

Altmire: Veterans Guaranteed Bonus Act One Step Closer to Becoming Law

(Washington, D.C.) -- The Veterans Guaranteed Bonus Act (H.R. 3793), legislation U.S. Congressman Jason Altmire (PA-04) introduced last year to ensure America's wounded warriors receive the full enlistment bonuses they were promised, passed the House tonight as part of the FY 2009 Defense Authorization Bill (H.R. 5658).

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After Congressman Altmire introduced the Veterans Guaranteed Bonus Act, news reports brought national attention to the Department's efforts to recoup the bonuses of wounded service men and women because they were unable to fulfill their entire military obligations. The bill passed the House with unanimous support on December 18, 2007, but was not acted upon by the Senate.

"I am proud that the Veterans Guaranteed Bonus Act is included -- in its entirety -- in the Defense Authorization bill that passed the House tonight. This is an important step forward in my ongoing effort to ensure that America's wounded warriors are not unfairly denied the full bonuses they earned," Altmire said. "I will not rest until the Veterans Guaranteed Bonus Act is signed into law and all of America's wounded warriors receive the bonuses they were promised."

In addition to guaranteeing the veterans' bonuses, the FY 2009 Defense Authorization Bill, which passed by a vote of 383-26, takes steps to help restore our nation's military readiness and protect our troops in harm's way. It authorizes funding to address critical equipment shortfalls for the Army, Marine Corps and National Guard and Reserve Units. On average, Army National Guard units only have 63 percent of their required equipment, and many would not be considered ready if they were called upon to respond to an emergency.

The bill will also provide our troops with Mine Resistance Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles, up-armored Humvees, improved body armor and other equipment that can help keep them safe. It also gives our military a pay increase of 3.9 percent, 0.5 percent above the president's request, and authorizes funding to improve the quality of military barracks that are in a severe state of disrepair.