

Currently serving his third term, Congressman Altmire has become one of Congress's leading voices on veterans' issues. To date, Congressman Altmire has seen nine of his legislative initiatives to help veterans, reservists, and military families become law. In western Pennsylvania, Congressman Altmire has worked tirelessly to help hundreds of local veterans obtain needed benefits, and he was part of the successful effort to keep a state of the art commissary and post exchange in the Pittsburgh region. Going forward, Congressman Altmire will continue working to ensure that America's heroes have the support that they deserve.

### **Modernizing the American Legion Charter**

Congressman Altmire introduced the *American Legion Charter Modernization Act* in June 2011. The bill gives American Legion members a new, more convenient option to meet their financial obligations and allows individual posts the freedom to continue offering important services to veterans. Congressman Altmire's bill received 432 co-sponsors, a record for a single bill in the history of the Congress. In December 2011, the president signed the bill to modernize the American Legion charter into law. For more information, see [

[Altmire Succeeds in Improving the American Legion Charter](#)

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### **Ensuring Quality Prosthetics and Care to Wounded Veterans**

In June 2011, Congressman Altmire introduced an amendment that would improve veterans' access to quality prosthetics as part of the FY 2012 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Bill. Endorsed by the American Legion, the amendment would provide the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) with additional support to research and improve prosthetic care for wounded veterans. The amendment passed the House on June 14, 2011 and was signed into law as part of the *Consolidated Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year (FY) 2012*. For more information, see: [

[Altmire Amendment Passes the House, will Improve Veterans' Access to Quality Prosthetics](#)

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### **Providing National Guardsmen with the Education Benefits They Deserve**

Today, approximately 130,000 National Guardsmen are ineligible for the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill's benefits, because the law does not take into account their Title 32 active duty service when their education benefits are calculated. To fix this problem, Congressman Altmire introduced the National Guard Post-9/11 G.I. Bill Act to ensure that all National Guardsmen will receive the full education benefits that they have earned. On January 4, 2011, Congressman Altmire's bill became law as part of the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Improvements Act (S. 3447). For more information, see: [ [Altmire Provisions Extending Education Benefits to National Guardsmen Set to Become Law](#) ]

### **Improving Care for Veterans Exposed to Agent Orange**

In 2010, Congressman Altmire voted for a new law that would provide disability compensation and health care benefits to 80,000 veterans suffering from Parkinson's disease, ischemic heart disease, and B cell leukemia as a result of Agent Orange exposure. During his time in Congress, Congressman Altmire has consistently worked to ensure that Vietnam veterans affected by Agent Orange exposure receive the support that they deserve. For more information, see: [ [Altmire Votes to Provide Veterans Affected by Agent Orange with Long-Overdue Benefits](#) ]

### **The Veterans Guaranteed Bonus Act**

Congressman Altmire introduced the Veterans Guaranteed Bonus Act (H.R. 3793) after learning that the Department of Defense (DOD) was unfairly penalizing wounded service members by withholding their enlistment bonuses. His legislation requires DOD to provide combat-injured service members with full payment of their enlistment bonuses within 90 days of discharge. On December 18, 2007, the House of Representatives voted unanimously to pass the Veterans Guaranteed Bonus Act. Congressman Altmire's bill was subsequently signed into law in 2008, as part of the FY09 Defense Authorization Act (S. 3001). For more information, see: [ [Altmire, Casey, Local Veterans Hail Major Accomplishment](#) ].

### **Authored First Expansion of FMLA Benefits in 15 Years**

Congressman Altmire offered an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 4986) that would allow military families to use Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) time to manage issues resulting from the deployment of a spouse, parent, or child. The amendment passed with wide bipartisan support and was signed into law by the president on January 28, 2008. For more information, see: [ [Two Altmire Measures to Improve Care for Veterans, Military Families Become Law](#) ].

## Improved Traumatic Brain Injury Treatment and Screening

Traumatic brain injury (TBI) has become the signature injury of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, with more than half of combat casualties returning home with associated brain injuries. To address this, Congressman Altmire introduced the Veterans Traumatic Brain Injury Act (H.R. 1944), which ensures that our brave men and women are properly screened for TBI and receive the treatment that they need and deserve. On January 28, 2008, the president signed this legislation into law as part of the National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 4986). For more information, see: [ [Two Altmire Measures to Improve Care for Veterans, Military Families Become Law](#) ].

## Restored the Promise of the G.I. Bill

In 2008, Congressman Altmire helped introduce and then voted for the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill, the largest increase in veterans' education benefits in more than 60 years. Under this new G.I. Bill, service members who have completed more than three months of active duty service since 9/11 can qualify for an education benefit of up to \$23,846 per year, an increase of more than \$14,000 annually. To ensure that individuals serving multiple deployments do not miss the opportunity to use these benefits, veterans will have up to 15 years to use this education assistance. For more information, see: [ [Altmire: Revamped GI Bill is Now Law](#) ].

## Expanded Opportunities for Veteran-Owned Small Businesses

Congressman Altmire believes that by helping our nation's veterans start and run small businesses, we can honor their service and strengthen our economy. To that end, Congressman Altmire wrote the [Military Reservist and Veterans Small Business Reauthorization and Opportunity Act](#) (H.R. 4253), which expands the funding and support available to veteran entrepreneurs and helps reservists secure loans to maintain their businesses during deployments. This legislation passed the House of Representatives with bipartisan support and was signed into law on February 14, 2008. In 2009, Congressman Altmire also included a provision in the Small Business Financing and Investment Act (H.R. 3854) that will make it easier for veterans to secure venture capital funding to launch new businesses. For more information see: [ [Altmire Continues Efforts to Help Veterans Succeed as Small Business Owners](#) ]

### **Cracking Down on Fraud**

After the Government Accountability Office found that businesses were securing government contracts by pretending to be owned by service disabled veterans, Congressman Altmire took action. He helped to introduce the Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business Procurement Reform Act (H.R. 4125), which would punish firms who falsely present themselves as service disabled veterans with up to \$500,000 in fines and/or imprisonment of up to 10 years. For more information, see: [ [Altmire Cracking Down on Companies Who Secure Government Contracts by Pretending to be Veteran-Owned](#) ].

### **Largest Increase in VA Funding in History**

Congressman Altmire voted for the largest single funding increase in the 77-year history of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and has repeatedly testified before the House Budget Committee about the importance of this funding. This increased funding has helped the VA strengthen health care services, maintain and build new health care facilities, and hire 8,300 new claims processors to reduce the backlog of claims from veterans waiting for their earned benefits.

### **Charles E. Kelly Commissary**

In 2009, Congressman Altmire worked with fellow Congressmen Mike Doyle and Tim Murphy to secure \$12 million in funding for a new, state of the art commissary and post exchange facility in the Pittsburgh region and to ensure that the current commissary remains open until the new one is complete. Without this facility, veterans and their families would be forced to drive almost 200 miles to access the products and services provided by the commissary and post exchange. For more information, see: [ [Army Announces Support for New Commissary](#) ].