

Sept 22 2005 - Slaughter Hosts Meeting with Homeland Security, State Dept. on NEXUS Program

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Northern Border Caucus Members Continue to Voice Opposition to Passport Plan

Washington, DC - Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-Fairport), Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee, yesterday led members of the Northern Border Caucus in a meeting with officials from the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of State. The Caucus again expressed its opposition to the Departments' Western Hemisphere Traveler Initiative, which would likely force individuals seeking to cross the U.S.-Canadian border to have their passports inspected before doing so.

"The Members of the Northern Border Caucus have always stood for economic prosperity and greater border security," Rep. Slaughter said. "DHS and the State Department are forging ahead with their passport plan, without considering the disastrous economic consequences it will have," she added. "We need a common-sense solution which will focus security where it needs to be focused, without needlessly convincing travelers that crossing the border just isn't worth the trouble."

Rep. Slaughter was the first Member of Congress to object to the Traveler Initiative, citing the significant economic consequences it would have for citizens in northern border communities in both the United States and Canada. The Initiative's passport requirement would result in long delays, and would significantly reduce cross-border traffic, hurting local businesses and tourism in the process.

Rep. Slaughter and the members of the Northern Border Caucus have consistently advocated for an extension of the NEXUS program, a cheaper, more efficient approach to border security which would not adversely impact the economic vitality of the northern border region.