

Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (NY-28) announced that Hickey Freeman, maker of fine wool suits, will expand its Rochester operation by adding jobs, production hours and a new line to their Avenue D facility.

Flanked by Hickey Freeman executives and workers, she announced 20 new good-paying jobs would be coming to Rochester in the coming weeks, boosting local employment to over 500. In addition production hours for their sewing lines are being extended to meet current demand and if demand continues to grow, the company anticipates it could add another 50 jobs within the coming year.

Slaughter also joined Hickey Freeman's parent company CEO Doug Williams in announcing the Rochester Facility will produce a new line, Hickey Freeman Sterling, which will begin production in June and hit stores next spring. In addition the company is moving some production of its other brand's garments to the Rochester facility and plans to open a factory outlet store in Syracuse.

"A year ago I stood with you to make sure Hickey Freeman wouldn't close their doors for good, and now you're thriving. Today I am pleased to announce that as a result of the turnaround, new work is coming to this factory, new investments are being made into the Hickey Freeman brand, and most importantly 20 new jobs are coming to Rochester over the coming weeks," said Slaughter.

"It is clear that Hickey Freeman's new parent company, HMX Group, recognizes that among their portfolio of brands, Hickey Freeman is a jewel. And they understand that Hickey Freeman's record of profitability and reputation for quality is a direct result of the tremendously skilled and hardworking Rochester employees who create its apparel."

Slaughter was joined by executives of Hickey Freeman's parent company HMX Group as well as labor leaders from Workers United and dozens of workers from the plant.

Doug Williams, CEO of HMX Group said, "We at the HMX Group on behalf of our 500 Hickey Freeman employees in Rochester, NY as well as the other 900 employees in New York City, Easton, PA and Chicago, IL, want to thank Congresswoman Slaughter for her unbelievable energy and support of our company. Whether when the Hartmarx was in the depths of its bankruptcy or through the leveling of the playing field against foreign competition,

Congresswoman Slaughter went to bat to support our company and all these manufacturing jobs here in the United States. Without her support, none of the factories would be operating today and most likely these amazing American treasures, Hickey Freeman and Hart Schaffner Marx, would not exist.”

Two weeks ago, Slaughter fought for a provision in The American Jobs and Closing Tax Loopholes Act of 2010 that would ensure that thousands of textile and apparel workers can compete on a level playing field directly benefiting Hickey Freeman. The provision was hailed by workers.

“Congresswoman Slaughter is once again coming through to protect the jobs of the working men and women at Hickey Freeman. We thank her for ensuring that the wool tariff relief program is sufficiently funded so that U.S. manufacturers like Hickey Freeman can compete on an even playing field and grow jobs in Rochester” said Gary Bonadonna Jr. of Workers United.

Hickey Freeman’s Rochester plant employs 486 workers, about 350 of whom are represented by Workers United. The new jobs announced today will increase local employment to over 500. HMX is consolidating its good-paying financial back office positions and are moving these 20 jobs that were formerly based in Chicago and Pennsylvania to Rochester. The company expects to fill these positions with locally hired workers.

The Rochester facility recently began production of the Hart Schaffner Marx trouser and Navy Blazers.

Hickey Freeman also announced that they will open a new factory outlet store in Syracuse and will unveil a new marketing campaign aimed at growing their brand.

Over the past year, Slaughter worked tirelessly with Hickey Freeman’s former parent company Hartmarx, along with their creditors and the Chairman of the House Financial Services Committee Barney Frank to avoid liquidation of the company. Last June, HMX Group purchased Hickey Freeman allowing operations to remain in Rochester.