

Washington, DC -- U.S. Rep. Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) introduced legislation to help communities in Upstate New York combat gang violence and reduce violent crime through federal grants to hire additional prosecutors and upgrade crime fighting technology.

“As Oneida County District Attorney for 13 years, I worked with community members to fight gang violence and crime to keep our community safe, and I know first hand how important legislation of this kind is to taking and keeping violent crime off the street,” **said Arcuri, who introduced legislation to provide grants to state and local prosecutors to fight gang violence**. “It would have helped my office, and our community, to have more federal resources and support in our struggle against violent crime. Crime is cyclical – simply because we have managed to contain it and reduce it for the present does not mean it goes away forever. My bill creates a new grant program to provide state and local prosecutors the resources they need to end gang violence and violent crime. These grants could be used to hire additional prosecutors or purchase new technology – tools I know will help local counties fight crime and protect our neighborhoods.”

“Congressman Arcuri has demonstrated his ongoing commitment to law enforcement and to protecting the quality of life here in Oneida County,” **said Oneida County District Attorney Scott D. McNamara**. “These new grant monies will serve as an important tool for law enforcement by applying more manpower on the street and bringing additional resources to bear against the tide of gang-related activity that has become a problem in Oneida County and other areas throughout our state. By giving police and prosecutors the means to peruse greater and more innovative approaches to the investigation and prosecution of these cases, our efforts will be more effective both on the streets and in the courtroom.”

The Providing Electronic Resources and Prosecutors Act (H.R. 3568), introduced by Arcuri earlier this month, would amend the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 to create a new competitive federal grant program for state and local prosecutors to fight gang violence and other violent crime. The grants would be used to hire additional prosecutors (assistant district attorneys) or to fund technology, equipment, and training for prosecutors and law enforcement in order to increase accurate identification of gang members and violent offenders, and to maintain databases with such information to facilitate coordination among law enforcement and prosecutors. H.R. 3568 would authorize \$20 million per year for Fiscal Years 2008 to 2012.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) estimates that at least 30,000 gangs, with 800,000 members, impact 2,500 communities across the United States. The FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program recently reported that from 2005 to 2006 robberies increased by 7.2 percent and homicides increased by 1.8 percent. Over the same time, overall violent crime rose 1.9 percent.

Last week, Arcuri also joined Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA) in sponsoring the Gang Prevention, Intervention, and Suppression Act (H.R. 3547), which would increase and improve law enforcement resources committed to the investigation and prosecution of violent gangs. H.R. 3547 includes steps to deter and punish violent gang crime, protect law-abiding citizens and communities from violent criminals, revise and enhance criminal penalties for violent crimes, and to expand and improve gang prevention programs.

In July, Arcuri managed debate on the resolution providing for consideration of the FY 2008 Commerce, Justice and Science Appropriations Act, which includes critical investments in community policing, juvenile courts, and neighborhood revitalization programs that provide grants for local law enforcement projects in the 24th district, including increased funding for the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program, the Weed and Seed program to help localities deter crime and promote neighborhood revitalization, and local drug courts.

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