

Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (NY-28) announced that the paperwork dispute keeping players and coach of the Iroquois Confederacy lacrosse team from traveling to England had been resolved. As a result, the team was expected to depart this afternoon to compete in the 30-nation international tournament, which is played in Manchester, England.

“I am relieved that this bureaucratic technicality has been papered over and these young men can go and do what they have trained to do: play lacrosse and compete on the international scene,” Slaughter said. “Lacrosse is an integral part of the Native American culture and this team deserves the opportunity to travel and play on their terms. I am extremely grateful to Secretary of State Clinton, who responded to this glitch promptly and efficiently. Going forward, we must find a way to balance homeland security concerns with some common sense and a border policy that does not create unintended consequences.”

This morning, Slaughter received a call from Secretary Clinton where they discussed the case and agreed that the issue ought to be resolved. Slaughter provided the State Department with a list of all the players and their passport numbers.

The travel issue came to a head last week after the British government announced that it would not honor the passports from the lacrosse players since they were issued by the Iroquois Confederacy. They insisted that in order to qualify for a visa, the players needed to obtain a letter signed by the State Department indicating that they intended to return to the United States after the tournament.

The players are Native Americans and represent the six Indian nations that include upstate New York and Canada. This same team has traveled internationally for more than 20 years without issue – this is the first time they encountered resistance.