

## June 12, 2008 - House Passes Legislation to Extend Unemployment Benefits

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Congressman John P. Murtha, Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, joined a bipartisan majority of his colleagues today in voting to approve legislation that will aid workers who have lost their jobs as a result of the current economic downturn.

The Emergency Extended Unemployment Compensation Act provides up to 13 weeks of extended unemployment benefits in every state to workers exhausting the 26 weeks of regular unemployment benefits. Approximately 3.8 million unemployed Americans can benefit from this legislation, which will be fully paid for through existing reserves in the federal unemployment trust funds.

“For the fifth straight month, the economy has lost jobs,” said Murtha. “Extending unemployment benefits will give hard-working American families some of the relief they need to get through these difficult economic times.”

The unemployment rate rose from 5.0 percent in April to 5.5 percent in May, the largest monthly increase in unemployment in over 20 years. The economy has lost nearly 325,000 jobs this year and 8.5 million Americans are unemployed. This legislation, which passed 274-137, extends unemployment benefits through March 2009. Congress last extended unemployment benefits in 2002.

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