

Washington, DC -- U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) hosted the opening meeting of his Higher Education Advisory Committee today, hearing from university and college presidents, professors and administrators about the needs of local educational institutions and students.

“My objective today was to listen to the experts and learn where local institutions need federal support and how we can work together to educate tomorrow’s workforce,” **Arcuri said**. “Today was about economic development and how we can help make our colleges and universities, which already serve as economic engines, stronger and more integrated into our communities. We also discussed how working together our colleges can build synergy within Central New York and the Southern Tier to make our area an alternative energy production center for the country.”

Last week, Arcuri joined an overwhelming bipartisan majority in the House of Representatives to approve the Higher Education Opportunity Act (H.R. 4137) Conference Report, to address rising college costs and remove other barriers that keep qualified students from pursuing higher education.

“We also spoke about legislation, already signed into law, which expands access to higher education for middle-class families and keeps our students from drowning in debt,” **Arcuri continued**

“I look forward to working with these outstanding leaders to continue my commitment to local students and families and to continue bringing cutting-edge economic opportunities to Upstate New York.”

H.R. 4137 is a comprehensive reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, the primary federal law aimed at expanding college access for low- and middle-income students. If enacted, this would be the first time the Higher Education Act was reauthorized since 1998. H.R.4137 was passed by the Senate and now awaits the President’s signature.

According to a recent College Board report, tuition and fees at four-year public institutions have increased 31 percent, accounting for inflation, over the last five years. In New York, 243,696 students take out need-based loans each year at public four-year schools – causing a typical student to accumulate \$14,276 of debt. In the 24th district alone, there are 12,681 borrowers,

attending our eight four-year colleges and universities and four two-year institutions.

The Higher Education Opportunity Act would address these rising prices by encouraging colleges to rein in price increases, ensuring that states maintain their commitment to higher education funding, providing students and families with consumer friendly information on college pricing, and streamlining the federal student financial aid application process.

H.R. 4137 builds on the College Cost Reduction and Access Act, the largest federal investment in student aid since the 1944 GI Bill, which was signed into law in September and strongly supported by Arcuri. The College Cost Reduction and Access Act will boost college financial aid by more than \$20 billion over the next five years – including increasing financial aid by \$2,217,665 for college students in New York.

In June, Arcuri voted for bipartisan legislation, signed into law, to expand GI Bill education benefits for veterans and their families. This expanded GI Bill would restore full, four-year college scholarships to veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars to help make them part of an economic recovery like the veterans of World War II. The legislation would also allow veterans to transfer those benefits to family members.

Since taking office, Arcuri has also supported critical education legislation, passed by the House, to reign in corrupt practices in the student loan industry as well as improve and reauthorize the national Head Start program and add thousands of highly qualified K-12 math and science teachers to our schools.

### Full Membership of Arcuri's 24th Congressional District's Higher Education Advisory Committee Includes:

Mr. Todd Hutton, President, Utica College

Dr. Anne Marie Murray, President, Herkimer College Community College

Ms. Joan Stewart, President, Hamilton College

Ms. Lois DeFleur, President, Binghamton University

Dr. Barbara Risser, President, Finger Lakes Community College

Mr. Bob Baber, Dean, Munson-Williams-Proctor School of Art

Dr. Randall VanWagoner, President, Mohawk Valley Community College

Ms. Carol Blazina, Vice President for Community Relations, SUNY Oneonta

Mr. Eric Bitterbaum, President, SUNY Cortland

Mr. Henry Steck, Professor of International Studies, SUNY Cortland

Ms. Meredith Bonham, Assistant to the President, Hamilton College

Mr. Alan Donovan, former President, SUNY Oneonta

Mr. Michael Frame, Director of Federal Relations, Binghamton University

Mr. Mark Gearan, President, Hobart and William Smith Colleges

Mr. Carl E. Haynes, President Tompkins Cortland Community College

Dr. Judith Kirkpatrick, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs, Utica College

Mr. Daniel Larson, President, Cayuga Community College

Ms. Marianne Monahan, President, St. Elizabeth College of Nursing

Dr. John Nader, Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences, SUNY Delhi (and Oneonta Mayor)

Mr. Daniel Sargent, Assistant to the President, Herkimer County Community College

Mr. Nicholas Laino, Officer in Charge, Herkimer County Community College

Dr. Thomas Topping, Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of the College, Finger Lakes Community College

Ms. Kim Muller, Former Mayor of Oneonta; Director of Grants Development, SUNY College at Oneonta

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