

April 1, 2008 - Slaughter Testifies at House Appropriations Sub. Hearing in Support of NEA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, April 1, 2008

Rep. Slaughter Testifies at
House Appropriations Subcommittee Hearing in Support of NEA

Promotes
Increased Arts Funding During Arts Advocacy Day

on
Capitol Hill

Washington, DC – Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY-28),
Chairwoman of the House Committee on Rules and Co-Chair of the Congressional
Arts Caucus, today testified before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies in support of funding for the National
Endowment for the Arts (NEA). During a

speech this morning at the Arts Advocacy Day breakfast, Rep. Slaughter also called for increased funding for arts education.

“The arts define our culture and instill unique character in communities across our nation,” said Rep. Slaughter. “As the largest national source of arts funding in the United States, the National Endowment for the Arts plays a critical role in supporting local arts programs in neighborhoods across the country.”

“By sufficiently funding the National Endowment for the Arts, we will enable the arts programs that invigorate local economies, connect cultures and generations, and energize our nation’s creative spirit to thrive,” Slaughter continued.

In addition to Congresswoman Slaughter, acclaimed actor and director Robert Redford, actress Kerry Washington, singer John Legend, Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hanneman, and Conference Board CEO Jonathan Spector testified at the hearing.

The annual Arts Advocacy event was hosted by Americans for the Arts and held in conjunction with the Congressional Arts Caucus.

BACKGROUND

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Congress funded the NEA at \$170 million to carry out its mission to support excellence in the arts and ensure that all Americans have access to the arts. Under a Republican-led Congress in 1995 and 1996, however, the NEA’s funding was slashed and has never recovered from the 40 percent budget cut it sustained.

Last year was a breakthrough year for the arts as the NEA received a nearly 20 million dollar increase in funding over Fiscal Year 2007 levels. Nevertheless, its invaluable programs remain seriously underfunded as the agency continues to struggle to meet the growing demand for its popular programs.

Last month, Rep. Slaughter led a letter to the Chair and Ranking Member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior and Environment requesting \$176 million for the NEA in the upcoming fiscal year. Seventy-nine bipartisan Members of Congress signed Rep. Slaughter's letter.

###