

Washington, DC -- Today, U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) voted to increase funding for the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program – which would make over \$4 million available in grants to hire an estimated 86 new police officers to protect local communities in the 24th district. In January, Arcuri joined a bipartisan group of over 100 representatives calling for legislation to restore the COPS program which passed the House today.

“As a former District Attorney, I know the profound impact that more police on the street can have to reduce crime in our community,” Arcuri said. “Crime is cyclical – simply because we have managed to contain it and reduce it for the present, does not mean it goes away. In Oneida County over the last few months, we’ve seen the important role police play in keeping our streets safe. We need to do all we can to protect our communities, and the COPS program is an outstanding tool in that fight.”

Arcuri is a cosponsor of the bipartisan COPS Reauthorization Act of 2007 (H.R. 1700) which would authorize a total of \$1.15 billion a year over the next six years for COPS programs nationwide, funding which was completely eliminated under past Republican Congresses. The bill would increase resources to hire additional beat officers and school resource officers, as well as hire additional officers to engage in counter-terrorism duties.

“In Congress, I have made it a priority to fund our nation’s police officers who put their lives on the line – as we know all too well – to keep our communities safe. It is a great honor to support this bill to increase critical funding to get more police officers on the beat, provide squad cars with better technology, and get more officers in our schools to help mentor and protect our children.”

The COPS Reauthorization Bill continues the COPS grants program which has been highly successful in the 24th district:

- Since 1994 the COPS program has enabled police forces across the 24th district to hire an additional 201 police officers and/or sheriff’s deputies. With passage of the COPS Improvement Act, an additional 86 officers could be hired over the next six years.

- Since 1994, \$15,180,133 in COPS grants have been awarded to local law enforcement agencies. With the COPS Improvement Act, an additional \$4,631,227 would be available in grants for the 24th district.
- Since 1994, the COPS program has enabled local law enforcement agencies to hire 26 additional school resource officers to keep our children safe at school. With passage of the COPS Improvement Act, an additional 11 school resource officers could be hired over the course of the next six years.
- Since 1994, the COPS program has allocated \$3,177,392 to the 24th district to purchase technology and training that helps cops get out from behind their desks so they can patrol a beat. With passage of the COPS Improvement Act, an additional \$969,374 will likely be available. These grants would allow police agencies to purchase things like laptop computers for patrol cars, crime mapping software, and interoperable communications equipment.

Today, Arcuri attended the National Police Officers' Memorial Service on the West Lawn of the Capitol. There, President Bush spoke to tens of thousands of police officers, family members, members of Congress, and supportive citizens. Arcuri was seated with the New Hartford Police Department Police Chief Ray Philo.

"In the 1990s the COPS program helped the New Hartford Police Department and the community significantly – allowing us to hire additional police officers and paying for technology for our police department," said Philo. "Technology is a work force multiplier because it allows a police officer to do more than he could do by himself and makes him more efficient. Without the COPS program we wouldn't have been able to keep up with growing demands on the police department as New Hartford grew over the last decade. As a chief, I watch statistics and now the crime rate is going up nationwide. I am glad Congress has moved quickly to reauthorize the COPS program and bring crime back under control."

"The last two years have been hard for the families of police officers in our district," said Arcuri. "Today, I had the opportunity to sit with Chief Philo of the New Hartford Police Department and talk about how important the COPS program has been to his department. I was proud to participate in events here in Washington today to honor the men and women who have sacrificed their lives in the line of duty. I urge everyone to take time this week to thank a member of their local police force."

The COPS Reauthorization Act would also:

- Authorize \$200 million per year to help hire community prosecutors and it authorizes funds for community prosecuting programs nationwide.
- Encourage state and local police agencies to hire former military members for some of the new law enforcement jobs under the bill.
- Enable COPS hiring grants to be used to hire and train officers to perform “intelligence, anti-terror, or homeland security duties.”

In 1994, Congress established the COPS hiring grants program, otherwise known as the 100,000 Cops-on-the-Beat Initiative. Between 1995 and 2005, COPS hiring grants provided \$9 billion to help local law enforcement agencies hire 117,000 additional police officers across the country. The COPS program was created to incentivize law enforcement agencies to hire more officers. In general, the COPS office provides 75% of an officer’s salary for three years.

According to a Government Accountability Office (GAO) study, between 1998 and 2000, COPS grants were responsible for reducing crimes by about 200,000 to 225,000 crimes – one third of which were violent. In 1998, COPS grants were responsible for an 8% decrease in crimes – and a 13% drop in violent crimes.

The COPS program was funded at over \$1 billion a year by the end of the Clinton administration. However, by 2003, the GOP-led Congress had scaled back COPS hiring grants to \$198 million and by 2005, to \$10 million. By 2006, the Congress had completely eliminated the COPS hiring grants program.

Earlier this year, the Police Executive Research Forum, a prominent law enforcement association, released a report which found that violent crimes rose by double digit percentages over the last two years. Among the cities surveyed, since 2005, 71% had an increase in homicides, 80% saw robberies rise and 67% reported an increase in aggravated assaults with guns.

This bill was endorsed by the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the National Sheriffs Association, the Fraternal Order of Police, the National Association of Police Organizations, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and the National League of Cities.

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