

June 23, 2009

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) – U.S. Congressman Jason Altmire (PA-04) tonight voted for legislation that will enhance the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) ability to anticipate and proactively plan for how best to meet veterans' health care needs. Altmire is a co-sponsor of the Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act (H.R. 1016), legislation that allows Congress to approve funding for veterans' medical care one year in advance. This advanced funding will give the VA up to a full year to plan for the most effective and efficient way to deliver medical care.

The issue of advanced funding is a top priority for veteran service organizations. Over 40 groups, including the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, AMVETS, Disabled American Veterans and the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, support the legislation.

“America’s veterans deserve to have access to the best health care our country can provide,” Altmire said. “This legislation will ensure that funding for veterans’ health care is never delayed because of lengthy budget debates in Washington, D.C. By providing the VA with advanced appropriations, we can also enhance its ability to effectively plan for how it can best meet veterans’ health care needs.”

The Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act was one of five bills Altmire voted for today that will improve veterans' services. Altmire also voted in favor of legislation that will improve the quality and accessibility of health care services for female veterans; reform the way veterans' disability payments are calculated to ensure they better reflect cost-of-living increases; make it easier for veterans and their survivors to find educational scholarships; and provide scholarships to students whose parent died while serving in Iraq and Afghanistan post 9/11.

Since first coming to Congress in 2007, Altmire has established himself as one of Congress' leading voices on veterans' issues. To date, six different pieces of legislation Altmire wrote to help veterans and military families have been signed into law. Altmire's laws will guarantee our wounded warriors receive their full enlistment bonuses, help veterans successfully start and run small businesses, improve treatment for traumatic brain injuries, extend the Family Medical Leave Act to help military families deal with issues arising from deployment, and more.