

Washington, DC -- Today, U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) voted for the Improving Head Start Act of 2007, H.R.1429, which would improve and reauthorize federal funding for Head Start programs through 2012.

“As the father of two children, I know how important it is to provide children with a solid foundation so they can succeed in school and later on in the workplace,” said Arcuri. “The national Head Start program has helped millions of children start kindergarten on an even playing field, and the bill we passed today would allow the program to continue to serve our communities. I am especially proud that the bill strengthens parents’ involvement and gives teachers access to cutting-edge educational resources.”

Head Start was created in 1965 and provides the most vulnerable preschool-aged children with a pre-kindergarten education, health and nutrition programs, and social development activities.

Head Start programs are locally designed and are administered by over 1,600 public and private nonprofit and for-profit agencies. In fiscal year 2005, Head Start funded enrollment for 906,993 children nation wide. In New York, there were 49,127 children in roughly 200 Head Start programs in 2005.

### H.R. 1429 would:

Authorize an additional \$450 million for 2008 to a maximum of \$7.3 billion, which would allow as many as 10,000 more children to access Head Start.

Improve Head Start’s workforce quality by increasing funding for teacher and staff salaries and professional development, strengthening training and technical assistance, and hiring additional qualified staff.

Update the Head Start program by using the latest science on early childhood brain development to strengthen the focus on school readiness.

Develop improved cooperation between Head Start and state and local child care programs to increase full-day and full-year services. Improve coordination with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and state family services and help programs to align Head Start and state early learning standards.

Allow programs to convert portions of their grant for use for Early Head Start, which serves children under three years old.

Increase accountability by devising a new system of application review that assesses program quality and makes low-quality centers reapply - allowing the Secretary of Health and Human Services to more quickly strip bad programs of funding.

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