

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 supported 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. Calabria, 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

continue to work toward its adoption. Thank you. We will now here from Ms. Calabria on behalf of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

INTRODUCTION OF THE IMMIGRANT HEALTH AND SAFETY ACT

**HON. JERROLD NADLER**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 20, 2000*

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Immigrant Health and Safety Act. I hope my Colleagues will join me in supporting this legislation designed to correct a very serious consequence of major immigration reform legislation that was passed into law in 1996.

Prior to 1996, relief from deportation was possible for long-term immigrants of good moral character who had community ties in the U.S., if deportation would prove a cruel hardship for themselves or their families. No more than 4,000 such grants are permitted each year—and only to long-term, non-criminal immigrants with family and community ties in the U.S.

In 1996, Congress severely limited this kind of relief. Even a cruel hardship to an individual—such as an extreme medical condition—cannot prevent that individual's deportation. Now only a showing that someone's deportation will result in extreme and unusual hardship to his/her immediate relative who is a legal permanent resident or U.S. citizen can prevent deportation.

In other words, current law permits removal of long-term immigrants even if it would mean extreme medical hardship, disability, or even death. Immigrants who suffer from eminently treatable conditions in the United States could be subjected to suffering or perhaps death if forced to leave. They are also forced to leave their loved ones behind and sever ties with communities they have been a part of for years.

Historically, humanitarianism and family unity have been principal policies underpinning U.S. immigration law. For a small group of immigrants, current law threatens individual lives, community integrity, and the well being of immigrant families. Our bill would allow the Attorney General discretion to cancel their removal from the U.S. if she determined their cases had merit. The bill would not increase the number of grants of relief available each year beyond the 4,000 already permitted in current law, but would remove an undue burden of the 1996 law on a small group of immigrants who have lived in the U.S. for many years.

Again, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and pass it as swiftly as possible.

HOME HEALTH OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY SHOULD BE COVERED BY MEDICARE

**HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 20, 2000*

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to co-sponsor an important

bill related to the Medicare Home Health benefit. I recently introduced H.R. 4874, the Medicare Occupational Therapy Coverage Eligibility Act of 2000. This bill would amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for eligibility for coverage of home health services under the Medicare Program on the basis of a need for occupational therapy.

Occupational therapy is regarded as a full rehabilitation benefit under Medicare in every post-acute benefit except home health. This is a historical problem that should have been corrected when occupational therapy was included as a free-standing benefit in 1987. This correction is long overdue. It will provide beneficiaries immediate access to occupational therapy—a service targeted toward increasing self-sufficiency and function in the home—if they need it as part of their home health care plan. Physicians will be able to prescribe occupational therapy immediately without the requirement that nursing or another service be provided first. Additionally, home health agencies will have more flexibility in designing care plans based on clinical appropriateness and not on an outmoded Medicare requirement.

Occupational therapy is focused on helping individuals become more independent. That is why I believe that the inclusion of occupational therapy coverage by Medicare in the home health benefit will actually decrease the dependence of individuals on home health services. This bill will help seniors to lead better, more independent lives. I urge my colleagues to support putting occupational therapy on an equal footing as a rehabilitation benefit in home health, just as it is in rehabilitation hospitals and skilled nursing facilities.