

Jan 20 2006 - Slaughter Joins Northern Border Caucus in Requesting Details on New DHS Border Card

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Letter Sent to Homeland Security and State Department Questions Cost, Efficiency of Plan

Washington, DC - Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-Fairport), Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee, has joined the Northern Border Caucus in authoring a letter requesting further details on the new northern border identification card proposed by the State Department and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The letter will be sent to officials in both departments today.

"I and my colleagues in the Northern Border Caucus are still very concerned about the plan being proposed, and we definitely need more information on it," Rep. Slaughter said. "Will this card be easy to obtain? Is it going to place an unnecessary burden on cross-border travel?" she added. "These questions haven't been answered by DHS and State, but the future of our economies depends on it."

The letter authored by Rep. Slaughter and the Caucus requests a wide variety of information regarding the border identification card proposed by DHS and State, including details on the application and adjudication processes, the processing time for an application, the cost, and the technological requirements to see the project through.

The complete text of the letter can be found below:

January, 20, 2006

The Honorable Michael Chertoff

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice

Secretary

Secretary

Department of Homeland Security

U.S. Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20528

Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Chertoff and Secretary Rice:

We are writing in response to your January 17th joint announcement, "Secure Borders and Open Doors in the Information Age," as it relates to the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative.

According to your announcement the Departments of State and Homeland Security (DHS) will "...produce an inexpensive, secure, biometric passport card as an alternative to a traditional passport book for use by U.S. citizens in border communities..." This card will meet the statutory requirements of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative.

preparation of this? What form will that campaign take?

- Is the technology available yet to produce and read this alternative document? What technology do you envision using for this travel card?

- Will this alternative card serve as a platform for the expedited or trusted traveler programs, such as FAST, NEXUS and SENTRI? If so, will this option be readily available prior to the land border crossing requirements of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative?

- How will you address the U.S. citizens that attempt to re-enter the country without a passport or an alternative travel card?

Please contact Amy Fuerstenau in Congressman Stupak's office (225-4735) or Meredith Curcio in Congressman Sweeney's office (225-5614) to schedule the requested briefing or with any other questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Representative Louise M. Slaughter