

Rothman Addresses the Bergen County School Boards Association

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Rothman Highlights New Education Initiatives

Pictured: Congressman Rothman with Beth Politi, President of the Bergen County School Boards Association, at The Landmark in East Rutherford.

(East Rutherford, NJ)—On Wednesday, November 28, 2007, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-Fair Lawn) addressed the Bergen County School Boards Association during its annual dinner. Dozens of local school board members were gathered to learn about education policy initiatives at the federal, state and county levels. In his remarks, Rothman thanked those in attendance for their efforts on behalf of students in Bergen County and highlighted new education legislation that the 110th Congress has passed.

“The New Direction Congress has reaffirmed America’s commitment to providing our children with the quality public education that they deserve. There’s more work to be done, but we’re off to a great start,” said Rothman. “As a member of the Science and Technology Committee, I helped develop the AMERICA Competes Act. This new law will put thousands of new science, technology, engineering, and math teachers in our schools each year. Congress also passed the College Cost Reduction Act, the single largest increase in college aid since the 1944 GI Bill.”

The College Cost Reduction Act, which became law in September, makes college more affordable by cutting the interest rates on federal student loans by half over the next four years and increasing the maximum Pell Grant scholarship that students can receive. All told, the College Cost Reduction Act will help over 5.3 million students in New Jersey and provide a total increase of over \$549 million dollars in loan and Pell Grant aid over five years for New Jersey students and families. In fact, the average New Jersey student with a four-year loan will save \$4,600. The maximum Pell Grant scholarship will increase by \$1,090 over the next five years, with an immediate increase of \$490 next year.

Rothman also discussed how local school districts can receive federal funding for school safety enhancements through the Secure Our Schools program. Working with the late Congressman Henry Hyde (R-IL), Rothman created the Secure Our Schools program in 2000. Secure Our Schools is a federal matching grant program to help local governments afford

security equipment and training in their schools. To date, 86 Secure Our Schools grants have been awarded to school districts in New Jersey. Those grants were worth over \$6.7 million and helped improve the security of 180 schools.

The Bergen County School Boards Association is comprised of seventy-eight Bergen County school districts and serves as a forum for board members to share ideas and exchange information so that they can better serve the needs of their districts.

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