

WASHINGTON – Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (NY-28) today proudly supported legislation that gives a one-time \$250 payment to social security recipients. Today the House voted on the Seniors Protection Act (H.R. 5987) which makes the payment in lieu of a cost of living adjustment in 2011 for social security recipients.

The House failed to pass the measure which Slaughter co-sponsored.

**“Americans all over this country are struggling to make ends meet right now, and that includes our seniors,” said Slaughter. “I stand shoulder to shoulder with them, and I whole heartedly support this move because it provides a measure of economic security for Western New York’s seniors. I’m deeply disappointed that this measure did not pass in the House but I want seniors to know that I stand with you.”**

Nationally, 54 million seniors would have received the \$250 payment including more than 77,000 seniors in the 28<sup>th</sup> district. In total approximately 107,000 residents of the 28<sup>th</sup> district would receive \$250 including seniors, veterans, railroad retirees and people with disabilities.

2011 will be the first time that social security recipients will not see a cost of living adjustment (COLA) for two years in a row.

The COLA is calculated using the Consumer Price Index (CPI) which is calculated by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and measures the changes through time in the price level of consumer goods and services purchased by households.

But researchers at Occidental College in California found that the CPI is not telling the whole story. It is the rising cost of health care over the past several years, which spurred Congress to pass health care reform, that has eroded the purchasing power of seniors. According to [their study cited by U.S. News and World Report](#), “out of every five dollars in [Social Security] benefits is effectively gone for men; one of every four dollars for women.”

**“When the dollar you have doesn’t reach as far as it used to, you need help,” said Slaughter. “That’s what I’ve been hearing from my constituents and that’s why this \$250 check is so important.”**

Over the past decade, cost of living adjustments have averaged 3 percent per year.

2011 will be the second consecutive year that Social Security retirees and other beneficiaries will not receive an automatic increase in their monthly Social Security, SSI, VA Pension and Compensation, and Railroad Retirement benefits.

The Seniors Protection Act enjoys broad support from veterans and seniors organizations, including AARP, Alliance for Retired Americans, National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, the Disabled American Veterans, and Military Officers Association of America. Their comments are included below.

### **Broad based Support for the Seniors Protection Act**

**AARP**, Nancy Leamond, Executive Vice President: “...we urge you to provide this relief in a fiscally responsible manner to millions of Americans who are struggling to make ends meet in this difficult economic environment. Older Americans are facing unique financial difficulties, have been acutely impacted by the downturn in the U.S. economy, and are in particular need of economic relief” [12/7/10]

**Alliance for Retired Americans**, President, Barbara J. Easterling, Executive Director, Edward F. Coyle: “For retirees faced with declining home and retirement account values and, the \$250 payment is immediately needed. Your support for this payment will demonstrate a commitment to older Americans.”

[12/6/10]

**National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare**, Barbara B. Kennelly, President and CEO : “The one-time \$250 payment will assist millions of older Americans who are still reeling from the economic collapse, providing resources likely to be injected directly into the economy.” [12/6/10]

**Strengthen Social Security Campaign**, which is comprised of 250 organizations representing more than 50 million members from many of the nation’s leading aging, labor, disability, women’s, children, consumer, civil rights and equality organizations: “It is both fair and appropriate to now provide a... payment to help stimulate our nation’s economy and at the same time assist seniors, people with disabilities, children and other Social Security beneficiaries who did not receive a cost of living adjustment 2010 and will not get one again in 2011.” [12/7/10]

**Disabled American Veterans**, National Commander Wallace E. Tyson: “Once again, our nation’s economic woes have affected every disabled veteran and surviving spouse receiving compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs. It is especially troubling for those who already bear the burden of disability and loss.” In a grassroots alert to its members and others, the DAV urged them to encourage their lawmakers to support this legislation vital to so many service-connected disabled veterans and their families. The \$250 would be helpful to many veterans and their families who are struggling with the second consecutive year of no cost-of-living allowance in their veteran and dependent benefits.

**Wider Opportunities for Women**, Joan Kuriansky, Executive Director: “Supporting the \$250 one-time payment to Social Security beneficiaries is a small, yet critical, step forward in building economic security for elders and families.” [12/8/10]

Other groups supporting the Social Security \$250 payment include Military Officers Association of America, National Association of Retired and Veteran Railways Employees, National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association and National Treasury Employees Union. [ [Washing](#)  
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