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COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE
HEALTH
COMMERCE, TRADE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION



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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

WEBSITE: murphy.house.gov

June 24, 2011

The Honorable Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Welcome to Southwestern Pennsylvania, an area with a proud heritage in steel, coal and manufacturing. Our area stands poised to lead the manufacturing resurgence in America. During your visit to Pittsburgh to discuss ways our economy can rebound and get Americans back to work, I write to offer specific concrete steps we can take to get our nation's economic engine again running strong.

Since 1980, America's share of gross domestic product from manufacturing has shrunk from almost 25 percent to only about 12 percent today. In the last decade alone, the United States lost five million manufacturing jobs. And even though the American manufacturing workforce is the most highly skilled, productive and sophisticated in the world, this year we will lose our position as the global leader in manufacturing to China.

At a recent Congressional Steel Caucus hearing I convened in May, industry representatives from across the steel and manufacturing spectrum unanimously agreed that Congress must act on fixing two specific obstacles to job growth: ending the anticompetitive and illegal practices of our foreign trading partners and the need to rebuild our aging infrastructure.

I call your attention to the two legislative solutions I've advanced in Congress to get our manufacturers back on track, and ask you join me in these efforts.

The practice of undervaluing currency has an immediate impact in the global marketplace when it comes to undercutting American-made goods. The Currency Reform for Fair Trade Act, HR 639, would remedy the illegal currency manipulation that China and other countries use to sell their goods at up to a 40 percent discount in our markets. My bill would give the Commerce Department and the US Trade Representative the tools they need within the World Trade Organization framework to ensure our trading partners live up to their international agreements.

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Since June of 2010, when China promised to allow its currency to appreciate, all we've seen since are empty promises while our employers continue to be restricted from selling their goods in the Chinese market. In the last Congress, the Currency Reform for Fair Trade Act passed the House with overwhelmingly bipartisan support. Already this year HR 639 has 156 cosponsors, and with your support Congress can send a strong message to the rest of the world that America will not stand idly by while other nations break their promises to gain an unfair advantage at our expense.

In addition, my colleagues and I on the bipartisan House Energy Working Group recently introduced HR 1861, the Infrastructure Jobs and Energy Independence Act to get America on a path to energy independence and repair our aging infrastructure without raising taxes or going deeper into debt. By harnessing our own vast natural resources, HR 1861 ends our dependence on foreign oil and makes critical investments in clean energy technologies to help make true energy independence a reality. HR 1861 would also take 20 percent of all new federal revenues from leases and royalties from safe offshore oil and gas exploration for direct investment in rebuilding our nation's infrastructure, which would generate more manufacturing jobs while making our roads, bridges and dams safer and stronger.

As we seek ways to revitalize and grow our manufacturing sector, these are two common-sense, bipartisan solutions that can begin reaping rewards and jobs immediately, not five or ten years down the road. Mr. President, I stand ready to work with you in Congress and with those who share the goal of reclaiming our rightful place as the world's industrial leader. Restoring the health of our manufacturing industry is vital for Southwestern Pennsylvania, and I look forward to working together to get these bills signed into law and get America back to work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Murphy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Tim Murphy
Member of Congress