

**WASHINGTON, DC** –“ Congressman Joe Courtney on Saturday delivered the keynote address during the commissioning ceremony for the USS Missouri (SSN-780), America’s newest Virginia class attack submarine. In May, Courtney secured \$5.4 billion in funding for the Virginia-class attack submarine program in the Defense Authorization bill, including \$3.4 billion to build two submarines in 2011 and advanced funding to prepare to build two each in 2012 and 2013. The funding capped a nearly-four-year effort to double submarine production, and marks the first time since the 1980s that Groton’s Electric Boat will build two submarines in a year.

“At a time when many doubt the future of ‘Made in America’ manufacturing, the men and women of Electric Boat are demonstrating that those doubts are misplaced,” Courtney said. “The commissioning of the Missouri is proof positive that American-made manufacturing can produce a technological wonder that no other country can come close to –“ ahead of schedule and within budget.”

A copy of Congressman Courtney’s remarks as prepared for delivery is below:

Like Governor Rell, I want to welcome all our guests here today, particularly those from the “show me” state of Missouri and the gracious matron Mrs. Becky Gates, who are joining us at the “Submarine Capital of the World.”

This is an exciting time for the southeastern Connecticut and Rhode Island. Next year, after a long legislative battle, construction of two Virginia Class submarines a year will begin. Just a few weeks ago, Electric Boat President John Casey announced that hundreds of EB designers and engineers will be moving into the massive Pfizer building across the Thames in New London –“ a purchase driven by the space needs of a growing workforce poised to build the Ohio replacement submarine.

Two points –“

First, this positive news did not happen by itself. Instead, it is the result of a focused effort in the shipyard, in the top levels of the Navy and in the halls of Congress to invest in smart cost reduction, increased efficiency, and an industrial base that outperforms every challenging benchmark it was assigned.

But most of all it is the result of a measured analysis of the national security needs of this country –“ for which an adequate submarine force is essential.

On all of those benchmarks, the Virginia Class program –“ and the USS Missouri –“ passes these tests with flying colors.

Second, at a time when many doubt the future of “Made in America” manufacturing, the men and women of Electric Boat are demonstrating that those doubts are misplaced.

The commissioning of the Missouri is proof positive that American-made manufacturing can

produce a technological wonder that no other country can come close to “ ahead of schedule and within budget.

To all of the men and women of the Electric Boat and Newport News shipyards “ thank you for your visible, tangible example of American know-how and execution of state-of-the-art shipbuilding.

Thankfully, we have leaders in the Navy “ many of whom are with us today “ and in Congress who truly understand need and value of this submarine to our nation’s defense. In particular, I want to thank Chairman Ike Skelton for his leadership of the House Armed Services Committee and Chairman Gene Taylor of the Seapower Subcommittee for their unwavering commitment to the men and women of our Navy and to the cause of American shipbuilding.

To Commander Rexrode and the men of the submarine Missouri: congratulations on achieving this milestone today. You can take ownership of this vessel today confident in the knowledge that countless men and women here in Groton, in Rhode Island, in Virginia and all across America, have worked hard to give you a “Made in America” ship that you can rely on to accomplish your mission and bring you home.

Thank you very much.