

December 13, 2007 - Rep. Slaughter Lauds Bill That Supports Jobs In Rochester and National Security

For Immediate Release

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Rep. Slaughter Lauds Passage of
Defense Bill with Language to Support Jobs in Rochester and Strengthen National Security

Urges Army to Provide Soldiers with Modern Radio
Communications System

Washington, D.C. — Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-Fairport), Chairwoman of the House Rules Committee, applauded passage of the FY08 National Defense Authorization Conference Report (H.R. 1585). The legislation includes language inserted by Rep. Slaughter urging the Army to transition away from its antiquated radios to a modern communications system through competitive bidding.

Harris RF Communications, a Rochester-based defense company, manufactures handheld tactical radio systems and is capable of producing the systems needed by the Army. Harris RF is widely regarded as a critical engine of economic growth in the region, and could participate in the competitive bid.

The conference report passed yesterday in the House of Representatives by a vote of 370 - 49.

“I am pleased to have secured language that encourages the Army to provide our soldiers with the best available technology to help them succeed in their missions in Iraq and Afghanistan,” said Rep. Slaughter. “This language will strengthen our military, while at the same time supporting local jobs in Rochester, including Harris Corporation RF Communications Division, which employs nearly 2,000 people and produces next generation communications systems for the military.”

The Single Channel Ground to Air Radio Systems (SINCGARS) radio is the Army’s legacy single-function, short-range communication system. Congresswoman Slaughter’s language urges the Army to move away from a sole source contract and transition to a modern communications radio system.

BACKGROUND:

This year, the Army decided to deviate from their procurement plan and purchase radios from one supplier that produces legacy radios. Their plan excluded Harris and therefore broke their previous contract with Harris RF to produce a share of the radios.

In May, Congresswoman Slaughter secured language in the Iraq supplemental spending bill calling on the Army to honor its commitment to purchase SINCGARS from Harris RF, with a prohibition on spending down a certain amount of the funds until the Army explains why they deviated from the procurement schedule.

In August, an internal Army Science Board memo recommended that the Army cease procuring these legacy radios immediately. The Army has failed to do so, and their SINCGARS procurement strategy is not in the best interest of the war fighter and taxpayer.

Congresswoman Slaughter secured language in the FY08 National Defense Authorization Conference Report passed by the House of Representatives in a vote of 370 - 49 that encourages the Army to reexamine their current tactical radio modernization plan, which moves toward a system in sync with other Army and Department of Defense radio programs.

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