

Altmire Votes for Honest Leadership and Open Government

(Washington, DC) - U.S. Representative Jason Altmire (PA-4) voted today to strengthen lobbying disclosure requirements that will help change the way business is done in Washington. H.R. 2316, the Honest Leadership, Open Government Act, will end the tight-knit relationship between lobbyists and lawmakers by requiring greater disclosure of lobbyists' activities. The bill will end the K Street project, require improved disclosure of contributions to Members' charities or entities, and establish public databases of member travel and personal financial disclosure forms.

H.R. 2316 passed the House this afternoon by a bipartisan vote of 396-22.

"My colleagues and I spent the past year and a half on the campaign trail talking about ethics reform," said Congressman Altmire. "We made a promise to the American people to clean up Congress and to change the way Washington does business. In the first 100 hours of the 110th Congress, the House restored accountability by imposing the toughest ethics standards ever. H.R. 2316 is another step in the right direction in keeping our promise to the American people and bringing greater transparency to lobbying activities on Capitol Hill."

"This legislation will help reverse the culture of corruption in Washington that has for too long put special interests ahead of the public interest," added Congressman Altmire.

The Honest Leadership, Open Government Act of 2007:

- Increases disclosure of lobbyists' contributions to lawmakers, including: contributions to Members' charities; contributions to events or entities honoring Members; contributions intended to pay the cost of a meeting or a retreat attended by Members; and conduit contributions disclosed under the Federal Election Campaign Act.
- Doubles the frequency of the Disclosure of Lobbyists' Reports to four times a year;
- Establishes an online, searchable public database of lobbyist disclosure information;
- Establishes an online, searchable public database of Member travel and personal financial disclosure forms;
- Requires sitting Members to disclose job negotiations for post-Congressional employment and to recuse themselves for purposes of a conflict of interest;
- Increases criminal and civil penalties for violating the Lobby Disclosure Act;
- Closes a loophole in current law that permits coalitions to avoid disclosing their clients;
- Requires Members to prohibit their staff from having any official contact with a Member's lobbyist spouse on behalf of the spouse's client;
- Requires lobbyists to disclose past Executive Branch and Congressional employment; and
- Bans the K Street Project, prohibiting private entities from hiring and firing based on politics.

Congressman Altmire also voted today in support of H.R. 2317, the Lobbying Transparency Act, which will require lobbyists who "bundle," or collect campaign checks for Members of Congress, to meet strict reporting and disclosure guidelines.