

Altmire Responds to Resignation of Veterans Affairs Secretary

(Washington, DC) - U.S. Representative Jason Altmire (PA-4) called for a renewed and meaningful commitment to our nation's veterans following the announcement that Veterans Affairs Secretary Jim Nicholson submitted his resignation today to President George W. Bush, effective no later than October 1, 2007.

"The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has been plagued by one failure after another: questionable accounting practices, lapses in data security, delays in processing claims, and substandard conditions at VA health care facilities," said Congressman Altmire. "Our veterans, including the 60,000 veterans in my district, have sacrificed so much in their service to our country. They have every right to expect that they will receive the finest quality care at VA health care facilities.

"Our next VA Secretary must keep America's promises to our veterans and make it a priority to reduce the claims backlog, shorten the wait time for doctors' visits, ensure proper care for our soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan and invest in VA facilities and personnel," added Congressman Altmire. "In recent years, the VA has struggled to treat not only our aging veterans, but also our newest veterans returning from combat duty in Iraq and Afghanistan. We can no longer tolerate excuses for what has been the administration's failure to plan."

Since taking office in January, Congressman Altmire has worked to honor veterans by voting for historic increases in veterans' health care and benefits programs, totaling more than \$17 billion. In addition, he has worked tirelessly to meet the needs of veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, including authoring the Veterans Traumatic Brain Injury Treatment Act (H.R. 1944), legislation that was incorporated into a bill passed by the House in May to ensure the proper treatment of traumatic brain injuries, the signature injury of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.