

January 14, 2009

(Washington, D.C.) – U.S. Congressman Jason Altmire (PA-04) and U.S. Congressman Tim Murphy (PA-18) today announced that they have introduced legislation that will help American manufacturers struggling to compete against a flood of Chinese imports. The Supporting America's Manufacturers Act would give Congress the power to review the president's decisions on whether to provide temporary relief – in the form of import duties or quotas – to American companies facing market disruptions caused by Chinese imports. Altmire originally introduced this legislation last May in the 110th Congress.

“Over the past eight years, President Bush flat out refused to provide temporary assistance to U.S. manufacturers whose businesses were being jeopardized by a flood of Chinese imports,” Altmire said. “This has had very real and extremely negative consequences for western Pennsylvania. I want to make sure that in the future, Congress will be able to review the president’s decisions on this important matter so we can ensure the fate of America’s manufacturers does not rest solely in the president’s hands.”

“American manufacturers consistently set the standards for trade in the global marketplace,” said Congressman Tim Murphy. “We are more productive, manufacture higher quality goods, have safer workplaces, and enforce stricter environmental controls than many of our other large competitors. This bill provides a mechanism to ensure that U.S. manufacturers can be competitive and not undercut by countries like China, who has a consistent record of breaking the rules at the expense of American workers.”

Under Section 421 of the U.S. China Relations Act of 2000, American manufacturers can file petitions for assistance with the International Trade Commission (ITC) if their businesses have been negatively affected by a surge of Chinese imports. When a majority of the ITC believes an industry deserves relief, it forwards its recommendation to the U.S. Trade Representative and the president. Over the past eight years, President Bush rejected every single recommendation for assistance issued by the ITC, leaving manufacturers without the relief they needed.

Western Pennsylvania saw firsthand the downfalls of President Bush's refusal to grant assistance to American manufacturers. In 2005, Wheatland Tube joined with six other domestic pipe producers to file a petition showing the rise in Chinese imports of standard pipe from 9,000 tons in 2002 to 266,000 tons in 2004 was damaging their businesses. After the president refused to accept the ITC's recommendation to provide these companies with assistance, Wheatland Tube's Sharon facility was shut down in August of 2006. The closing of the plant meant that 257 individuals lost good, high-paying jobs, which on average paid \$25 per hour.

“Had the president listened to the ITC and granted assistance to the domestic steel industry, many believe that Wheatland Tube's Sharon facility would still be open today,”

Altmire said. “In today’s economy, it is more important than ever that we do everything we can do keep good paying jobs in America. I will keep pushing to make the Supporting America’s Manufacturers Act law so it will be easier for American manufacturers to obtain the temporary assistance they need to compete against unfair trade practices and keep good paying jobs in our communities.”