

## LWV Voters Guide to Fall '08 General Election

### Representative in Congress

(Vote for one)

**Term:** 2 years

**Salary:** \$169,300

**Duties:** The Congress is the legislative branch of the federal government. It is composed of two houses, the Senate and the House of Representatives. A majority vote by both houses is necessary to pass a law. Every law concerned with taxation must originate in the House of Representatives.

**Questions:** 1. What should the federal government do to ensure that every American has health insurance coverage?  
2. List your top legislative priority and what you will do to accomplish it.

### 4<sup>th</sup> Congressional District

#### Democratic

**Jason Altmire**, 40, Wexford

[www.jasonaltmire.com](http://www.jasonaltmire.com)

**Education:** George Washington University, M.H.S.A. (Masters in Health Services Administration), 1998; Florida State University, B.S. (Political Science), 1990.

**Occupation:** U.S. Congressman

**Qualifications:** As a Congressman, I have led efforts to improve support for veterans, strengthen support for small businesses and reform health care.

**Answers:** 1. To make health insurance more accessible and more affordable, Congress must expand the State Children's Insurance Program, make it easier for small businesses to provide their employees with health insurance, and strengthen Medicare. We must also rein in rising health care costs by incentivizing preventative care, improving disease management and expanding the use of health IT.

2. Congress must make energy independence a national priority and pursue every option to reduce our dependence on foreign oil. Congress has already acted to open up off-shore drilling, a crucial step as we make the necessary investments to develop clean energy alternatives. Pennsylvania could become the worldwide leader in new energy technologies if we harness our unique assets of unmatched coal and natural gas reserves and our leadership in nuclear technology.

#### Republican

**Melissa Hart**, 46, Bradford Woods

[www.peoplewithhart.com](http://www.peoplewithhart.com)

**Education:** 1984, Washington & Jefferson College, B.A. 1987, University of Pittsburgh, J.D.

**Occupation:** Attorney

**Qualifications:** PA State Senate 1991-2001, US House of Representatives 2001-2007

**Answers:** 1. It is vital that we find ways to ensure that health care is affordable without jeopardizing either the quality of medical care or patients' choice of doctors and other providers. This requires innovative, realistic solutions such as health savings accounts, opening the market for health insurance to provide more choices for consumers, and limiting punitive damages so physicians are not driven out of practice.

2. My top priority is getting our country's economy back on track. When I return to Congress, I will regain my seat on Ways and Means Committee with significant seniority. This will allow me to deal directly with tax issues that are making our economy less competitive. It will also put me in the forefront on trade issues. Congress needs to support legislation that would level the playing field for American businesses so they can compete in a global economy. Existing trade laws should be strongly enforced; against illegal dumping and other predatory practices by foreign governments which heavily subsidize competing industries. U.S. manufacturers should not be negatively impacted by unfair trade practices that give foreign competitors an unfair advantage. Additionally, Congress needs to act to make the tax cuts permanent that doubled the child tax credit to \$1,000 per child, provided marriage penalty relief and eliminated the death tax, which gave relief to families, farms and small businesses. To address the instability in the market, Congress must do more to encourage private investment. I

believe we need to look at options that would encourage this such as eliminating the capital gains tax, implement market reforms, take the cap off of FDIC coverage and keep taxpayer liability to a minimum.