

Altmire earns recognition for 100% vote attendance

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WASHINGTON — Congressman Jason Altmire, D-4th, can lay claim to perfect voting attendance — one of only two members of the U.S. House of Representatives to accomplish that feat in the 110th session of the Congress.

U.S. Sen. Bob Casey, D-Pa., also was one of only seven senators who cast all 657 votes in the 110th session.

The voting records were tabulated by The Washington Post votes database.

Altmire's district includes southern Butler and northern Allegheny counties as well as all of Beaver, Lawrence and Mercer counties.

Altmire said he takes attendance at voting sessions seriously because it is important to the job to which he was elected. He was surprised that half way through the session there were only a handful of congressmen who had attended all the votes. In the end, he and the Rev. Jesse Jackson Jr., D-Ill., were the only two who attended all of the 1,876 votes. That was the highest number of votes ever taken in any session of the Congress.

Altmire said the biggest issue Congress must face in 2009 is the faltering economy. Lawmakers also will have to deal with energy and health care matters.

"We need to be finding a way to become more energy independent to avoid the situation that occurred over last summer that has crippled the economy," said Altmire.

He said Congress has to rein in the rising cost of health care. Altmire plans to introduce legislation that will allow small businesses to pool their employees' coverage so more could potentially afford to offer workers insurance.

He also is supporting legislation to help veterans returning from Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere receive medical coverage at the Veteran's Administration facilities.

In the Senate, Casey was joined in casting all the votes by Olympia Snowe, R-Maine; Susan Collins, R-Maine; Ken Salazar, D-Colo.; Herb Kohl, D-Wis.; Russ Feingold, D-Wis.; and Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa.

"The people of Pennsylvania sent me to Washington to be their advocate and fight on their behalf to ensure that their voices are heard in the U.S. Senate," said Casey.