

Altmire Bill Requires 'Country of Origin' Disclosure on Customer Service and Sales Calls

(Cranberry Twp., PA) - Rep. Jason Altmire (PA-4) today announced that he has introduced legislation that is designed to help protect the jobs of millions of call center employees nationwide. The Call Center Consumer's Right to Know Act of 2007, H.R. 1776, will require call center employees to indicate their physical location when making calls to or receiving calls from consumers.

"Americans have the right to know what country they are calling and with whom they are speaking when they call for customer assistance," said Rep. Altmire. "Call center employees often deflect questions about their whereabouts. This bill would subject companies to civil penalties if their employees do not truthfully disclose their location to customers."

H.R. 1776 would require companies to annually certify to the Federal Trade Commission that their employees have properly disclosed their location at the beginning of every call they make or receive.

The Call Center Consumer's Right to Know Act is intended to limit the outsourcing of American call center jobs by raising awareness among consumers about the extent to which U.S. jobs have been exported overseas. Currently, over 20,000 workers in southwest Pennsylvania are employed by nearly 80 customer service/call centers and back office operations in the region. Across the United States, there are approximately 50,000 call centers, which employ an estimated 6 million people. However, these jobs are increasingly threatened by outsourcing.

"Transactions are based on trust," said Rep. Altmire. "As commerce is increasingly conducted over fiber optic cables and lines, Americans have lost the comfort and security of knowing with whom they are dealing. This bill would take a small step in reassuring consumers that their private information - be it a Social Security number, bank account number or pin code - is not being divulged without their full knowledge to someone thousands of miles away where U.S. laws may not be applicable and where U.S. law enforcement officials may not have any jurisdiction."

Rep. Altmire is a member of the House Committee on Small Business, which will have jurisdiction over this legislation.