

Representative **JOHN MURTHA**

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A family photo of John with his wife Terrie alongside their children.

Pocketbook Savings for Families & Seniors

Retirement Income Tax Cut—Making Wisconsin the best place in the nation to retire is an ongoing challenge. Next year, senior couples with incomes less than \$30,000 will be able to exempt \$5,000 of retirement/pension income from their state taxes.

Helping Parents Pay Their Child Care Expenses—Parents already get a tax break from the IRS for child care expenses. Beginning next year, parents will also be able to deduct a certain portion of their child care expenses from their state taxes too.

Making a College Education More Affordable—To help parents offset the costs of putting their children through college, we expanded the income tax deduction to include mandatory student fees and increased the maximum deduction to \$6,000.

Leading the Nation in Renewable Energy—With high gas prices and rising utility bills, it's time to look to alternative energy sources such as energy derived from plant and wood materials (biomass). To encourage the use of this renewable energy resource, I led the effort to exempt biomass used for fuel and sold for residential use from the state's sales tax.

Holding the Line on Property Taxes—Many local homeowners, particularly seniors, are already paying too much in property taxes. Working together, we renewed the Property Tax Freeze for another two years to help keep local property taxes in check.

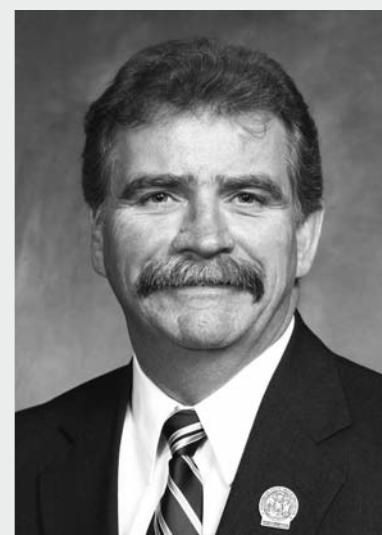


John welcomed the annual Mystery Tour in September 2007. The participants were made up of constituents from the communities of Baldwin, Woodville, Hammond, and Roberts.



2008 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Representative **JOHN MURTHA**



KEEP IN TOUCH WITH JOHN!

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COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Committee on Small Business,
Vice-Chair
Committee on Agriculture
Committee on Labor & Industry
Committee on Rural
Economic Development

From the desk of John Murtha

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

As your voice in the state Assembly, my job is to put your needs ahead of the wants of state government. Rather than getting bogged down in partisan bickering, I have focused on listening to my constituents and then working with legislators, both Republican and Democrat, who want to get things done.

We got off to a good start by reforming the way Madison does business. The first bill I voted for was comprehensive ethics and elections reform. The new non-partisan Government Accountability Board will have the full authority to investigate criminal and civil violations of the state's ethics, campaign finance and elections law.

Working together, we passed a new state budget that taxpayers can afford. By holding the line on government spending and setting priorities, we provided a record increase in state aid to local school districts, improved access to affordable health care and delivered much-needed tax relief for families, seniors and small businesses.

Since January, my Assembly colleagues and I have been working with Governor Doyle to jump-start the state's economy. We are making progress, but we have a ways to go.

We are now working to close a budget shortfall resulting from the state's economic slowdown. Just like area families do when times are tough, our plan cuts government spending and dips into the state's rainy day account. And most importantly, our plan does not include any increases in taxes.

Serving you continues to be an honor and privilege and your continued input is most appreciated. Please contact me by calling toll-free (888) 529-0029 or by e-mail at Rep.Murtha@legis.wi.gov.

I thank you for providing me the opportunity to serve you in the state Assembly and I hope to talk to you soon.

Best Wishes,

John Murtha
State Representative
29th Assembly District

Serving the Communities of Baldwin, Deer Park, Elmwood, Glenwood City, Hammond, Knapp, Menomonie, New Richmond, Roberts, Spring Valley, Star Prairie, Wilson and Woodville

JOHN MURTHA: *Real Issues... Common Sense Solutions*

Governor Signs Murtha Home Safety Bill into Law

Homes, apartments, dorm rooms and office buildings all have one thing in common—they are all susceptible to fires. While the state keeps track of when and where fires occur, they don't collect information on how and why a fire started. It is this important information that will truly help prevent and reduce the number of fires in the future.

This past fall, I joined with Green Bay Senator Dave Hansen and local home builders on legislation to require the state to collect this information and make it available to homeowners, builders, realtors, and fire inspectors. Governor Doyle signed our bill into law just a few weeks ago.



John is congratulated by Governor Doyle after the Home Safety Bill is signed into law.

Looking Out for Our Hometown Universities

Fueling the Local Economy—Working with UW-Eau Claire and the Chippewa Valley Technical College, UW-Stout is positioned to be a leader in the trillion dollar nanotechnology industry. Through the state's new budget, UW-Stout will receive the resources it needs to be a world leader in this exciting new field.

Our Campus Community—The Stout Campus helps make downtown Menomonie a special place. Working with UW-Stout officials, Governor Doyle and my legislative colleagues, I was able to secure funding to renovate Harvey Hall and restore Price Commons.

A College Education Families Can Afford—Over the next two years, the state will invest an additional \$29 million in financial aid to make sure our families can send their kids to college.

Tuition Reciprocity—Due to our work in renewing the agreement between Wisconsin and Minnesota, local students will continue to be able to get a degree from Minnesota colleges and universities at more affordable tuition costs.

Letting Our Voice Be Heard—Milwaukee and Madison are well represented on the UW System Board of Regents, but our voices need to be heard too. Working with Representative Kitty Rhoades from Hudson, I worked to get more local representation on that Board as well as our state's Group Insurance Board.

Getting Our Local Economy Back on Track

Our Technical Colleges: Retooling Our Workforce—As a graduate of our local technical college and owner of a small business, I know how our communities depend on our technical schools. Working in a bipartisan fashion, our state's technical colleges will receive an additional \$3 million to fund worker skills training or other educational needs of local businesses.

Fighting for the I-94 Corridor Technology Zone—Over twenty local businesses including 3-M, Contour Plastics and iMark Molding, have taken advantage of the tax benefits available through the I-94 Corridor Technology Zone to create more than 670 good-paying local jobs. Recently, I joined with legislators from the Chippewa and St. Croix Valley and Governor Doyle to keep this successful program going.

Investing in Our Best and Brightest Entrepreneurs—Western Wisconsin is home to some of the best and brightest entrepreneurs. Bringing their ideas to market requires help from angel investors. To encourage these investors to look to Wisconsin, I joined with my Assembly colleagues to expand the Angel Investment Tax Credit program.

Keeping our Local Agricultural Economy Strong—In the bipartisan budget agreement, we created a new incentive to encourage local dairy processors to modernize their operations so that they can compete with those across the nation. We are now trying to expand this program to include Dairy Cooperatives which produce nearly 80% of the state's milk and about half the state's cheese.

Reforming Wisconsin's Economic Development Programs

State auditors issued a report last year that raised serious questions about the effectiveness of the state's economic development efforts. Working together, we eliminated programs, consolidated others, and put in place new reporting requirements to make sure our state's investments in economic development are not being wasted.



John meets with constituents during the United St. Croix Valley Legislative Days. From left to right: Judy Wiff of RiverTown Newspaper Group, Dale Jorgenson of Riverland Laser, Inc., Dr. Barbara Nemecek, Dean of the College of Business and Economics at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, Blaze Cunningham, owner of Crystal Cave, Inc., and former State Senator Bill Berndt.

Investing in Our Children's Future & Safe Schools

School Aids, Our State's Top Funding Priority—Over the next two years, classrooms across Wisconsin will see the largest increase in our state's history, totaling more than \$12.3 billion in state aid.

More Aid for Special Needs Students—Special needs students need extra help in school and with the bipartisan support of Governor

Doyle, local school districts will receive an extra \$53 million in special education aid from the state.

Helping Area School Districts with Declining Enrollment—In our area, we have school districts that are adding students, but we also have school districts that are losing students. To help out, the state will provide them with additional resources to ease the

often dramatic financial loss associated with declining enrollment districts.

Tracking Down Dangerous Child Predators—Working with Attorney General Van Hollen, the state's two-year budget includes additional funding for investigators to track down sex predators who use the Internet to prey on unsuspecting children.

Better, More Affordable Health Care

Tax Breaks on Health Insurance Premiums—The rising cost of health care continues to put a strain on family budgets. Last year, I co-authored legislation to make health insurance premiums paid by workers state income tax deductible. This provision was eventually included in the state budget. When fully implemented, this tax break will put an extra \$150 million a year in the pockets of Wisconsin families.

Providing Health Care to Our Most Vulnerable—Wisconsin continues to lead the nation in providing our most vulnerable citizens with the care they need. Last year, the SeniorCare program was extended to provide more than 100,000 Wisconsin seniors with access to low-cost prescription drugs. In addition,

low income families, children, and pregnant women are now eligible to receive affordable health care thanks to the new **BadgerCare Plus** program.

Health Savings Accounts (HSA's)—Wisconsin is one of only five states that tax HSA's. I voted to make them tax deductible to encourage their use by local employers and for those citizens who seek an alternative to expensive health insurance.

Patients Right to Know—If patients and their families are truly going to be in charge of their health care, they need to know the real costs and quality of their care. Under the Health Care Price Disclosure proposal I voted for, health care providers in Wisconsin would be required to give

patients a good-faith cost estimate of a medical treatment or procedure.

Funding for Cancer Screening—Every year, breast cancer, cervical cancer and colon cancer take the lives of more than 100,000 Americans. Over the next two years, the state will invest more than \$300,000 for breast, cervical, and colon cancer screening.

Health Care Insurance Small Businesses Can Afford—Most Wisconsin families receive their health care insurance through an employer. Unfortunately, small businesses can't always provide coverage at an affordable price. We just passed a new law to help small businesses access "Fortune 500" health care coverage at prices hometown businesses can afford.