

Washington, DC -- U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) announced today that he is a cosponsor of two pieces of legislation to strengthen Internet safety and protect children from online predators.

“As District Attorney, I prosecuted crimes where the Internet was manipulated to mislead and even harm children and put them in danger,” Arcuri said. “The Internet is a tool for economic development and expanded communication, but unfortunately, it also gives criminals an opportunity to prey upon our children, our seniors, and even our very own identities.”

Arcuri joined a bipartisan coalition of Representatives as a cosponsor of the Safeguarding America’s Families by Enhancing and Reorganizing New and Efficient Technologies Act (The SAFER NET Act), H.R. 1008, which would organize and streamline a national defense against Internet crime. He also cosponsored the Keeping the Internet Devoid of Sexual Predators (the KIDS Act of 2007), H.R. 719, which would impose harsh penalties for criminals who lie about their age online to harm young children.

The SAFER NET Act would put into place safeguards against the worst abuses of the Internet. It would create a new Office of Internet Safety and Public Awareness to streamline and efficiently collect information from federal, state, local and non-profit entities, along with commercial web sites, financial institutions and tech companies – providing a clearinghouse of readily available information for Americans to protect themselves and their families from cyber crime. The KIDS Act would make sex offenders register their email and screen names and makes it illegal for anyone older than 18 years old to lie about their age to entrap young children. The KIDS Act has teeth, with penalties of up to 20 years in prison.

“These two bills are a national solution to what has unfortunately become a national problem. As popularity of the Internet has grown exponentially over the last several years, we must keep pace with safeguards to protect our children from criminals. This legislation is a critical step, and we must continue to keep a vigilant watch for new strategies employed by predators to exploit our children,” Arcuri said.

Eighty-seven percent of teens use the Internet on a regular basis, and according to the Justice Department, one in five children between the ages of 10 and 17 received a sexual solicitation or approach online in the last year. Cyber criminals use spyware, phishing schemes and online ID

theft to ruin more lives each year.

The KIDS Act would:

- Require sex offenders to register online identifiers such as e-mail and instant message addresses with the National Sex Offender Registry which the Department of Justice would make available to social networking;
- If the offender fails to register their online identifiers they will be fined or imprisoned for not more than ten years;
- Any person 18 years or older who knowingly misrepresents their age with the intent to use the Internet to engage in criminal sexual content involving a minor can get a prison term of up to 20 years.

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