



AMERICAN COUNCIL OF ENGINEERING COMPANIES

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**NEWS RELEASE**

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## **Missouri Congressman Cleaver Introduces Landmark Education Bill For Engineering Students** *Milestone Legislation Developed In Conjunction with ACEC*

Responding to the growing shortage of engineers, Congressman Emanuel Cleaver (D-MO) has introduced the Strategic Technology/Engineering Program (STEP) Act of 2007—a "GI Bill style" legislation to provide incentives for young people entering the engineering profession.

The bill (H.R. 3634) was developed by the Congressman in consultation with the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC), and creates new scholarships and loan forgiveness for engineering students who are working toward their P.E. license.

"Our nation needs to make much more efficient use of the available resources by recruiting students from our best and brightest high school graduates and encourage them to go on to college to become our next generation of engineers," Cleaver said. "This legislation will help support engineering students as they complete an education for an industry that will always be in demand. This is an investment that will benefit our country for decades."

The number of U.S. engineering graduates has steadily declined in the last two decades, according to the National Science Foundation. In addition, over one-quarter of the science and engineering workforce is older than 50 and expected to retire over the next 15 years.

"A growing economy demands a growing workforce of engineers to sustain it," said ACEC President David A. Raymond. "Unfortunately, we're facing a serious shortage of engineering talent right now. This is a national problem, demanding a national solution, which is why Congressman Cleaver's legislation is so important. By providing straightforward incentives to encourage more young people to pursue engineering careers, it makes the kind of investment we need to ensure that we have the ability to compete in the global marketplace in the coming decades."

*The American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) is the business association of America's engineering industry, representing approximately 5,700 independent engineering companies throughout the United States engaged in the development of America's transportation, environmental, industrial, and other infrastructure. Founded in 1910 and headquartered in Washington, D.C., ACEC is a national federation of 51 state and regional organizations.*