Dear Friend:

The 1999 session of Congress has ended, and I want to bring you up to date on what’s been accomplished in the past year...

Financial Services Overhaul Passes Probably the most significant product of the session was legislation which reformed the financial services industry and repealed the Glass-Steagall Act separating banking from securities businesses. I served on the Conference Committee which worked out the differences between the House and Senate versions of the bills and supported final the final legislation which is now law. Key victories in the Conference Committee included the establishment of the first Federal protections of consumers’ private financial information, applying of the Community Reinvestment Act to mergers between banks and nonbanks and mandatory disclosure of ATM fees.

“Right to Breastfeed” Act Signed Into Law Allowing breastfeeding on federal property was enacted as part of a FY2000 spending bill. I introduced the Right to Breastfeed Act (H.R. 1848) after new mothers complained about being kicked out of federal parks and museums for simply breastfeeding a child. It’s a shame we need a law on this, but until now, when women were prevented from feeding their babies, they had no recourse.

Small Business Protections Signed Into Law President Clinton signed my Construction Industry Payment Protection Act of 1999 (H.R. 1219), which will help protect small businesses by modernizing a 1935 law to provide adequate payment protection for contractors who accept government contracts. I sponsored this after learning of the problems of a constituent who experienced firsthand the deficiencies of the 1935 law.

House Passes Legislation Commending Greek and Turkey Relations The House passed H.Con.Res. 188, a bill I introduced along with Congressman Mike Bilirakis to commend Greece and Turkey for their swift responses to the devastating earthquakes that struck the countries last summer. The fall was a critical time in the talks between Greece and Turkey over numerous areas of disagreement; after both countries suffered the earthquakes, they were able to put aside their political differences to respond to each other’s need for help.

Congress Honors Zachary Fisher, Founder of Intrepid Museum On December 9th, the President signed legislation honoring Zachary Fisher for his work in support of America’s veterans. This New Yorker worked for decades on behalf of the armed services, their members and families, and almost single-handedly rescued the U.S.S. Intrepid from the scrap heap by helping found the Intrepid Museum.

Helicopter Noise Addressed by Transportation Funding Bill Language from my bill (HR 729) to recommend that the Federal Aviation Administration address the concerns of New York City residents regarding helicopter noise was included in this year’s appropriations agreement. Noisy helicopter traffic from sightseeing flights has been an annoyance to city residents for years.

And, finally, hearings were held in Manhattan in October on my bill, H.R.1112, to authorize the Department of Housing and Urban Development to guarantee mortgages for the acquisition, construction, or rehabilitation of child care facilities nationwide. It’s my hope that this bipartisan bill will do for child care what Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae have done for affordable housing. I’ll keep you posted on its progress.

My best wishes for you and your loved ones in the New Year.

Sincerely,

Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress
Census 2000: It’s your future—don’t leave it blank.

Census 2000: Fairness and accuracy win in Congress

Rep. Maloney, the ranking Democrat on the Census Subcommittee, has been leading the fight to ensure that the 2000 Census is the most fair and accurate census possible—and the good news is that the battle is being won.

The year 2000 budget appropriation passed weeks ago included almost all of the money requested by the Administration—and, just as importantly, contained none of the prohibitions on modern statistical methods that has appeared in previous bills.

“I’m cautiously optimistic that the Census Bureau will be permitted to conduct the best, most accurate Census it can,” Maloney said.

And that Census is just around the corner. In just a few months, the largest peace-time mobilization of government employees in U.S. history will begin. 860,000 workers—larger than the current U.S. Army—will fan out across America to count an estimated 275 million people. 520 local census offices will open, and the Census Bureau will have to process 1.5 billion pieces of paper.

All this work is necessary because Census 2000 will be the information cornerstone for the Federal government as we start the next century. Close to $2 trillion in federal funds will be spent on education, health care, job training and business projects in the next 10 years. How and where that money is spent depends on the census numbers.

Census 2000 will also be an opportunity for hundreds of New Yorkers who may want to earn money as census takers, or enumerators. The Census Bureau tries to hire people to work in the neighborhoods in which they live, and people who can work part-time.

Workers spend most of their time locating and verifying addresses and conducting door-to-door interviews. In order to find people at home, census takers may be required to work evenings and weekends. Most Census 2000 positions will last for approximately 8–12 weeks. For more information, call 1-888-325-7733.

Census 2000: “Census in the Schools” raises awareness

In October, N.Y.C. Schools Chancellor Rudolph F. Crew and U.S. Rep. Carolyn Maloney joined students from M.S. 167—Senator Wagner Middle School on East 76th Street—to listen and learn about the ‘Census in the Schools’ program, a program designed to help young people understand the Census, and raise awareness within children’s families about the importance of filling out Census forms.

In a demonstration for Rep. Maloney and Chancellor Crew, the 7th grade students divided into groups of Yankees fans, Mets fans, and baseball non-fans. Most of the students identified as Yankees fans, while a few students identified as Mets fans and baseball non-fans. In different size groups, students were able to discuss what it felt like to be given fair or unfair amounts of money for a world series celebration. As one student said, comparing the exercise to the real census, "unless we are fairly counted, we won't get what we deserve from the institutions that decide about money and representation -- and that's the point of the Census."

“Over half of those who are missed in the Census are children—and in New York City, the challenge to ensure our children do not go uncounted is especially great,” Maloney said. “We hope that Census-smart kids to go home and talk to their parents about the importance of filling out Census forms.”

Census 2000: It’s your future—don’t leave it blank.
Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney continues to fight for a more livable city. She recently testified against the re-zoning of a mid-block on East 76th St. to permit a 31-story high rise, and also opposed the construction of Trump World Tower on First Avenue at 48th St.

At public hearings on the new zoning designation proposed for East 76th St. conducted by the City Planning Commission and later by the City Council, Maloney joined dozens of local residents and community groups to oppose high-density development on mid-blocks. Because this particular block had been zoned for manufacturing, it was exempt from provisions of a 1985 zoning resolution that prohibited tall residential towers from being built in mid-blocks.

Maloney said that allowing this kind of zoning will “set a terrible precedent... If you grant the application, the resulting building will irreparably change the nature of the neighborhood, blocking both sunlight and fresh air.” In a major victory for our neighborhoods, the City Council adopted low density zoning for the block in early December.

Maloney has also taken a stand against Trump World Tower—testifying before the Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA) in June, and co-sponsoring a Town Hall Meeting and “speak-out” that attracted 350 people.

At that event, Maloney said, “The proposed tower is the most egregious example of an out-of-scale, out-of-size, out-of-place building ever to appear in New York. When the courts finally support the city’s zoning laws, Trump Tower will be taken down brick by brick. It’s happened before and it can happen again.” Community groups are, in fact, currently appealing to the Appellate Division to prevent the tower from going up.

In September, over 150 students from across New York City joined Congresswoman Maloney in a forum on youth violence at Hunter College, discussing their experiences and ideas for curbing violence committed by and against young people.

Congresswoman Maloney has responded to the recent outbreak of youth violence by renewing her push for passage of strong gun-safety legislation in the House of Representatives. Earlier this year, she and N.J. Congressman Bill Pascrell introduced legislation to require that all handguns be equipped with “smart-gun” technology—technology that prohibits anyone but the registered owner from operating a handgun. In addition, Maloney has been a leader in efforts to get the House to adopt reasonable legislation to limit access to guns. During the recent debate on the floor of the House, Maloney pleaded with her colleagues to close the gun-show loophole, which permits criminals to get their hands on guns without going through background checks.

Even though the House rejected even this modest measure, Maloney has vowed that she will not stop fighting until guns are off our streets and out of the hands of criminals.

“The vast majority of the American people support sensible gun-control legislation. It’s time that Congress stopped listening to the gun lobby and started listening to the victims of gun violence and did something to get guns off our streets,” she said.

Maloney renews push for “Smart Gun” technology after school gun tragedies

Although Congress has allocated $17.9 billion—a $2.3 billion increase—to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), some in Congress are working to block NIH’s work to develop treatments and/or cures to major diseases using stem cell research.

Rep. Maloney has responded with a resolution about to be introduced supporting stem cell research. A stem cell’s value is its unique ability to generate specialized cells that are lost in crippling—and until now untreatable—conditions of the nervous system such as Alzheimer’s disease, brain injury, birth defects, spinal cord injury, muscular dystrophy, and Lou Gehrig’s disease.

“Not only does stem cell research promise to treat and prevent diseases, it also provides safer and more effective ways to test drugs without experimenting on humans or animals,” Rep. Maloney said. “We must let scientists fully research this novel, innovative, and ground-breaking technology because lives depend on it.”
After weeks of pushing for a debate and floor vote, the House of Representatives finally approved the Bipartisan Consensus Managed Care Improvement Act of 1999 (HR 2723). The consumer protections included in this bill will protect patients by:

- Banning gag clauses that prevent health care providers from discussing all possible treatment options with the patient;
- Allowing women direct access to OB-GYNs and other women’s health specialists;
- Allowing direct access for children to see a pediatrician;
- Improving access to clinical trials to provide lifesaving treatments to the critically ill;
- Ensuring coverage for emergency room visits;
- Guaranteeing a fair and timely process of internal and external appeals, and a right to sue when it is warranted.

“While I applaud this hard-won bipartisan victory, serious obstacles remain before the bill becomes law,” Rep. Maloney said. “I’ll continue to fight against poison pill amendments and other gimmicks that stand in the way of the protections that all patients deserve.”

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Asian Longhorned Beetles have once again been spotted in the 14th Congressional District, this time in a playground on East 92nd Street. Since there is no known pesticide, any tree infested with these insects—4,400 in New York since 1996—must be destroyed.

An inch-long bug with visible spots and long antennae, the beetle burrows into tree limbs to lay its eggs. The 92nd Street infestation was spotted by private citizens who knew to alert the authorities. My office is working with the N.Y. State Dept. of Ag and Markets to alert the public to this issue. If you see an Asian Longhorned Beetle, call the USDA at 1-800-554-4501, ext. 72087.