

April 7, 2005 - Slaughter to Bush: Effective Security Checks, Promotion of NEXUS Program the Answer

Slaughter to Bush: Effective Security Checks, Promotion of NEXUS Program the Answer for Northern Border Security

Requiring All Citizens to Carry Passports Means Damaging Border Economies

Washington, DC - In response to a recent announcement that passports will be required for all individuals who wish to cross the US/ Canadian border, Rep. Slaughter has the following response for President Bush:

"I am gravely concerned that requiring American and Canadian citizens to present passports at the border will exacerbate traffic problems and more importantly, negatively impact the regional economies of border communities from coast to coast, especially where trade and tourism are concerned. Had the Administration consulted border region Members of Congress before making this drastic announcement, we would have had the opportunity to demonstrate that there is a better way.

The NEXUS program, which provides the most comprehensive security check of trusted travelers available, affords us the opportunity to both increase border security and expedite border crossings for regular travelers. Efforts should be made to promote the use of NEXUS by regular travelers in conjunction with efficient and thorough security interviews at the border for occasional travelers in lieu of requiring all citizens to present passports.

Instituting a border policy that includes increased promotion of the NEXUS program would enable the United States and Canada to both enjoy an unprecedented level of border security without burdening occasional travelers with onerous impediments and without damaging our vital regional border economies.

Tightening security along our vast northern border is one of the most important steps that we have taken to defend our homeland since September 11, 2001. However, it is imperative that we not allow security procedures to impede trade and tourism with our Canadian neighbors. We in Western New York are very proud of our open northern border. Canada is our largest trading partner and one of our greatest allies. If we allow security to strangle international trade with our neighbor to the north, we risk creating the kind of economic devastation for which the 9/11 terrorists aimed."