify for Medicaid, but not enough to afford private insurance. Currently, more than six million low-income children from across the country are covered by the program. The bill passed today by Congress will ensure these six million children will not lose their health insurance and also extend coverage to an additional 3.8 million uninsured children who are eligible but not enrolled in CHIP.

"By reauthorizing CHIP, Congress is ensuring that over 130,000 Pennsylvania children have the health insurance they need," said Murtha. "Providing access to health care for our children is a national priority, and I am proud of the action taken by Congress."

The bill reauthorizes CHIP and invests an additional \$35 billion over five years to strengthen the quality of health care children receive. It costs less than \$3.50 a day to cover a child through CHIP, and the bill is paid for by an increase in the current tobacco tax. Studies have shown that this will help deter kids from taking up smoking and will save billions of dollars in health care costs in the future.

Congressman Murtha also noted that, in response to concerns regarding provisions for illegal immigrants, the bill includes language which specifically states that "Nothing in this Act allows federal payment for individuals who are not legal residents."

The President has threatened to veto this bipartisan bill.