October 19, 2011

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Congressman Jason Altmire (PA-04) today issued the following statement on the announcement from the Social Security Administration (SSA) that senior citizens would receive a 3.6 percent increase beginning in January.

"This adjustment could not come at a better time for our senior citizens," said Congressman Altmire. "For two years, Social Security recipients saw their healthcare costs rise and even more saw their retirements dwindle away in a tough economy. As we continue to pull ourselves out of this economic downturn, protecting our seniors and ensuring they are able to get by must remain a top priority, and I am committed to keeping their interests at the forefront of our debates."

Today, the SSA announced that Social Security and Supplemental Social Security income would increase for more than 60 million recipients beginning in January of 2012. The SSA has not implemented a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) since 2009 when a 5.8 percent increase was enacted. To view more information from the SSA on the COLA, please click here .

Congressman Altmire has been an advocate for improving the method for calculating Social Security COLAs. Since taking office in 2007, he has co-sponsored legislation that calls for the Bureau of Labor Statistics to use the Consumer Price Index for Elderly Consumers (CPI-E) when calculating Social Security COLAs. This new formula, which has been in the experimental phase since 1983, would take into account the real spending habits seniors face. Currently, increases in Social Security payments are tied to the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. This index is based on the prices of goods and services for younger workers who have dramatically different spending habits than seniors, particularly with regard to rising healthcare costs.