

the development of long-range economic recovery programs. It also requires the hospitals to devise a coordinated economic recovery program with the assistance of the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Mr. Speaker, in a time when the future of Medicare is under strict scrutiny, we must today continue to provide the basic essential care under the Medicare program that are intended some 35 years ago. I urge all Members of Congress to review this critical legislation in the remainder of the 106th Congress and work to enact it into law.

#### HONORING MELVIN PAGE

#### HON. ZACH WAMP

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 20, 2000*

Mr. WAMP. Mr. Speaker, in some ways Melvin Page and his colleagues in honor and arms may be the bravest Americans. They fought a long and difficult war against a brutal and ferocious enemy. But—unlike the brave Americans who fought all our other wars—Melvin Page and his fellow Vietnam veterans had to fight a war that not all Americans supported. Even if Melvin Page and his comrades were “the bravest of the brave”—and they were—the civilian leadership that got us into Vietnam badly failed the men and women it sent there. Those leaders never gave our brave soldiers the unconditional backing and the clear goals needed to win. But, despite all those impediments, Melvin Page and the others who fought in that conflict can always hold their heads proudly and high because of the extreme sacrifices they made in defense of freedom.

That's why I was especially honored to take part in Melvin Page Day in Harriman, TN, in the Third District on Saturday, September 9, 2000. When you look at the story of Melvin Page's brave service, it's hard to imagine anyone who could more deserve the honors he received from his fellow citizens. Melvin served in the United States Army from 1967 to 1969 when the Vietnam War was at its height. He showed his true courage and suffered enormously during a battle in which he and 43 other men were ambushed by over 1,000 North Vietnamese Army soldiers. In an attempt to save as many of his comrades as possible, Sgt. Page called in napalm air strikes on his own position. He was hit three times by rifle shots, struck by a grenade and was grievously burned. He was one of the very few people in his command to survive the attack. Rescuers arrived just in time to save his life; and in fact, Melvin Page was so badly injured that the recovery team thought that he had died and placed him in a body bag. It was only when his hand moved that the rescuers realized that he was alive.

He had to undergo numerous operations and extensive rehabilitation to recover from the severe burns and other injuries he suffered. After Melvin Page left the Army, he became a letter carrier with the U.S. Postal Service back home in Harriman, where he has worked faithfully for 30 years.

Melvin Page's heroism and sacrifice has been recognized by the numerous medals and awards he has received, including the Bronze Star with V Device, three Purple Hearts, Two

Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters, Good Conduct, National Defense Service, U.S. Vietnam Service, Vietnam Campaign, Combat Infantryman Badge, Parachute Jump Badge, Ranger Tab and Expert Marksman badge for pistol, rifle, and machine gun.

But, as impressive as this list is, it cannot begin to convey the heroism and sacrifice that marked Melvin Page's Army service. Mr. Page, as you complete 33 years of loyal and dedicated services to the United States in war and peace, please accept the congratulations, best wishes and heartfelt thanks of a grateful nation.

#### OCHSNER FOUNDATION HOSPITAL

#### HON. DAVID VITTER

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 20, 2000*

Mr. VITTER. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, September 25, the Ochsner Foundation Hospital will open a spectacular new addition. This \$46 million facility will provide 140 square feet of space over three floors. The first floor will include a world-class emergency and trauma center; the second floor will be home to 10 new operating rooms with the most advanced equipment; and the third floor will include 32 new intensive care unit patient rooms. By placing these improved facilities in new construction, operations of the existing facility are not threatened.

These improvements will improve the quality of care of patients at Ochsner. They also will provide a better learning environment for the more than 200 medical residents that study each year at Ochsner.

The Ochsner Foundation Hospital, at its present location since 1954, is accredited with commendation by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Organizations, an achievement which places the hospital above 87% of all hospitals in the U.S. The hospital admits over 18,000 patients each year for a total of more than 97,000 patient days. The average length of stay at Ochsner is 4.9 days. In addition, each year 30,000 individuals are treated on an emergency outpatient basis.

Known for surgical expertise with nearly 12,000 surgery cases handled each year, the hospital is also known for its pediatric, cancer, cardiology, and orthopedic programs. The Ochsner Multi-Organ Transplantation Center performs transplantation surgeries for most major solid organ systems and ranks as the fifth largest heart transplantation program in the country.

Ochsner has provided generations of patients from the New Orleans area and from throughout the world with quality medical care. This new addition will permit them to continue providing the highest quality of medical care for future generations.

#### TRIBUTE TO THE REVEREND BERTRAM G. BENNETT, JR.

#### HON. JOSE E. SERRANO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 20, 2000*

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an outstanding individual who

has devoted his life to serving others, Reverend Bertram G. Bennett, Jr. He will be honored by the Wardens, Vestry and People of Saint David's Episcopal Church on Sunday, September 17, 2000 for 20 years of ministry at Saint David's.

Reverend Bertram G. Bennett, Jr., was born in New York City on September 23, 1951 and has been Priest-in-Charge of St. David's Episcopal Church in the Bronx since 1980. He received a B.A. in Behavioral Science from Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina and a Master of Divinity from the General Theological Seminary in New York City and was ordained Deacon in 1977 and Priest in 1978.

Fr. Bennett strongly upholds the Diocese of New York's mission statement of “effective church presence in poor communities.” Born and raised in Harlem and carrying out his ministry in the South Bronx, Fr. Bennett is very much aware of the problems that afflict such communities.

Serving on a number of committees and boards, Fr. Bennett is well-known and respected in the Diocese, the parish and the community. He has served on the Diocesan Council and on several Diocesan committees. He is currently the Chair of the South Bronx Interparish Council, and in that capacity stresses the importance of the parishes meeting on a regular basis and sharing information and resources. Fr. Bennett is also on the Board of Episcopal Social Services, an organization that assists people of all ages throughout the Diocese.

Under Fr. Bennett's encouragement, St. David's has been a member of South Bronx Churches (SBC) since its beginning in 1987. SBC is an ecumenical broad-based organization of the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), involved with problems the communities in the South Bronx face regarding housing, illegal drugs, education, health, and employment. As Chair of the Housing Task Force of the South Bronx Churches, Fr. Bennett has been instrumental in the development of affordable homes in the South Bronx. He is also Chair of the Board of the Senior Housing Development. The accomplishments result from the hard work and motivation of Fr. Bennett whose steadfast perseverance is an inspiration to his parishioners.

Important to Fr. Bennett's ministry is his involvement with youth work in the church and community. He has served as Chair of the Board of Bronx Youth Ministry and has recently been appointed to serve on the School Chancellor's Interfaith Advisory Council. St. David's After School Program and Summer Day Camp are vital community programs that offer supervised and structured activities for the youngsters. In recent years, Fr. Bennett has encouraged the men of the Parish to meet on a regular basis with the young men of the community for prayer and fellowship during the week.

Before coming to St. David's, Fr. Bennett served in churches in the Bronx and Manhattan. As a parish priest, he places a high priority on making pastoral calls, visiting the sick and shut-ins, and counseling. Many times he has been able to assist members of the church and community through court appearances and intervention with the Department of Social Services, and giving support to parents dealing with school authorities.

Among the church and community organizations that have honored Fr. Bennett for his

ministry are the Boys of Yesteryear, the Bronx Council, Bronx Youth Ministry, and the New York City Council of Churches.

Fr. Bennett is a devoted family man, as is evident to those who have met his wife, Ledda, their children and grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Reverend Bertram G. Bennett, Jr., for his remarkable career of serving the community and bringing hope to the many individuals he has touched.

#### A SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

### HON. ROBERT WEXLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 20, 2000*

Mr. WEXLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the important contributions made by ADT Security Services, Inc., a security headquarters in my district in Boca Raton, Florida, to the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC).

The NCPC is a private non-profit organization which has been working tirelessly to make our country safer from crime. The most prominent of their programs is the "McGruff the Crime Dog" public service advertising campaign, which is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. Many of us are familiar with its "Take a Bite out of Crime" slogan. Some of their other valuable activities include providing technical assistance to communities, coordinating community demonstration projects, and producing award-winning publications for distribution to law enforcement, schools, and community organizations.

ADT has sponsored activities of the NCPC since 1985, and ADT's support has allowed the NCPC to develop and distribute the National Crime Prevention Survey and the annual October Crime Prevention Month kit. To celebrate McGruff's 20th anniversary, the NCPC also began a tour of the country to recognize those communities which have had significant reductions in crime as a result of coordinated prevention efforts. This tour is only possible as a result of ADT's support.

Mr. Speaker, when corporations such as ADT give of their resources to improve communities, the results pay enormous dividends in the quality of life all Americans enjoy.

I would like to express my best wishes for continued success to the partnership of ADT and the NCPC, as well as my pride to represent a company, such as ADT, in the House of Representatives.

#### VICTIMS OF CIVIL WAR: THE REFUGEES OF COLOMBIA AND PERU

### HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 20, 2000*

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, earlier today, I chaired a Congressional Human Rights Caucus briefing on "Victims of Civil War: The Refugees of Colombia and Peru." I would hereby like to share the agenda and my opening statement at the hearing with the House for my colleagues' information.

#### CONGRESSIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS CAUCUS—VICTIMS OF CIVIL WAR: THE REFUGEES OF COLOMBIA AND PERU, SEPTEMBER 20, 2000, 10-11:30 AM

Summary: Pursuant to the request of Congressional Diaz-Balart (R-FL), the Congressional Human Rights Caucus convened on September 20, 2000 at 10 AM to examine the causes and ramifications of the Andean refugee crisis and to review U.S. policy in response to this crisis. Caucus Chairmen John Edward Porter (R-IL) and Tom Lantos (D-CA) appointed Congressman Diaz-Balart (R-FL) to chair the briefing. The briefing concluded at 11:45 AM.

#### WITNESSES

Panel I: (1) Ms. Dawn T. Calabia, External Relations, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; (2) Mr. Julian Hoyos, political asylee from Colombia; and (3) Mr. Jorge Vallejos, refugee/journalist from Peru.

Panel II: (1) Ms. Nina Serafino, Congressional Research Service (CRS) specialist on Colombia; (2) Ms. Maureen Taft Morales, (CRS) specialist on Peru; (3) Andrew Miller, Acting Advocacy Director for Latin America and the Caribbean, Amnesty International USA; and (4) Elisa Massimino, Washington, DC Director, Lawyers Committee for Human Rights.

#### OPENING STATEMENT OF CONGRESSMAN LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART, CONGRESSIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS CAUCUS, BRIEFING ON THE VICTIMS OF CIVIL WAR IN COLOMBIA AND PERU, SEPTEMBER 20, 2000

Welcome to today's Congressional Human Rights Caucus briefing on the Andean refugees—victims of civil war in Colombia and Peru. I would first like to thank my colleagues, Congressman JOHN PORTER and TOM LANTOS and their able staffs for supporting me in convening the caucus to address this critical issue. Secondly, I would like to thank my colleagues who are present with us today. Finally I would like to extend my deep appreciation to our witnesses for their participation today and their personal investment of time and, in some cases, travel to help illuminate this issue.

I have become progressively more interested in this issue in the last few years as I have observed Colombian and Peruvian refugees seeking safe haven in South Florida. Since their arrival during the last two decades, they have enriched South Florida with their talent and their spirit of enterprise. In the last few years, my district office has experienced a great increase in the number of visits from Colombian and Peruvian families. In talking with them about their struggle for freedom and peace, I have learned about their journey and how they have sacrificed greatly to protect their children and loved ones from those who would terrorize them in pursuit of territorial, political, or monetary greed. I have pledged to these families that I will do everything I possibly can to assist them in their effort to remain as residents en route to becoming citizens of the United States.

I should mention that I will use the term refugee in its inclusive meaning to include those who seek humanitarian protection both before and after entering the United States. Therefore, I include those who seek asylum when they are fortunate enough to escape their persecutors and reach the United States.

A few points should be noted to provide context to the issue before us. Colombia continues to be engulfed in an intensifying civil war that is no longer confined to rural communities. Moreover, it now affects all regions and social strata of Colombian society. Bogota, the nation's capital, is now daily

beset with guerrilla atrocities. Unemployment levels exceeded a staggering 20% in 1999 and on average there were seven kidnappings per day—2,548 per year.

On August 1, 1999 the Miami Herald Editorial Board noted, "During the terror campaign of the late 1980's and early 1990's, narco cartels bombed malls and jetliners, randomly killing innocent civilians en masse." Today, the Herald, the Washington Times, Washington Post and other national newspapers report escalating murders, kidnappings for ransom, and other atrocities committed against civilians and foreigners—increasingly more Americans (executives, journalists, professors, and tourists) are becoming victims.

Peru experienced equally severe destruction in the 1980's and 1990's at the hands of the Sendero Luminoso (the Shining Path). According to Amnesty International's Annual Report for 1990, in October of 1990 alone, the Marxist-terrorist organization killed 350 people. We will hear more from our panels about the grave conflict in Peru and how it forced thousands from their homes.

As many here recall, in the 1980's and 1990's these severe Marxist-guerrilla atrocities in Colombia and Peru caused thousands of refugees to flee their countries and seek safe haven in the United States and elsewhere in North America. The Colombians and Peruvians pursued asylum claims, but most were obstructed for relief. For example, according to the INS between 1989 and 1997, the cumulative approval rate for Colombians was 15.8% and for Peruvians 24.8%—well below similarly beleaguered countries such as Liberia (45.2%) Ethiopia (50.3%) and Burma (54.8%).

I have received letters from constituents and interested individuals that are bitterly painful to read because they depict savage brutality, intimidation, and terror, all as means to deprive non-combatants of political freedom, land, personal property, and worst of all their human dignity. One man's father was killed by the Marxist Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), after repeated beatings and the murder of cattle workers, to confiscate the family's land and other assets. Another letter was from a woman who was involved in grass roots political activity on behalf of the assassinated Presidential candidate Luis Carlos Galan in 1988. She was assaulted, subjected to death threats, and forced to live in hiding and apart from her mother and children for months at a time. A bomb exploded near her home followed by a phone call that threatened her telling her that the next time it would be her home that was bombed. The door to her house was regularly spray painted with the letters "FARC".

What we will hear today will only provide a brief glimpse of the continuous suffering that the refugees have experienced everyday for years. They have lost loved ones in the conflict. They have been separated from family for years. They have been unable to attend funerals of parents and siblings. The physical and mental anguish of these communities deserve our consideration.

A nation's strength must be measured not only by its economic or military might, but by the degree in which it helps its neighboring allies. Colombia is a mere three and one-half hours flight from Miami—about the distance between Washington, DC and Denver, Colorado.

It is my hope that this Congress will look at the record of this meeting today and use it to help craft foreign and immigration policies that work to extend relief to the hard-working and law-abiding Peruvian and Colombian families. I have a proposal (The Andean Adjustment Act, HR 2741), which I will discuss later, to begin this effort and I will