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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Buffalo and Niagara PAL Chapters Benefit 40,000 Area Youth

Washington, DC - Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY-28), Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee, today applauded Congress' passing of the National PAL Youth Enrichment Reauthorization Act. The bill passed the House by a voice vote this afternoon as part of the Adam Walsh Child Safety and Protection Act. It is expected to be signed into law by President Bush on Thursday.

Rep. Slaughter joined with Reps. Reichert (R-WA), Meek (D-FL), and LaTourette (R-OH) in introducing this legislation last year, which will reauthorize the National Police Athletic League (PAL) programs. The \$16 million authorized by this bill will help establish an additional 250 PAL chapters nation-wide, and expand current community PAL programs.

Chapters in Buffalo and Niagara already serve 40,000 area youth.

"Buffalo and Niagara benefit from the trust their PAL chapters build between local law enforcement and youth," Rep. Slaughter said. "At a time when juvenile crime is on the rise, we must do more to invest in effective youth crime prevention programs."

"That is why it was so critically important that we passed this legislation today which will support and expand PALs in Western New York and across the nation," Rep. Slaughter said.

"By engaging youth in productive athletic and academic programs and bringing police officers closer to the people they serve, we will build safer and stronger communities," she added.

Police Athletic Leagues seek to prevent crime by bringing local law enforcement officers and youth together to participate in athletic, educational, and recreational activities. Such programs seek to forge positive ties between youth and the law enforcement officers in their community. Studies have proven this proactive measure to be highly effective in combating juvenile crime, gangs, and other violence. PAL chapters across the country currently serve approximately 2 million children between the ages of 5 and 18.

Buffalo PAL has 50 year history in the city, and now collaborates with over 50 youth service agencies and community based organizations. Niagara PAL has served the community since 1970, and provides over 60 different youth programs. Each local chapter reaches nearly 20,000 area youth per year.

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