

May 16, 2005 - Supreme Court Decision a Victory for Slaughter and Consumers

Supreme Court Decision a Victory for Slaughter and Consumers

Rep. Slaughter Calls on New York State Assembly to Stand with Consumers

Washington, DC - The U.S. Supreme Court ruled this morning that states may not ban, or severely limit, the direct shipment of out-of-state wine, while simultaneously authorizing direct shipment by in-state producers. The Court stated that laws banning direct shipment of wine from out of state are discriminatory and unfair where in-state producers are allowed to ship wines directly to consumers.

This decision by the high court could essentially end the existing ban on the direct shipment of wine to consumers from our of state, assuming the New York State Legislature does not act to prohibit all direct to consumer shipments of wine in response.

Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY) has been the leading voice in Congress to end bans on direct shipment of wine to consumers in other states and is pleased by the Court's decision. She also calls on New York state elected officials to accept the Supreme Court's decision.

"This is a major victory for New York wineries and for the rights of all consumers. The decision will have a large impact on wineries all over America, but especially here in New York, where we produce over 100 million bottles of wine every year," said Slaughter.

She added, "I applaud Governor Pataki and the New York State Senate for their support in this important issue and call

upon the State Assembly to join us in ensuring that the direct shipment of wine remains legal in our state. The only real decision for the State Assembly here is to decide if they are going to protect the rights of consumers, or choose to protect the profits of special interests. It shouldn't be a tough choice," remarked Slaughter.

Rep. Slaughter has led efforts in Congress to lobby the Governor of New York and the New York State Legislature to overturn the state law banning out of state direct shipment and eventually signed onto the Granholm v. Herald amicus curiae brief, which was filed on September 23, 2004 in the United State Supreme Court.

It was this brief which ultimately led the Supreme Court to review and eventually overturn state bans on direct to consumer out of state wine shipments.

Louise Slaughter was grateful to be joined in her efforts by Senators Hillary Clinton and Chuck Schumer as well as other prominent elected leaders in her cause.

In a 2003 letter to Governor Pataki, Senator Hillary Clinton wrote that "I join Congresswoman Louise Slaughter and a number of my New York House colleagues in writing in support of the approximately 170 wineries across the country."

In 2004 Slaughter received an award from the Winegrape Growers of American and Wine America for her leadership and hard work to end the ban on direct shipment in the state of New York.