

Rep. Louise M. Slaughter

Ranking Member, House Committee on Rules
Representing New York's 25th District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, March 16, 2018

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Statement on the Passing of Congresswoman Louise M. Slaughter

WASHINGTON, DC — Liam Fitzsimmons, chief of staff to Congresswoman Louise M. Slaughter (NY-25), announced that the congresswoman passed away early this morning surrounded by family at George Washington University Hospital after sustaining an injury in her Washington, DC residence last week. Slaughter rose to become the first woman to chair the powerful House Committee on Rules since it was formally constituted on April 2, 1789, and was serving as its ranking member. She was a relentless fighter for families in Monroe County and across the nation, and authored the landmark Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA) and the Stop Trading On Congressional Knowledge (STOCK) Act, among many other accomplishments. Slaughter, 88, was the dean of the New York congressional delegation, serving her 16th term in Congress.

“To have met Louise Slaughter is to have known a force of nature. She was a relentless advocate for Western New York whose visionary leadership brought infrastructure upgrades, technology and research investments, and two federal manufacturing institutes to Rochester that will transform the local economy for generations to come. As the first chairwoman of the House Rules Committee, Louise blazed a path that many women continue to follow. It is difficult to find a segment of society that Louise didn’t help shape over the course of more than thirty years in Congress, from health care to genetic nondiscrimination to historic ethics reforms. The Slaughter family is incredibly grateful for all the support during this difficult time. Details on funeral arrangements will be provided when they are available,” said Fitzsimmons.

Slaughter was born in Harlan County, Kentucky and graduated from the University of Kentucky with a Bachelor of Science degree in Microbiology and a Master of Science degree in Public Health. After graduate school, she and her husband, Robert “Bob” Slaughter, moved to the village of Fairport, New York. She and Bob were married for 57 years, until his passing in 2014. Together they had three daughters, seven grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. Slaughter’s full biography is available [here](#) and her most recent portrait is available [here](#).

She was elected to Congress in 1986. Prior to that, Slaughter served in the New York State Assembly from 1982 to 1986 and the Monroe County Legislature between 1976 and 1979. While holding elected office, she was regional coordinator to Mario Cuomo from 1976 to 1978 while he served as secretary of state and from 1979 to 1982 while he served as lieutenant governor.

Slaughter delivered results for Monroe County, securing major infrastructure investments, bringing high-tech companies to Eastman Business Park, and working to make Rochester a national leader in advanced manufacturing. She secured two federal manufacturing institutes for Rochester over three years: Slaughter [led a more than three-year effort](#) to create the federal photonics institute and to ensure that Rochester became the consortium’s national headquarters. After another vigorous Slaughter lobbying effort, she then [announced in 2017 that an RIT-led consortium](#) won a competition by the U.S. Department of Energy to headquarter a new public-private clean energy manufacturing institute.

The new Rochester train station was made possible by more than \$18 million in Slaughter-secured funding, including a \$15 million grant from the Federal Railroad Administration through the highly competitive Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Program. She also spearheaded reconnecting Rochester by filling in the Inner Loop, securing nearly \$20 million for the project. This includes a \$17.7 million TIGER grant secured in August of 2013 to bring the Eastern section of the Inner Loop to grade. The grant was the third largest TIGER grant in the nation at that time.

For ten years, Slaughter’s congressional district included portions of Orleans, Erie, and Niagara Counties. She secured funding for the new Niagara Falls train station and delivered on critical environmental protections for the cities of Niagara Falls, Lewiston, Tonawanda, and Buffalo. Slaughter, longtime co-chair of the bipartisan Great Lakes Task Force, led the multi-year effort to secure more than \$1.2 billion for Great Lakes preservation and restoration. A former blues and jazz singer, she was co-chair of the bipartisan Congressional Arts Caucus and championed numerous arts and cultural initiatives throughout her career.

In 2006, after learning that 80 percent of Americans killed in the Iraq War due to upper body wounds could have survived with adequate body armor, Slaughter started years-long effort to improve body armor safety standards. In 2009, she secured the recall and replacement of 16,000 pieces of unsafe body armor from the front lines. Her effort led to improved armor testing protocols and ended the practice of outsourcing testing to private companies.

Slaughter worked tirelessly in Congress to hold elected officials and other public servants to the highest ethical standards. In 2006, Slaughter authored the Stop Trading On Congressional Knowledge (STOCK) Act, one of the most important ethics bills in a generation. This law bans insider trading and dramatically increases transparency for federal officials, including members of Congress, cabinet secretaries, and the president of the United States. After her six year fight and a groundswell of public support following a 60 Minutes investigation, the legislation was passed and

signed into law on April 4, 2012. She went on to introduce legislation to [reform the ethics guidelines for Supreme Court justices](#) and [bring transparency to the political intelligence industry](#).

The only microbiologist in Congress, Slaughter authored the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA), leading the bill for fourteen years before it finally passed Congress and was signed into law by President George W. Bush in 2008. With the passage of GINA, individuals no longer have to fear their health insurance premiums skyrocketing or their boss making hiring or firing decisions based on a genetic predisposition to a condition they may or may not ever develop. The late Senator Ted Kennedy described GINA as “the first civil rights act of the 21st century.”

Slaughter also introduced the Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act to prevent a nightmarish post-antibiotic future by saving eight critical classes of antibiotics from being routinely fed to healthy animals, reserving them only for sick humans and sick animals. She sponsored this legislation for the past four terms in office and was responsible for consumer education that has led to increased corporate responsibility. Slaughter continued to rail against the bipartisan failure to take the bold action necessary to save antibiotics and considered it her primary unfinished legislative business.

Throughout her time in Congress, Slaughter also fought to ensure equal access to quality education for all Americans. In one of her first major actions as a member of Congress, Slaughter helped ensure that the McKinney-Vento Homeless Housing Assistance Act, the first federal law regarding homelessness, did not neglect children. She ensured that homeless children could continue to attend the same schools even if their family moved to a shelter out of the school district. This law helps 2,440 kids in Monroe County and 148,215 across New York State.

As one of the longest-serving women in the House of Representatives, Slaughter was a prominent voice for women and diversity. She was the co-chair and founding member of the Congressional Pro-Choice Caucus, which works to promote reproductive health and protect a woman's right to choose. Slaughter wrote and successfully fought for the passage of legislation that guarantees women and minorities are included in all federal health trials, established the [Office of Research on Women's Health \(ORWH\)](#) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and secured the first \$500 million in federal funding for breast cancer research at the NIH.

Slaughter also co-authored the landmark Violence Against Women Act, which has helped reduce cases of domestic violence by 67 percent since 1994. She championed reauthorization campaigns and [recently stood with local advocates and law enforcement](#) to urge the Republican Congress to swiftly pass an extension that includes expansive protections.

On January 12, 2007, Slaughter called to order her first meeting of the Committee on Rules as chair. At the time she said, "This is an important body, one charged with upholding the standards of our House and ensuring that the will of the American people is done here. It is a big responsibility, but I know that we are ready for it." During the 110th Congress, Slaughter helped House Democrats pass more than 230 key measures, more than 70 percent of which had significant bipartisan support. The 111th Congress was heralded as “one of the most productive Congresses in history” by congressional scholar Norman Ornstein.

As chairwoman from 2007-2011, Slaughter was able to bring key pieces of legislation to the House Floor for a vote, including a bill that raised the federal minimum wage, the Post-9/11 Veterans Assistance Act, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the Affordable Care Act, the Genetic Information Non-Discrimination Act, and the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act. A more complete list of accomplishments can be found below.

In 2015, Slaughter was honored for her service on the Rules Committee during [the hanging of her official portrait in the Capitol](#).

At the time, President Barack Obama said of Slaughter, “Louise Slaughter has proudly served in Congress for nearly three decades. As Chairwoman of the Rules Committee, she has shepherded landmark legislation like the Affordable Care Act, the Recovery Act, and the Genetic Information Non-Discrimination Act through the House, and millions of Americans are better off because of it.”

Many leaders also shared their admiration for Slaughter, including Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi. Their comments are available [here](#).

Slaughter took particular pride in delivering strong constituent services over her three decades in Congress while never losing touch with the people she represented. She continued to live in the same small house in Fairport where she and her husband raised their three children and where she continued to welcome grandchildren and a great-grandchild. Despite all of her accomplishments, she was always fondly known by constituents simply as, “Louise.”

As chairwoman from 2007-2011, Slaughter was able to bring key pieces of legislation to the House Floor for a vote, including:

2007: Brought legislation to the floor of the House of Representatives increasing the federal minimum wage for the first time in 10 years, giving 13 million Americans a \$4,400 raise.

2008: Won passage of the Genetic Information Non-Discrimination Act (GINA), a law that Slaughter authored to protect individuals from discrimination by employers or health insurers based on genetic predispositions to health conditions.

2008: Brought legislation to the floor leading to passage of the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act to provide free college education to veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan.

2009: Won passage of the National Women's Rights History Project Act – after nearly a decade of work with then-Senator Hillary Clinton – as part of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, authorizing the Votes for Women Trail, an auto route linking historical sites with importance to the struggle for women's rights and suffrage.

2009: Brought the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to the floor of the House of Representatives, which created and saved 3.5 million jobs, gave 98 percent of American workers a tax cut, and began to rebuild American infrastructure.

2009: Brought the Affordable Care Act to the floor of the House of Representatives for an historic vote, expanding and improving health care for Americans.

2010: Won passage of the Airline Safety and Pilot Training Improvement Act in the wake of the Colgan Air Flight #3407 disaster in the Buffalo area.

2010: Ushered the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2010 to the floor of the House of Representatives, providing large increases in the size of Pell grants, strengthening the Perkins loan program, and drastically lowering interest rates on federally subsidized student loans.

2010: Brought the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act to the floor of the House of Representatives, ensuring that unchecked corporate greed will never again bring America to financial collapse.

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