

September 18, 2006 - Slaughter Announces New Funding for Lead Paint Removal in Monroe County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Slaughter Announces New Funding for Lead Paint Removal in Monroe County
2,000 District Children in Danger from Lead Poisoning

Washington, DC - Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-Fairport), Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee, was today joined by Derrick Hazle, Managing Director of the Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning, and Assemblyman David Gantt, and State, County, and City Officials to announce the passage of an amendment the Congresswoman authored restoring \$35 million in federal funding to the Housing and Urban Development's Office of Lead Hazard Control.

Also present at the event were Dr. Andrew Doniger, Director of the Monroe County

Health Department; Julio Vazquez, Commissioner of Community Development for the City of Rochester; and Bob Barrows, Director of Housing and Project Development for the City of Rochester.

"With over 2,000 children across our district alone falling victim to lead poisoning each year, we cannot stand by and allow their environment to continue to be hazardous," 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."

Rep. Slaughter's legislation comes at the same time as new codes adopted by the Rochester City Council that will require all city inspectors to check for lead-based paint hazards when evaluating older rental housing. The Amendment must now be joined by complimentary funding from the Senate to go into effect.

The funding, which will allow for the removal of dangerous lead paint from numerous Monroe County residences, was restored in the FY 07 Transportation-Treasury-HUD-Judiciary-D.C. Appropriations bill approved by the House of Representatives in June.

The Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning has set a goal of eliminating the threat posed by lead contaminants by 2010, and is working with city officials to achieve its goals.

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.

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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