

News from U.S. Rep. John Spratt (D-SC)

Assistant to the Democratic Leader

Ranking Member, Committee on the Budget

US House of Representatives – Washington, DC

www.house.gov/spratt | www.house.gov/budget_democrats

Monday, December 8, 2003 – For Immediate Release

Contact: Chuck Fant, 202-225-5501

Spratt Secures \$10.5 million for Bennettsville Prison

WASHINGTON – U.S. Rep. John Spratt (D-SC) announced today that he has obtained \$10.5 million to start up the new federal prison in Bennettsville. The House approved the funds in passing the Omnibus Appropriations Act on Monday. The bill now moves to the Senate.

“These funds will mean hundreds of new jobs in Marlboro County – jobs in the near future, and not next year,” said Spratt. “In addition, this new prison will bring needed relief to a crowded prison system.”

The U.S. Bureau of Prisons has been scheduled to open and staff the 1152-bed facility starting in April, but due to a shortage of funding in the President’s budget, a start-up in April appeared increasingly doubtful, and there was growing concern that the schedule might slip for a whole year.

Since the first of the year, Spratt and U.S. Sen. Ernest F. Hollings (D-SC) have worked to earmark funding for the federal prison in the appropriations bill in order to avoid a delay in the start-up. “It has been an uphill struggle,” said Spratt, “because the first House bill contained no specific funds for the prison, and what we have achieved is a compromise. Even \$10.5 million in special funding may not be enough to start staffing in April. The schedule could still slip until later in the year.”

Spratt said the Senate might not take up the Omnibus Appropriations Act until mid-January. “Until the omnibus bill passes the Senate, and the President signs it, provisions of this kind are still in play,” said Spratt. “But Senator Hollings has championed our cause in the Senate. Without his senior position on the Senate Appropriations Committee, and his unflinching commitment, this earmark would not have made the cut in a very tight budget. With his support, we are optimistic that it will pass and become law.”

#