

**March 3, 2010**

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) -- U.S. Congressman Jason Altmire (PA-04) today testified before the House Budget Committee to lay out his priorities for the FY 2011 budget. Altmire urged the Committee to write a budget that would improve services for our nation's veterans, continue to secure America's borders, and help small businesses gain access to capital.

**“No one should stand before our nation’s veterans when we make federal budget decisions,” Altmire said. “I want to make sure that this budget honors America’s heroes by increasing funding to improve VA medical care and speed up the processing of veterans’ disability claims. Additionally, we must ensure that this budget provides the funding needed to effectively crack down on illegal immigration and further secure our nation’s borders.”**

In recent years, Congress has provided record increases in funding for the Veterans Administration. In his testimony, Congressman Altmire urged the Budget Committee to build upon this strong tradition by providing a 27 percent increase in funding for veterans' services. This would help the VA hire 4,000 additional claims processors to speed up the processing of veterans' benefit claims.

Citing the importance of continuing to secure our nation's borders, Altmire also supported increased funding for programs focused on immigration status verification and criminal alien deportation. However, Altmire criticized the President's proposal to cut the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's budget by \$317 million, which would result in the loss of 180 border patrol agents. Altmire emphasized that this proposal is out of step with America's national security needs.

To help small businesses grow and create jobs, Altmire urged the Budget Committee to draft a budget that continues to support guaranteed lending programs for small businesses and strengthen resources for the Small Business Development Centers that provide entrepreneurs with valuable business expertise.