

Congresswoman Louise M. Slaughter, Chairwoman of the House Committee on Rules, met with Wendell Potter, former CIGNA Vice President, to discuss health care reform and the efforts by insurance companies to undercut proposed legislation. The meeting came about after Slaughter said she wanted to share Potter's insight on the industry with other members of the Democratic caucus.

Potter, a twenty year veteran of the insurance industry, said the industry is waging a "charm offensive" to appear open to reform, but is actually intent on blocking any serious new legislation. Potter said that insurance companies save money by hiking up premiums for small businesses or cutting people's coverage off altogether if they make minor mistakes or omissions in their application paperwork.

"The industry has a vested interest in the status quo and protecting its profit margin," said Slaughter. "This is just what they did in 1993 the last time we tried to reform health care. The public must be aware that the industry is not going to willingly change the way it does things and I hope the public understands what's at stake. As Wendell Potter said, these insurance companies do what's good for Wall Street, not main street."

"What we have today is a Wall Street-run system that has proven itself an untrustworthy partner to its customers, to the doctors and hospitals who deliver care, and to the state and federal governments that attempt to regulate it. The industry's charm offensive—which is the most visible part of duplicitous and well-financed PR and lobbying campaigns—may well shape reform in a way that benefits Wall Street far more than average Americans," Potter said.

This meeting marked the first time that Potter has spoken with members of the House of Representatives about health care reform and Slaughter planned to share details of the meeting with leadership and the rest of the Democratic caucus.