

July 22, 2010

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) -- Today, U.S. Congressman Jason Altmire (PA-04) introduced legislation that would make approximately 45,000 National Guardsmen eligible for the Post 9/11 G.I. Bill for the first time. Under Congressman Altmire's National Guard Post-9/11 G.I. Bill Act, National Guardsmen would finally be able to use their Title 32 active duty service -- which involves homeland security, troop support, disaster relief, and other key missions -- to qualify for Post 9/11 G.I. Bill benefits. U.S. Congressman Todd Platts (PA-19) is the co-lead on Congressman Altmire's bill, which is endorsed by the American Legion.

**“In 2008, we created the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill, because we wanted to honor our newest generation of veterans by helping them pay for college or graduate school,” Congressman Altmire said. “It is unacceptable that tens of thousands of National Guardsmen are currently being denied the chance to take advantage of the largest expansion of veterans’ education benefits since World War II. My legislation will ensure that the National Guardsmen who serve and protect our country receive the full education benefits that they have earned.”**

**“The Post 9/11 G.I. Bill provided many of our veterans with the funding to better afford a quality education,” said Congressman Todd Platts (PA-19). “There are still an estimated 45,000 National Guard members who are not eligible for these benefits, however. This legislation addresses that issue and restores the promise of the G.I. Bill to our National Guard troops. America owes a debt of gratitude to all of the men and women in uniform who serve on our behalf. ”**

To qualify for the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill's benefits, veterans must have completed at least 90 days of active-duty service since September 11, 2001. As it is currently written, the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill only takes into account the time National Guardsmen have spent on Title 10 active duty service -- which involves supporting or fighting alongside troops overseas -- when calculating their education benefits. By ensuring that National Guardsmen's more domestically-focused Title 32 active duty service is also taken into account, Congressman Altmire's legislation would fully honor the vital role these men and women play in protecting our county.

**“Right now, there are many Pennsylvanians who are ineligible for the Post-9/11 G.I.**

**Bill's benefits even though they have served full-time with the National Guard for years," Matt Jones, a Public Affairs Officer for the Pennsylvania National Guard said. "Under Congressman Altmire's bill, the National Guardsmen who have dedicated so much of their lives to serving their country will finally have the same benefits as other active duty service members. This legislation would truly make a difference in many National Guardsmen's lives."**

Under the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill, qualifying veterans can receive a maximum education benefit equal to the cost of in-state tuition at their state's most expensive public university, plus a cost of living stipend. Veterans can also receive an additional \$1,000 to offset the cost of books and other educational expenses. In many cases, veterans who do not wish to use their benefits can pass them onto their children.