Rep. Louise Slaughter, Chairwoman of the House Committee on Rules, today said that the health care bill unveiled in the House last week contains necessary provisions that will end discrimination by health care companies against women.

“In the twenty four years I have been fighting for gender equality, women are still an underestimated and underappreciated demographic in America but now I am proud to say, health care inequity for women will end upon the signing of this bill,” said Slaughter. “Women are set to gain the most from this health care bill. I’m particularly proud of my provision in the bill that makes it illegal for a woman to be denied coverage because she was a victim of domestic violence.”

Of the many benefits for women:

- The Affordable Health Care for America Act will end the ‘gender rating’ which has allowed insurance companies to charge women more for the same coverage in men, up to 48 percent more in some states.
- It bans discrimination against women with so-called pre-existing conditions which have been defined to include c-sections, pregnancy and domestic violence.
- It creates an exchange that will allow more coverage options if you’re not covered by employer-based insurance, a problem affecting more women than men.

Nationwide, less than half of women can obtain insurance from their workplace under current regulations because so many work for small businesses or part-time. Under the Affordable Health Care for America Act, men and women can be covered through a health care exchange which includes a public option, if they don’t have access to employer-based insurance. The exchange will guarantee choices of quality, affordable insurance at the rates comparable to large groups, and coverage will continue even if you lose your job, switch jobs, move or get sick.

According to a study from the Kaiser Family Foundation, more than 50 percent of women nationwide have delayed receiving needed medical care due to cost compared to 39 percent of men.

Slaughter has been a tireless advocate for women over the course of her career in the House of Representatives. She is a co-chair of the Congressional Pro-Choice caucus, and a major author of the Violence Against Women Act. She also has introduced legislation to combat sexual assault in the military. As Chairwoman of the Rules Committee, she plays a vital role in the national health care debate.