



Representative Louise M. Slaughter
Chairwoman, House Committee on Rules
Representing New York's 28th District

P R E S S R E L E A S E

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, May 30, 2008

Rep. Slaughter Delivers Remarks In Support of Employee Free Choice Act

Attends Event For Rochester Plaza Hotel Employees Seeking to Unionize

Rochester, NY – Congresswoman Louise M. Slaughter (D-Fairport), Chairwoman of the House Committee on Rules, today delivered remarks in support of H.R. 800, the Employee

Free Choice Act, at an informational event for Rochester Plaza Hotel employees seeking to organize as part of UNITE HERE (Union of Needletrades, Industrial, and Textile Employees - Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union).

Throughout her career in public service, Rep. Slaughter has distinguished herself as a leader in the fight to protect workers' rights to organize and collectively bargain. She is a cosponsor and strong advocate of the Employee Free Choice Act, critical federal legislation that would allow workers to more easily join a union to bargain for better wages, benefits, and working conditions without fear of being harassed, intimidated, reassigned, or fired.

“On average, union workers make thirty percent more than non-union workers and are far more likely to have access to healthcare, retirement plans, and paid leave,” said Rep. Slaughter.

“We in Western New York are all too aware of the shortcomings of current labor laws in providing for a free and fair choice to unionize.”

Today’s event was hosted by the Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice group (CLUE), in conjunction with UNITE HERE, to provide information to Rochester Plaza Hotel employees seeking to unionize as part of UNITE HERE. If they succeed, the Rochester Plaza Hotel would be the first unionized hotel in the city. The employees have been trying to organize since 2006.

“During periods of economic downturn, it is always working Americans who are hit the hardest,” said Rep. Slaughter. **“With astronomical gas prices, the housing market in crisis, and American companies shipping good paying jobs overseas, the right to unionize provides one of the last great protections to the working Americans who keep our country running.”**

BACKGROUND

The Employee Free Choice Act (H.R. 800) was introduced in the House of Representatives on February 5, 2007, shortly after the new Democratic Congress took control. Congresswoman Slaughter is an original cosponsor of this legislation that has been deemed

the number one Congressional priority for organized labor.

H.R. 800 passed in the House on March 1, 2007 by a bipartisan vote of 241-185. Unfortunately, in June 2007, the Senate was unable to pass a cloture motion to end debate on the bill.

UNITE (formerly the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees) and HERE (Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union) merged on July 8, 2004 forming UNITE HERE. The union represents more than 450,000 active members and more than 400,000 retirees throughout North America.

###