

Washington, DC -- U.S. Rep. Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) voted for legislation today to address the current economic crisis through investments in infrastructure, aid to states and localities, and tax cuts for the middle class.

“Reading local unemployment numbers is shocking and puts a local face on the country’s economic problems,” Arcuri said. “Now we see increases in area counties of nearly 2% in just one month from November to December. The facts on the ground are frightening: 500 jobs lost in Cortland County in one month, companies cutting jobs from Cayuga to Oneida. I wish I had the luxury of standing by and criticizing this bill for all it is not. But I took an oath as your Congressman to make the hard choices that I believe will help my constituents.”

Arcuri voted for and the House of Representatives passed, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Economic Recovery Package), which is estimated to create 390,770 jobs by the end of 2010 and reduce the unemployment rate by 2.3% in New York State. Prior to voting for the Economic Recovery Package, Arcuri broke with his party and supported a Republican measure to increase infrastructure spending in the legislation by over \$60 billion.

“One thing is clear – our economy is in rough shape and we need to do something about it,” **Arcuri said**

. “Unemployment is at all time highs across Upstate New York, our water infrastructure is outdated and in need of repair, and people aren’t spending money. We need to get the economy moving again, and this approach, although not perfect, is a giant step in the right direction.”

For the month of December the unemployment rate in New York State hit 7%, up from 4.6% in December 2007. From November to December of this year the unemployment rate in counties in the 24th Congressional District increased by:

- Herkimer County up from 6.4% to 7.7%
- Oneida County up from 5.9% to 6.7%
- Cayuga County up from 6.3% to 7.4%
- Chenango County up from 6.7% to 8.2%
- Cortland County up from 7.2% to 9.1%
- Otsego County up from 5.8% to 7.3%

This legislation will directly help unemployed workers by increasing both regular and extended unemployment benefits by \$25 a week through 2009 and continuing the extended unemployment benefits program, which will soon provide up to 33 weeks of extended benefits to New Yorkers through the end of 2009. Currently the program is scheduled to end at the end of March, 2009. The legislation will also improve health care coverage for the unemployed workers by providing a 65% subsidy for health care costs for COBRA.

The Economic Recovery Package also includes \$3.4 billion for New York State to make infrastructure improvements, including bridges, roads, water and sewer, and mass transit projects. New York State, not the federal government, will distribute all infrastructure funding from the legislation to projects - the legislation does not include any earmarks.

“Traveling around the district for the last two months, meeting with mayors and town boards, I heard over and over again that what we need first and foremost are sewer upgrades and new wastewater treatment systems,” **Arcuri said**. “My biggest concern with this legislation, is the fact that funding goes to Albany instead of directly to counties and municipalities to make critical upgrades.

“This is why before I cast my vote I spoke personally with house leadership, Senator Schumer and Governor Paterson to begin working with them to ensure that local projects – especially sewer and water systems – get full and prompt consideration.”

To further help counties in the 24th Congressional District faced with severe budget shortfalls, the Economic Recovery Package includes direct assistance to individual counties through relief from Medicaid costs and to individual school districts to address unfunded mandates and begin stalled construction projects. Medicaid and education funding for the counties will alleviate budget pressures, freeing up resources at the county level for critical needs like water and sewer and local transportation projects.

County by County increases in Education funding and Medicaid (FMAP) savings:

- Cayuga County: \$6,600,000/\$3,000,000
- Cortland County: \$4,500,000/ \$2,200,000
- Oneida County: \$28,600,000/\$12,000,000
- Herkimer County: \$6,430,000/\$3,000,000
- Ontario County: \$8,180,000/\$3,500,000
- Seneca County: \$3,050,000/\$1,300,000

- Broome County: \$20,320,000/\$8,300,000
- Chenango County: \$5,410,000/\$2,100,000
- Otsego County: \$4,960,000/\$2,300,000
- Tioga County: \$4,500,000/ \$1,800,000
- Tompkins: \$6,020,000/\$2,600,000

The Economic Recovery Package also includes tax cuts of up to \$1,000 for roughly 6.7 million New York families and more than \$20 billion for large and small businesses to spur job creation. Tax cuts in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act total \$185 billion over 10 years. The Make Work Pay Tax Cut would provide tax relief to 95 percent of American workers through a refundable tax credit of up to \$500 per worker (\$1,000 per couple filing jointly), phasing out at \$200,000 for couples filing jointly and \$100,000 for single filers.

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