

## May 13, 2008 - Murtha Recommends Expanding the G.I. Bill

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Congressman John P. Murtha, Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, announced today that House Appropriators have finished work on the fiscal year 2008 emergency war supplemental spending bill. The bill, which is expected to be voted on by the House of Representatives tomorrow, provides funding to expand the educational benefits of our nation's veterans.

Currently, veterans' educational benefits are administered under the Montgomery G.I. Bill. Using Senator Jim Webb's (D-Virginia) proposed legislation, the supplemental bill will increase the G.I. Bill benefits to all members of the military, including members of the Reserve and National Guard, who have served on active duty since September 11, 2001.

"I was given the opportunity to attend college under the G.I. Bill, and I understand how important educational benefits are to our veterans," commented Murtha. "Today's G.I. Bill is simply inadequate to meet the needs of hundreds-of-thousands of our veterans who have served since September 11, 2001."

In order to qualify, veterans must have served at least three months of active duty beginning on or after September 11, 2001. Benefits will cover the cost of college tuition and fees, up to the cost of the most expensive in-state public school, and also provide a monthly housing stipend. Benefits are linked to the amount of active duty service. For example, a veteran who serves three months will receive 40 percent, a veteran who serves one year will receive 60 percent, and a veteran who serves three years will essentially receive a full-ride scholarship to any in-state public school.

"I'd like to thank Senator Webb for offering this legislation, which will further our commitment to ensuring that our veterans receive every possible resource available to them," added Murtha. "I'm inspired by our troops, and this bill is a way to thank them for their service."

Veterans will receive educational assistance for up to a total of 36 months, or four academic years. They will have 15 years, instead of the current 10-year limit, to use the benefits.

In preparing the supplemental bill, Murtha was instrumental in recommending to the Congressional Leadership that funding be provided to expand the G.I. Bill.

###