

Altmire Supports Goals of National Physical Education and Sports Week

(Washington, DC) - U.S. Representative Jason Altmire (PA-4) today joined with Members of Congress in recognizing National Physical Education and Sports Week. Rep. Altmire introduced a resolution to establish May 1-7, 2007 as National Physical Education and Sports Week and to highlight the central role of physical activity and sports in creating a healthy lifestyle for all children and youth. The measure passed today in the House by a 373 to 0 vote.

The bill calls on communities to work with schools to craft and implement a local wellness plan as required by the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 that includes goals for physical activity, nutrition education, and other school-based activities to promote physical education and wellness. It also encourages schools to offer physical education classes to students and to work with community partners to provide opportunities and safe spaces for physical activities for all children and youth before and after school, as well as throughout the summer months.

"The benefits of physical activity are well documented," said Rep. Altmire. "It reduces the risk of obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes and even certain types of cancer. As a nation, we should be more active. One out of every four children does not attend physical education classes in school and only 25 percent of children get a minimum of 20 minutes of vigorous exercise on a daily basis. Adults fare much worse - 60 percent are not regularly active and 25 percent are not physically active at all."

"We can no longer continue to ignore these statistics," said Rep. Altmire. "Physical inactivity is a major health risk factor in this country. Empowering young people to take charge of their health with daily physical activity will provide lifelong benefits. Fitness can be fun, and this month, I urge children and adults to take the steps to make physical fitness a part of their everyday routine."

The Center for Disease Control recommends 60 minutes of daily physical activity for children and teenagers and 30 minutes of daily physical activity for adults.