

## June 19, 2008 - Murtha Comments on the Emergency Supplemental Bill

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Congressman John P. Murtha, Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, gave the following remarks during the House debate on the Emergency War Supplemental Spending Bill:

"Today we once again consider a supplemental spending bill for our troops in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

"The spending bill before us represents a compromise between both the House and Senate. It provides funding to take care of our troops in the field through the balance of fiscal year 2008, and through June 2009. The funding in this bill also closely follows our vision of "looking beyond the war in Iraq."

For fiscal year 2008 this supplemental includes:

\$825 million for National Guard and Reserve Equipment;

\$1.6 billion for HMMWVs;

\$3.1 billion for Medium and Heavy Tactical Trucks;

\$102 million for Land Warrior equipment sets for next-to-deploy units;

\$1.2 billion for various Joint Unmet Operational Needs as identified by the Department of Defense, but not included in the budget request;

\$500 million for Army and Marine Corps Facility Maintenance and Repairs (this includes barracks) ;

\$300 million for Facility Maintenance and Repairs at DoD medical treatment facilities;

\$94.9 million for Wounded Warrior efforts;

\$50 million for  
Family Advocacy Programs;

\$570 million for  
treatment and research activities within the Defense Health Program; and

\$3.5 billion to address the increasing cost  
of fuel that was not included in the budget request.

For fiscal year 2009 this  
supplemental includes:

\$1.2 billion for military personnel and \$51.9  
billion for operation and maintenance. This is sufficient funding to  
maintain all anticipated military operations through June 2009;

\$394.8 million for Bradley base sustainment;

\$390.2 million for HMMWV recapitalization;

\$1.1 billion for the Defense Health Program; and

\$ 2.0 billion for the Joint Improvised Explosive  
Device Defeat Fund.

"This is a good piece of  
legislation, and I&rsquo;d ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote for  
this bill."

The bill also includes:

Expanded GI Benefits for Veterans  
Education: Expands the education benefits veterans receive  
under the GI bill to restore the promise of a full, four-year college education  
and make the veterans of Iraq  
and Afghanistan part of an American  
economic recovery, just like the veterans of World War II were. Also allows  
service members to transfer educational benefits to their spouses and dependents.

**Extended Unemployment Compensation:**

Extends unemployment benefits for workers who have exhausted their benefits by up to 13 weeks in every state. The number of Americans looking for work has grown by 800,000 over the last year, and the number of American jobs has declined by 260,000 since the beginning of 2008.

**Protecting the Medicaid Safety Net**

Act of 2008 (H.R. 5613): Places a moratorium on six Medicaid regulations that would cut services to seniors, families, and those with disabilities as well as cut payments to safety net providers. These costs are fully offset.

**Amendment to War Funding:**

Reduces Department of Defense funding in Amendment #1 by \$3.6 billion in order to fund other pressing needs.

**Disaster Relief:**

\$2.65 billion to ensure that critical resources are available to respond to disasters in the wake of tornadoes and flooding in the Midwest.

**Iraq Policy Provisions:**

**Iraq Reconstruction:** Requires that State Department and USAID reconstruction aid for Iraq be matched dollar-for-dollar by the Iraqi Government.

**No**

**Permanent Bases in Iraq:**

Prohibits military construction funds from being used to establish permanent bases in Iraq.

**International**

**Affairs:** \$10.1 billion, \$670 million above the President's request for the State Department, USAID and International Food Assistance (PL480).

**Food Aid**

**& Disaster Assistance:** \$1.865 billion, \$745 million above the President's request, for international food and disaster assistance. This includes \$500 million above the President's request for PL480 Food Assistance and \$245 million above the President's request for development assistance and disaster assistance programs meant to alleviate world hunger.

**Refugee**

**Assistance:** \$696 million, \$475 million above the President's request,

to address the refugee crisis in Iraq and elsewhere.

Merida: \$465 million, \$85 million below the President's request, for the initiative to provide counter-narcotics and law enforcement assistance in Mexico (\$400 million) and Central America (\$65 million).

#### Military Construction and Veterans

Hospitals: \$4.6 billion, \$2.2 billion above the President's request, for military construction and veterans hospitals including increases of \$863 million for BRAC, \$863 million for military hospitals, \$396 million for VA hospitals and polytrauma centers, and over \$210 million for the military child care centers that the President announced in the State of the Union but never funded.

Louisiana Levees: \$5.8 billion for much needed efforts to strengthen New Orleans levees in FY 2009, as requested by the President.

Louisiana Housing Vouchers: \$73 million, for permanent supportive housing vouchers targeted to the extremely low-income, disabled and elderly left homeless as a result of Hurricane Katrina. These individuals and families are currently living in tent cities and in abandoned buildings in Louisiana as a result of the hurricane.

Science: \$400 million, for important investments to improve America's global competitiveness, energy efficiency, and medical research.

Food and Drug Administration: \$150 million, for food and medical product safety.

Bureau of Prisons: \$178 million urgently needed to meet rising incarceration costs and growing inmate population. The administration would have paid for these costs with cuts to state and local law enforcement.

Census: \$210 million to address decennial census cost overruns. The administration requested these funds but would have paid for them by cutting items ranging from scientific research to economic development.