

Washington, DC -- Today, U.S. Rep. Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) announced the introduction of "Ask an Intern," a regular series highlighting students from New York's 24th Congressional District who are participating in Congressman Arcuri's Washington, DC Internship Program. Every few months a new intern will be interviewed and profiled regarding their experience in Washington.

"Each class of interns represents the incredible diversity of our colleges and communities across Upstate New York," **Arcuri said**. "Throughout the year, these future leaders come to Washington to gain first-hand knowledge of the legislative process, while at the same time we learn more about the people of our district. The role they play in the day-to-day operation of my office cannot be overstated."

The first installment of "Ask an Intern" will feature Little Falls native Julia Keyser, a 2007 graduate of Tufts University, who began her Washington, DC internship on January 5, 2009. Included below is a transcript of Julia Keyser's "Ask an Intern" 12 question interview.

Since taking office, more than 35 students from New York's 24th Congressional District have participated in Congressman Arcuri's Washington, DC Internship Program. Internships are unpaid and last from six-to-ten weeks.

For more information, or to apply for an internship with Congressman Arcuri's office, please call 202-225-3665 or log onto the Congressman's website at <http://www.arcuri.house.gov/> .

### **Ask an Intern** **Question and Answer Session with Julia Keyser**

Hometown: Little Falls, NY

College: Tufts University, Graduated 2007

1) What made you decide to pursue an internship with Congressman Arcuri?

As I mentioned, I was an intern with the ENOUGH Project and there was an event at the House of Representatives on violence against women and international development—it was actually right down the hall [from Congressman Arcuri's Office in Cannon Caucus Room]. I was here for that and realized that I have never seen my representative's office. When I walked in, I started talking to the interns and one of them was from New Hartford, NY. During our brief conversation I realized I would really enjoy the opportunity to work in my representative's office. It was just one of those things where I thought it would be a great idea.

2) What is one thing you have learned about Congress (or the Congressman) that really surprised you?

Congressman Arcuri is a lot taller in person than he appears to be on TV. I wasn't expecting that.

3) What is your impression of Washington, DC and how does it differ from home?

What struck me first about DC was how transient it is—everybody is from somewhere else. No one really has roots in the area like Upstate, where families have lived in the same place for generations. Meeting people from different places wasn't so new because of my time at Tufts in Boston, but meeting people so entirely motivated by one thing was. Everyone has an issue in DC—like, their thing. It's overwhelming, people pulling you in every direction. When you're in Upstate New York, people are just friendlier.

4) What is something that you have learned that you will continue to use after your internship?

I am definitely a better listener. Initially it was difficult to spend so much time on the phone listening to constituents. It is something I really didn't get at first. But, when you talk to people...you realize they are calling because they really need to be heard, and you start to realize that it really does matter. After a while, I would talk to different people that I would think about when I went home because I've been to their town and I can understand where they are coming from.

5) What do you think is the most important issue for Congress to address?

Healthcare reform is an area of public policy that I have really become interested in. It is a major issue that affects everyone. When you look at countries that are extremely poor, then you look at the U.S. which is supposed to be the most developed country in the world, we have the same problems. Healthcare needs to be more affordable; it needs to be more available. I think reform needs to be done in a way that works with our current system by encouraging employers to provide healthcare through incentives, reducing redundancy in billing and removing barriers to care like 'preexisting condition clauses.'

6) What are plans for the future?

Well, I was in West Africa last year doing developmental work through the Peace Corps and had to come back rather unexpectedly because of an injury. Once I returned, I decided I really wanted to work in public policy, so I applied for a number of internships and just moved down to DC. I didn't find out I got the one I really wanted until I got down here. In September I began interning at the ENOUGH Project over at the Center for American Progress.

7) What advice would you give a potential intern?

I think an internship is a great opportunity for anyone. It really makes you reflect on your government and how you can play a part in that—which is really important. I think it encourages you to do a lot of research; you have a lot of questions when you go home. Especially during the first couple of weeks it encourages you to look them up and just kind of

figure out the system a little more. Also I think it is important to go in with an open mind and be ready to work.

8) Walk me through your first day?

I don't even remember what I did on my first day to be quite honest. I think my first thought was; wow, they are a lot stricter here than in my last internship. I came in and started answering phones right away; then took a tour of the Capitol Visitors Center, which I had never been to before. You walk around and feel like you need clearance. Then, my first time in Rayburn; I think it took my 45 minutes to find a street exit.

9) What is your impression of Congressman Arcuri and how does it differ from before you started your internship?

He is very personable, he makes people feel welcome and at home. I am always impressed that every time he is greeting someone it seems like he has been waiting around the office all day for this one person. When in reality he may have been up in New York doing an event that morning and flew to DC just prior. I never realized just how busy he is and how often he travels back and forth. He is almost omnipresent.

10) Is there any food in DC you've tried that you've never had before?

Ben's Chili Bowl. It's a DC institution. I heard about it through my classmates, who talked about it a lot. I had never been there and, actually was a little disappointed when I went because I got the bowl of chili, which you aren't suppose to do—but I didn't know that. Everyone was like, why didn't you get the chili dog or half-smoke? I guess I'll have to go back soon.

11) Is there any type of food you really miss or something you've had in DC that they don't make quite like at home?

I miss tomato pie from the White Rose Bakery in Little Falls, my hometown. I love it; it's so Central New York, and it reminds me of my childhood. I've never seen it anywhere else.

12) Has anything funny or embarrassing happened to you during your internship?

I'm pretty sure I've accidentally hung up on another Member of Congress's office before, but no one called back to call me out on it, so I'm not entirely sure. But, I am horrible with directions and I was in the basement of Cannon looking at the plaque on the wall to see which way to go for the cafeteria and Sam the Chief of Staff walked by and was like, "Can I help you find something?" I was a little embarrassed.