

## **The Honorable Louise M. Slaughter Biography**

One of the most powerful women in the U.S. House of Representatives, Congresswoman Louise McIntosh Slaughter has achieved a significant level of leadership as the Chairwoman of the influential House Committee on Rules, making her the first woman in history to hold this position. A member of the House Democratic Leadership, she serves on the prestigious Democratic Steering & Policy Committee. She is the Democratic Chair of two very prominent congressional caucuses: the Congressional Arts Caucus and the Bipartisan Congressional Pro-Choice Caucus.

In November 2008, Rep. Slaughter was elected to her twelfth term in Congress as U.S. Representative for the 28th Congressional District of New York State. Her diverse district includes the cities of Rochester, Buffalo and Niagara Falls. Her constituents know her to be a strong proponent of progressive causes and a fighter for the employment concerns and the economic development of Western New York. She has earned a reputation for her dedication to constituent service.

A microbiologist with a master's degree in public health, Rep. Slaughter is intensely involved in health issues. She is the leading expert in Congress on genetics issues and her cutting-edge legislation to protect Americans from discrimination by health insurance providers and employers based on genetic makeup is now law. Rep. Slaughter's Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA) passed the House and the Senate and was signed into law by President Bush in May 2008. The bill has been called "the first civil rights legislation for the 21<sup>st</sup> century." In 1997, Rep. Slaughter was awarded the American Public Health Association Distinguished Public Health Legislator Award for her work on health and genetics issues.

A tireless promoter of economic development, Rep. Slaughter is deeply concerned about the job losses suffered in Western New York. In Congress, she has introduced legislation to study the effects of international trade agreements like NAFTA on American jobs. To help local employers, Rep. Slaughter regularly holds conferences to help businesses access capital and federal contracting opportunities. In March 2004, she and former Rep. Jack Quinn organized a major event with local manufacturers to discuss ways the federal government can support them.

Rep. Slaughter's fight to secure funding for local projects was recognized by the Rochester Institute of Technology, when it named its Center for Integrated Manufacturing Studies facility, "The Louise M. Slaughter Building." Rep. Slaughter authored the Niagara Falls Heritage Act which passed in Congress by overwhelming majorities and was signed into law by President Bush. This law will help heighten national appreciation for the region, preserve its natural and historic resources, and expand the local economy. Rep. Slaughter has secured over \$25 million for the development of the Rochester Harbor, in addition to millions of dollars for other economic development projects. In Buffalo and Niagara, she has brought in millions of dollars for community development projects at the Burchfield-Penney Art Center, Hauptman-Woodward Institute, CUBRC, Inc., the Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center, the Niagara Falls International Airport, Olcott Harbor, and the Village of Lyndonville in Orleans County, to name just a few.

When serving as a senior member of the Select Committee on Homeland Security, Rep. Slaughter fought to support first responders in Western New York and improve systems to deliver federal funding to local entities. She organized a major forum for local first responders and hosted a subcommittee hearing in

Niagara Falls in 2003, where Members of Congress came to discuss border security. Rep. Slaughter has also authored legislation to put in place a Northern Border Coordinator at the Department of Homeland Security in order to coordinate federal, state and local law enforcement and first responders. In addition, she worked on the SECURE Borders legislative proposal, which would provide \$1 billion for security improvements such as enhancing border lines, doubling the number of Custom and Border Patrol agents.

A leading advocate for women's rights, Rep. Slaughter served as co-chair of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues during the 108th Congress, and continues to serve as co-chair of the Bipartisan Congressional Pro-Choice Caucus. She co-authored the historic Violence Against Women Act in 1994 and wrote legislation to make permanent the Department of Justice's Violence Against Women Office. She is leading the fight against sexual assault in the military, and organized a hearing on the issue in March 2004 that garnered national attention. Rep. Slaughter authored an amendment to the Department of Defense Authorization bill in FY05 to require the Pentagon to put in place comprehensive policies and procedures to deal with sexual assault in the military. In November 2004, she introduced landmark legislation to make further changes to end sexual assault, domestic violence and stalking in the military. She has continued to reintroduce this bill each Congress.

Rep. Slaughter has won historic increases in funding for women's health. As a member of the House Budget Committee in the early 1990s, she secured the first \$500 million earmarked by Congress for breast cancer research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). She fought for legislation guaranteeing that women and minorities are included in all federal health trials and establishing an Office of Research on Women's Health (ORWH) at NIH and was later honored with its "Visionary for Women's Health Research" award, on the ORWH's tenth anniversary. She has also introduced a bill to direct NIH to fund up to six centers nationwide to focus on women's health and the environment, as well as a bill to increase research on the impact of hormone disruptors on women's health.

As longtime co-chair of the Congressional Arts Caucus, Rep. Slaughter leads the annual fight to increase budgets for the arts and humanities. In 2007, she successfully led the fight to increase funding for the National Endowments for the Arts from \$124 million in FY07 to \$144.7 million in FY08, a \$20 million increase. Her efforts to generate congressional support for the arts have been recognized by a variety of arts organizations over the years. She has received awards for her commitment to the arts by Alliance of New York State Arts Organizations, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, Americans for the Arts, the American Symphony Orchestra, and the Eastman School of Music at the University of Rochester, among others.

During her tenure in Congress, Rep. Slaughter has won numerous awards for her leadership and dedication to public service. She was the first Member of Congress to receive the Sidney R. Yates National Arts Advocacy Award, presented by the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies. In 2003 she was awarded the Humane Legislator of the Year by the American Humane Association. In January 1999, she was named "Lay Educator of the Year" by the Rochester Chapter of Phi Delta Kappa International, the professional fraternity for men and women in education. In 2004, Women in Film and Vision honored her with its Woman of Vision award for her work on women's and arts issues.

Elected in 1986, Rep. Slaughter holds a Bachelor of Science degree (1951) in Microbiology and a Master of Science degree (1953) in Public Health from the University of Kentucky. Prior to entering Congress, she served in the New York State Assembly (1982-86) and the Monroe County (N.Y.) Legislature (1976-79); and as regional coordinator to then-Secretary of State Mario Cuomo (1976-78) and to then-Lt. Gov. Mario Cuomo (1979-82).

A native of Harlan County, Kentucky, Congresswoman Slaughter has lived most of her life in Rochester's suburb of Fairport. She is married to Robert Slaughter and has three daughters and seven grandchildren.