

June 25, 2009

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) – Last night, U.S. Congressman Jason Altmire (PA-04) succeeded in increasing funding for a federal grant program that helps dozens of western Pennsylvania fire departments buy much-needed safety equipment each year. In the wake of cuts to the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program, Altmire successfully inserted a provision in the FY 2010 Homeland Security Appropriations Act (H.R. 2892) today that will increase AFG funding by \$10 million. This fiscally responsible funding increase – which is fully paid for by other offsets in the bill – will help fire departments across the country obtain the equipment and training they need to keep local families and businesses safe.

To watch a video of Congressman Altmire speaking on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives about his provision, click [here](#) . The Homeland Security Appropriations Act passed the House last night by a vote of 389-37. This legislation must still pass the U.S. Senate before it can be signed into law.

“There are more than 150 volunteer fire departments in my district, and each one of these fire departments plays a crucial role in keeping our local communities safe,” Altmire said. “Unfortunately, the current economic recession has made it harder than ever for these small fire departments to raise the donations they need to upgrade their equipment. By restoring funding to the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program, we can help fire departments nationwide obtain the equipment they need to effectively respond to emergencies.”

In 2008, 445 fire departments in Pennsylvania received more than \$37 million through the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program.

Altmire has long been a leading advocate for volunteer fire companies. Since 2007, Altmire’s office has held three workshops to help western Pennsylvania fire departments apply for AFG funding. Altmire has also repeatedly fought to prevent funding cuts to the AFG program.