

Official Biography

Biography

One of the most powerful women in the U.S. House of Representatives, Congresswoman Louise McIntosh Slaughter has achieved a significant level of leadership as the Chairwoman of the influential House Committee on Rules, making her the first woman in history to hold this position. A member of the House Democratic Leadership, she serves on the prestigious Democratic Steering & Policy Committee. In 2003, Rep. Slaughter was chosen to sit on the newly created Select Committee on Homeland Security, serving as the Ranking Member on the Subcommittee on Rules and a member of the Subcommittee on Infrastructure and Border Security for two years. She is the Democratic Chair of two very prominent congressional caucuses: the Congressional Arts Caucus and the Bipartisan Congressional Pro-Choice Caucus, and is the former Co-chair of the Congressional Women's Caucus.

In November 2006, Rep. Slaughter was elected to her eleventh term in Congress as U.S. Representative for the 28th Congressional District of New York State. Her diverse district includes the cities of Rochester, Buffalo and Niagara Falls. Her constituents know her to be a strong proponent of progressive causes and a fighter for the employment concerns and the economic development of Western New York. She has earned a reputation for her dedication to constituent service.

As ranking member of the Committee on Rules, Rep. Slaughter has fought against the Majority in an effort to curb the current deterioration of the Democratic process. In early March of 2005, she unveiled a Congressional report detailing the unprecedented erosion of the legislative process in the last decade. This report is just one component of Rep. Slaughter's ongoing effort to restore the integrity of the House of Representatives.

Rep. Slaughter is also a vocal advocate of fair coverage in the media, striving to reinstate the Fairness Doctrine, which requires broadcasters to provide balanced, truthful coverage on important local and political issues. In late 2004, she authored the Meaningful Expression of Democracy in America Act, or MEDIA, bill which would reinstate the Fairness Doctrine in an attempt to restore integrity and balance in the media. In the 109th Congress, she authored a slightly different version of the bill that would enforce the public interest obligations of broadcast station licensees to their local communities. In addition, Rep. Slaughter spearheaded the investigation against Jeff Gannon, the fake news reporter allowed in White House press briefings and given access to classified CIA documents, as an example of biased political reporting.

When serving as a senior member of the Select Committee on Homeland Security, Rep. Slaughter fought to support first responders in Western New York and improve systems to deliver federal funding to local entities. She organized a major forum for local first responders and hosted a subcommittee hearing in Niagara Falls in 2003, where Members of Congress came to discuss border security. She has also authored legislation to put in place a Northern Border Coordinator at the Department of Homeland Security in order to coordinate federal, state and local law enforcement and first responders. In addition, she worked on the SECURE Borders legislative proposal, which would provide \$1 billion for security improvements such as enhancing border lines, doubling the number of Custom and Border Patrol agents.

A tireless promoter of economic development, Rep. Slaughter is deeply concerned about the job losses suffered in Western New York. In Congress, she has introduced legislation to study the effects of international trade agreements like NAFTA on American jobs. To help local employers, Rep. Slaughter regularly holds conferences to help businesses access capital and federal contracting opportunities. In March 2004, she and former Rep. Jack Quinn organized a major event with local manufacturers to discuss ways the federal government can support them.

Rep. Slaughter's fight to secure funding for local projects was recognized by the Rochester Institute of Technology, when it named its Center for Integrated Manufacturing Studies facility, "The Louise M. Slaughter Building." She has secured over \$25 million for the development of the Rochester Harbor, in addition to millions of dollars for other economic development projects. In Buffalo and Niagara, she has brought in millions of dollars for community development projects at the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, Hauptman-Woodward Institute, the Broadway Market, the Buffalo Hospice Center and the new Heart Center of Niagara, the Niagara Falls International Airport and Oak Orchard Harbor in Orleans County, to name just a few.

A microbiologist with a master's degree in public health, Rep. Slaughter is intensely involved in health issues. She is the leading expert in Congress on genetics issues and has authored cutting-edge legislation to protect Americans from discrimination by health insurance providers or employers based on genetic makeup. The bill passed the U.S. Senate unanimously in 2003 and 2005 and President Bush expressed his support for it. In 1997, she was awarded the American Public Health Association Distinguished Public Health Legislator Award for her work on health and genetics issues.

A leading advocate for women's rights, Rep. Slaughter served as co-chair of the Congressional Caucus for Women's

Issues during the 108th Congress, and continues to serve as co-chair of the Bipartisan Congressional Pro-Choice Caucus. She co-authored the historic Violence Against Women Act in 1994 and wrote legislation to make permanent the Department of Justice's Violence Against Women Office. She is leading the fight against sexual assault in the military, and organized a hearing on the issue in March 2004 that garnered national attention. Rep. Slaughter authored a proposal to require the Pentagon to put in place comprehensive policies and procedures to deal with sexual assault in the military, which passed as part of the FY 05 Defense Appropriations bill. In November 2004, she introduced landmark legislation to make further changes to end sexual assault, domestic violence and stalking in the military.

Rep. Slaughter has won historic increases in funding for women's health. As a member of the House Budget Committee in the early 1990s, she secured the first \$500 million earmarked by Congress for breast cancer research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). She fought for legislation guaranteeing that women and minorities are included in all federal health trials and establishing an Office of Research on Women's Health (ORWH) at NIH and was later honored with its "Visionary for Women's Health Research" award, on the ORWH's tenth anniversary. She has also introduced a bill to direct NIH to fund up to six centers nationwide to focus on women's health and the environment.

As longtime co-chair of the Congressional Arts Caucus, Rep. Slaughter leads the annual fight to increase budgets for the arts and humanities. In 2004, she successfully authored an amendment to increase the budget for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) by \$10 million and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) by \$3.5 million. Her efforts to generate congressional support for the arts was recognized in January 1998 when Rep. Slaughter received the Award for Outstanding Arts Leadership in the U.S. House of Representatives from the U.S. Conference of Mayors and Americans for the Arts.

During her eighteen years in Congress, Rep. Slaughter has won numerous awards for her leadership and dedication to public service. She was the first Member of Congress to receive the Sidney R. Yates National Arts Advocacy Award, presented by the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies. In 2003 she was awarded the Humane Legislator of the Year by the American Humane Association. In January 1999, she was named, "Lay Educator of the Year" by the Rochester Chapter of Phi Delta Kappa International, the professional fraternity for men and women in education. In 2004, Women in Film and Vision honored her with its Woman of Vision award for her work on women's and arts issues.

Elected in 1986, Rep. Slaughter holds a Bachelor of Science degree (1951) in Microbiology and a Master of Science degree (1953) in Public Health from the University of Kentucky. Prior to entering Congress, she served in the New York State Assembly (1982-86) and the Monroe County (N.Y.) Legislature (1976-79); and as regional coordinator to then-Secretary of State Mario Cuomo (1976-78) and to then-Lt. Gov. Mario Cuomo (1979-82).

A native of Harlan County, Kentucky, Congresswoman Slaughter has lived most of her life in Rochester's suburb of Fairport. She is married to Robert Slaughter and has three daughters and seven grandchildren.