

Washington, DC -- To protect American families from financial uncertainty, the U.S. House of Representatives today passed bipartisan, comprehensive credit card reform legislation, cosponsored by U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica), which would level the playing field between credit card companies and consumers.

“It is time to stop credit card companies from ambushing working families with crippling interest rate hikes and fees,” **Arcuri said**. “If we learn anything from the current situation on Wall Street, it is that by enacting sensible regulations to protect consumers now, we can avoid future financial crises and save billions down the road. I am a proud cosponsor of this bipartisan legislation because it will provide American consumers with critical information to make responsible financial decisions.”

The Credit Cardholders' Bill of Rights (H.R. 5244):

- Protects cardholders against arbitrary interest rate increases;
- Prevents cardholders who pay on time from being unfairly penalized;
- Protects cardholders from due date gimmicks and misleading terms;
- Empowers cardholders to set limits on their credit;
- Requires card companies to fairly credit and allocate payments;
- Prohibits card companies from imposing excessive fees on cardholders;
- Protects vulnerable consumers from fee-heavy subprime credit cards;
- Requires Congress to provide better oversight of the credit card industry; and,
- Contains NO rate caps, fee setting, or price controls

The average American household's debt from credit cards has risen from \$2,966 in 1990 to \$9,840 in 2007. In 2007, credit-card issuers imposed \$18.1 billion in penalty fees on families carrying credit card balances—up more than 50% since 2003. This year, card companies will break all records for late fees, over-limit charges, and other penalties, pulling in more than \$19 billion.

The Credit Cardholders' Bill of Rights is supported by consumer organizations including the Consumers Union, Consumer Federation of America, Center for Responsible Lending, National Consumer Law Center, Consumer Action, and the National Community Reinvestment Coalition.

In March, Arcuri joined with fellow New York Representative Carolyn B. Maloney

(D-Manhattan), Chair of the House Financial Services Subcommittee on Financial Institutions and Consumer Credit, to introduce this legislation (H.R. 5244), which has over 75 bipartisan cosponsors.

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