

Altmire Declares Opposition To Senate Immigration Bill

(Washington, DC) - U.S. Representative Jason Altmire (PA-4) today vowed to oppose any immigration bill that does not respect citizenship and meet American expectations of border security. Congressman Altmire made the announcement in response to yesterday's Senate vote of 69-23 to begin debate on a comprehensive immigration bill that would give legal status to millions of illegal immigrants in the United States.

"I am disheartened that my colleagues in the Senate and President Bush have decided to move forward on a trajectory that will reward illegal immigrants with amnesty," said Congressman Altmire. "Over 12 million illegal immigrants living in our country have shown callous disregard for the laws that govern our society while placing an undue burden on American taxpayer-funded health care, education and legal systems. The correct response to the immigration crisis is stronger enforcement and a redoubling of our commitment to the rule of law. Bestowing the high honor of American citizenship on lawbreakers is tantamount to giving away the store."

While the Kennedy-Kyl immigration bill includes provisions to tighten border security and toughen workplace enforcement, the proposed plan would grant renewable, four-year visas to illegal immigrants living in the United States prior to January 1, 2007. It would give illegal immigrants the option of applying for green cards and create a new "merit based" point system when evaluating applicants for citizenship. The Senate immigration bill would also create a guest worker program to allow up to 400,000 unskilled workers to enter the country each year.

"I oppose the Kennedy-Kyl bill, a bill that rewards lawbreakers," said Congressman Altmire. "While I support the inclusion of heightened border security measures, the strengthening of unlawful hiring protections and steps to reduce chain migration, the Kennedy-Kyl bill goes too far and is an underhanded way of providing a path to citizenship and granting amnesty to illegal immigrants."