In this time of economic hardship, scams are, unfortunately, taking hold attempting to make a quick buck off of hard-working Americans. Please take caution if you receive a solicitation claiming to distribute funds from the stimulus package. These scams ask you to send a small shipping and offer to accept all major credit and debit cards.

The Federal Trade Commission warns :

Some scam artists ask you to send a small processing fee, supposedly to get a much larger check in return. That's money you'll never see again. Others skip the fee, and instead, ask for your bank account number so they can "deposit" your check. Then, they use the information to clean out your account or open new ones using your identifying information.

Some stimulus scams encourage you to click on links, open attached forms, or call phony toll-free numbers. But simply clicking the link or opening the document can install harmful software, like spyware, on your computer. The result could be your personal information ending up in the hands of an identity thief.

Signs that it may be a scam:

- Any federal reimbursement from the stimulus package would be identified as being part of the "American Recovery and Reinvestment Act"
- Representatives from the federal government will never ask you for you credit or debit card number
- You will never be charged shipping and handling fees
- If a stimulus plan does involve a check to you, you won't need to fill out a separate form in an email or give out your bank account or Social Security numbers

If you do spot a scam:

- File a complaint at www.ftc.gov/complaint
- Forward any scam-ridden email to phising@irs.gov then delete it

For more information:

For more information from the Federal Trade Commission visit: http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/alerts/alt125.shtm

If you have any questions about a piece of mail, an email or phone call that claims to be from the federal government, please call my office

In Rochester: 585-232-4850
In Buffalo: 716-853-5813
In Niagara Falls: 716-282-1274

Congresswoman Slaughter released the following statement today:

Slaughter Warns Constituents About Stimulus Scams

Rochester, NY- Congresswoman Louise M. Slaughter today warned Western New Yorkers about scams meant to trick constituents into passing along credit and debit card information in exchange for funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

“It is outrageous to me that in this time of economic hardship, people are using the stimulus package as an excuse to make a quick buck off of hard-working Americans,” Slaughter said. “Today I’ve put information on my website to help identity these scams and implore Western New Yorkers to report any scams that they find.”

Slaughter’s announcement comes amid reports that some people have fallen prey to believing they can qualify for government funds if they give their social security number of other information out as part of the application process.

###