

## August 7, 2006 - Slaughter Announces Restoration of Funding for Lead Paint Removal

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Slaughter Announces Restoration of Funding for Lead Paint Removal  
Buffalo and Erie Children Suffer Acutely from Lead Poisoning

Washington, DC - Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-Fairport), Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee, was today joined by Erie County public health officials to announce passage of an amendment she authored restoring \$35 million in federal funding to the Housing and Urban Development's Office of Lead Hazard Control.

Also in attendance at the event were Melanie DeSiderio and Tom Muscarella, Senior Public Health Sanitarian and Supervising Public Health Sanitarian respectively for the Erie County Department of Health, and Andrew McLellan, an environmental educator and recipient of two Leap Grants from the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

"We simply cannot stand by while over 2,000 children in our district alone fall victim to lead poisoning each year," Rep. Slaughter said. "Our parents and grandparents didn't know the dangers of lead in their environment, but we do. There is no justification for inaction."

"The Office of Lead Hazard Control is helping us make headway against this preventable scourge, and I aim to keep it that way," Rep. Slaughter said. "We must refuse to allow it to be the target of short-sighted budget cuts."

"You can't put a price on the health of our children," Rep. Slaughter said.

The funding was restored in the FY 07 Transportation-Treasury-HUD-Judiciary-D.C. Appropriations bill recently passed by Congress. It was authored by Rep. Slaughter in response to the Administration's proposal to cut \$35 million from the Office of Lead Hazard Control's budget. The amendment must now pass the Senate to become law.

Rep. Slaughter has for years advocated for federal lead abatement programs, and has fought the Administration's attempts to slash the program's funding during House consideration of previous Appropriations measures.

Over 50 percent of the homes in Niagara and Erie Counties were built before 1950, and are likely to contain lead paint. In Erie County, 1,000 children will be found to have unsafe lead levels. This year, a 1.5 million dollar Lead Hazard Control Grant to the City of Buffalo has been essential to local efforts to protect these children from lead poisoning.

Nationally, nearly 434,000 U.S. children between 1 and 5 years of age have blood lead levels greater than the level recommended by the Centers for Disease Control. High blood lead levels in children have been linked to asthma, brain damage, mental retardation, hearing loss, hyperactivity, and developmental delays. In extreme cases, exposure to lead has caused seizures, comas, and death in children.

## BACKGROUND

HUD's Office of Lead Hazard Control provides lead hazard control grants that help cities and states control significant lead hazards in low-income, high-risk properties. In FY 06, the Office of Lead Hazard Control received \$150.48 million in funding - \$16 million less than in FY 05. As a consequence of these cuts, HUD was unable to fund two-thirds of the requests for grants because the need for lead hazard control far outpaces the available resources.

The FY 07 Transportation-Treasury-HUD-Judiciary-D.C. Appropriations bill would have exacerbated this crisis by slashing funding for the Office of Lead Hazard Control to \$114.84 million. This cut of over \$35 million would have significantly jeopardized the progress thus far made in eradicating childhood lead poisoning.

"If we were committed to the national goal of wiping out lead poisoning by 2010, it was critical that we restored funding to HUD's Office of Lead Hazard Control," Rep. Slaughter said.

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