

July 28, 2010

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) – Last night, U.S. Congressman Jason Altmire (PA-04) voted for legislation that will provide much-needed benefits to Vietnam veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange. Under the FY 2010 Supplemental Appropriations Act (H.R. 4899), more than 80,000 veterans suffering from Parkinson’s disease, ischemic heart disease, and B cell leukemia as a result of Agent Orange exposure will now be able to get disability compensation and health care benefits. The FY 2010 Supplemental Appropriations Act passed last night by a vote of 308-114 and will now be sent to the President to be signed into law.

“I have consistently worked to provide Vietnam veterans affected by Agent Orange exposure with the benefits that they deserve,” Congressman Altmire said. “With this legislation, these American heroes will finally receive long-overdue support.”

From 1961 to 1971, the U.S. Military used herbicides such as Agent Orange to clear out vegetation and jungle canopy that provided cover to enemy forces. In 2009, the Veterans Administration (VA) announced that it would provide disability benefits to Vietnam veterans who developed Parkinson’s disease, ischemic heart disease, and B cell leukemias after being exposed to Agent Orange. The FY 2010 Supplemental Appropriations Act will provide the VA with the resources that it needs to deliver on this promise.

Veterans suffering from several other illnesses that the VA considers linked to Agent Orange exposure -- including Hodgkin’s Disease, ALS, and prostate cancer -- already qualify for VA disability compensation and health care benefits.