

Washington, DC -- U.S. Rep. Michael Arcuri (D-Utica) voted to lower subsidized student loan rates today, helping millions of students across the country gain access to higher education. The U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 5, the "College Student Relief Act."

"Lowering student loan rates is essentially a tax cut for the middle class," Arcuri said. "Middle class families, those most likely to use subsidized student loans, will be able to give their children access to higher education and lower their own debt. Education is the key to a bustling economy. This bill would provide much-needed financial relief for hard-working families and students throughout Upstate New York."

"In my district alone, there are 12,681 borrowers, attending the eight outstanding four-year colleges and universities and four two-year institutions," said Arcuri. "H.R. 5 will save those students, on average, \$4,570 over the life of their loan. For my constituents, this legislation not only helps students, but it benefits all of those employed in the education industry in Upstate New York."

"I am especially proud to be a co-sponsor of this bill because it meets pay-as-you-go budget requirements," Arcuri said. "We will not cut loan rates for our children only to saddle them with massive deficits down the road."

H.R. 5 is designed to make college more affordable and accessible by cutting the interest rate on subsidized student loans for undergraduates in half over the next five years – cutting the interest rate from the current 6.8 percent to 3.4 percent. This proposal would cut the cost of college for an approximately 5.5 million undergraduate students and their families. .

During debate on H.R. 5 today, Arcuri delivered a speech on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives outlining his strong support for helping students and families pay for college. He also addressed the economic importance of the eight four-year institutions and four two-year colleges in the 24th district. A copy of Arcuri's floor speech is attached below.

THE HONORABLE MICHAEL A. ARCURI (NY-24)

U.S. House of Representatives

January 17, 2007

Floor Statement: The College Student Loan Relief Act of 2007 (H.R. 5)

Mr. Speaker: The legislation before us is part of a promise made to the American people. A promise to make college more affordable for our nation's future leaders and middle-class families by cutting the interest rate on subsidized student loans in half over the next five years.

It is no secret that rising tuition fees are making it more difficult for students to attend college. In response, we are taking action today to alleviate the heavy financial burden many students face after graduation when the loan collector comes knocking on their doors.

In New York, there are 243,696 subsidized loan borrowers attending 4-year institutions, who will accumulate over \$14,000 in loan debt. And in my district alone, there are 12,681 borrowers, attending the eight outstanding four-year colleges and universities. H.R. 5 will save those students, on average, \$4,570 over the life of their loan. I find it hard to believe that any member of this body would argue that this type of relief is not well-directed and long overdue.

And through this legislation we are providing relief where it is needed most – for our middle class families, who continually face a financial crunch each month; while at the same time creating incentives to attend college for those who otherwise might not. And we are doing it in a fiscally responsible way by meeting paygo requirements.

Further, I would be remiss if I did not highlight the positive impact the eight four-year institutions and four two-year colleges have on my district and the Upstate New York economy. Those institutions employ thousands of hardworking men and women, who own homes, shop, raise families and contribute to the local economy. It only makes sense to me that we would want to keep student loan interest rates low, so that our colleges and universities can continue to serve as economic engines for our local economies and our nation as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, the message from the American people is clear. The time to act is now. I urge my colleagues to support this measure and provide much-needed financial relief for the hardworking families and students who need it most.

Thank you. I yield back the balance of my time.

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