

(Washington, DC)- Rep. Jason Altmire (PA-4) today voted to ensure the federal government remains open and continues to provide services to the American people.

The House passed the joint funding resolution, H.J. Res. 20, this afternoon by a vote of 286 to 140. Under this measure, most programs will continue to be funded at Fiscal Year 2006 levels, adjusted for increased pay costs, while others will be significantly increased to meet critical national needs such as health care for veterans.

"Last year's Republican-controlled Congress passed only 2 of 11 appropriations bills for Fiscal Year 2007, creating the worst budget mess since the government shut down in 1996," said Rep. Altmire. **"Because of the inaction of the previous Congress and the President, federal departments and agencies, and state and local governments have been in limbo for months and unable plan properly for the future. This resolution is a step forward in cleaning up the budget in a bipartisan and bicameral fashion."**

Rep. Altmire told House leaders that his vote was contingent upon an increase in spending for veterans' health care and the suspension of any pay raise or cost-of-living increase for Members of Congress. In addition to these requirements, the joint resolution also eliminates earmarks until a reformed process is put in place to restore an accountable, above-board, transparent process for funding decisions.

"I am pleased that this bill will increase funding for veterans' medical care. It will help the VA health care system keep up with inflation and the increasing number of veterans it serves," said Rep. Altmire. **"This bill means the VA health system will receive an additional \$278 million each month, and helps us to better meet our obligation to provide care for those who have served and sacrificed so much in defending our country."**

The joint resolution provides additional funding for high priority needs that have bipartisan support, including:

- Increased funding for veterans' health care by \$3.6 billion to provide health care for 325,000 veterans.
- Help more than 5.3 million students pay for college through an increase in the Pell Grant.

- Provide increased special education grants to better serve the 6.9 million children in America with disabilities.
- Deliver new funding for 6,700 schools that failed to meet the standards of No Child Left Behind and increase funding for Head Start.
- Finance the construction of 300 new or expanded health centers that will serve 1.2 million new patients.
- Funds to double the number of intelligence analysts at the FBI since 9/11. It would also invest in state and local law enforcement programs, including the COPS program.