

Wounded Warriors Commission Recommendations Include 2 Altmire-Authored Bills

(Washington, DC) - Congressman Jason Altmire (PA-4) today praised the work of the Dole-Shalala Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors, and called upon Congress and the Bush Administration to implement the panel's recommendations. Rep. Altmire is the author of legislation addressing two of the commission's key recommendations: ensuring proper screening and treatment of traumatic brain injuries (TBI) and amending the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to allow spouses and parents of seriously wounded veterans to take leave. Both of the provisions authored by Altmire have passed the House.

"The commission has outlined clear recommendations for providing America's wounded warriors the care they deserve. Now it is our responsibility to act," said Congressman Altmire. "I am pleased that the Dole-Shalala recommendations include my legislation addressing brain injuries and providing the families of our wounded warriors much needed leave."

In May, the House unanimously passed the Traumatic Brain Injury Enhancement and Long-Term Support Act (H.R. 2199) which included in its entirety a bill (H.R. 1944) introduced by Congressman Altmire in April. H.R. 2199 would ensure the proper treatment of traumatic brain injuries sustained by veterans returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. It would require the Veterans Administration (VA) to institute a program to screen veterans for TBI; develop and operate a comprehensive program of long-term care for post-acute TBI rehabilitation; establish a TBI transition office at each of the polytrauma network sites nationwide; and create and maintain a TBI veteran health registry.

Also in May, the House approved a floor amendment sponsored by Congressman Altmire to the FY 2008 Defense Authorization bill (H.R. 1585). The Altmire language amends the Family Medical Leave Act to include spouses, parents, or children of military personnel in certain circumstances. H.R. 1585 passed by a vote of 397 to 27.

"I urge President Bush to heed this report and to make its implementation one of our nation's top priorities," said Congressman Altmire. "We must do all that we can to keep America's promises to our veterans. We owe it to our troops to ensure that their families are taken care of while they are deployed and that our servicemen and women receive the finest quality care when they return home from serving their nation."