

October 16, 2009

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) – U.S. Congressman Jason Altmire (PA-04) announced today that he has succeeded in increasing funding for a federal grant program that helps dozens of western Pennsylvania fire departments buy much-needed safety equipment each year. Altmire inserted a provision in the FY 2010 Homeland Security Appropriations Act (H.R. 2892) earlier this year that will increase funding for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program 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.

The FY 2010 Homeland Security Appropriations Act passed the House for a final time yesterday by a vote of 307-114 and now is expected to be signed into law by the president.

“There are more than 150 fire departments in my district, and each one plays a crucial role in keeping our local communities safe,” Altmire said. “Unfortunately, in today’s tough economy, many fire departments are finding it harder than ever to raise the funding they need to upgrade their equipment. By bolstering funding for 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. In the Fourth Congressional District, 26 fire departments received more than \$2.4 million through the program in 2008.

Altmire has long been a leading advocate for 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.