

Altmire Hosts Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year

(Washington, DC) - On Thursday, Rep. Jason Altmire (PA-04) hosted Lois Rebich, the 2007 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year, during the National Teacher of the Year Program in Washington, D.C. Rebich is an instructional support teacher at Ross Elementary School in the North Hills School District.

"I am very proud that Pennsylvania's Teacher of the Year is from the Fourth District. Mrs. Rebich is a leader and a role model to her colleagues and her students at Ross Elementary School," said Rep. Altmire. "Mrs. Rebich has excelled by coordinating her efforts with parents, teachers, administrators and other students. She is representative of all the great teachers in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. These selfless men and women spend every day educating our children so they can become happy and productive citizens of this great country."

After graduating from the University of Pittsburgh with dual majors in mathematics and economics, Rebich began her career at H.J. Heinz Co. in the areas of inventory control and purchasing. She later earned a Master's degree in Business Administration, allowing her the opportunity to become a financial analyst with Rockwell International. After the birth of her children, Rebich struck out on her own by opening a state licensed day care center. Initially, Rebich sought her teacher certification only as a requirement for operating the day care center; however, she quickly found her passion for teaching.

After teaching two years in the Pittsburgh Public Schools, Rebich joined the North Hills School District as a regular education teacher in 1991 where she taught first, second and third grades. In 2001, she became Ross Elementary's instructional support teacher, helping students who have been referred to her due to academic, behavioral or organizational issues.

"Since being named Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year, my life has been a whirlwind," said Rebich. "I think I'm living what Andy Warhol referred to as our 'fifteen minutes of fame.'" According to Rebich, Ross Elementary proclaimed 'Red and White Day' in her honor.

"After a few days, one of my first grade students stopped me and asked me what I won," added Rebich. "So I told him about the smart board and projector for the classroom, the lap top computer, books and school supplies, and I could see he was not very impressed. Then I told him the nice people from Hershey Corporation gave me a huge five-pound Hershey chocolate bar - that brought a smile to his face."

Pennsylvania has participated in the "Teacher of the Year" program since 1965. The program is co-sponsored by the Pennsylvania State Department of Education and the Pennsylvania chapter of the National State Teacher of the Year. Each year, one teacher is recognized in Pennsylvania for excellence in education and is eligible to participate in the National Teacher of the Year competition sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers. The National Teacher of the Year was announced Thursday at a White House Ceremony. This year's winner is Andrea Peterson, a music teacher from Granite Falls, Washington.

