

to wartime veterans who are totally and permanently disabled due to a non-service connected medical condition. A small, but important number of these disabled wartime veterans own family farms or ranches, which provide the livelihood for their families. Most family farms in the United States are very small. Over 75% of family farms have less than \$50,000 in gross annual sales. After deductions for costs of operating the farm or ranch, the net income of the family farmer is much lower. Farmers receive an average of 20 cents for every dollar of produce sold. In 1995, the average net farm income for very small farms was \$510. The average net farm income for small farms with gross sales between \$50,000 and \$250,000 averaged \$14,335. Clearly most family farmers have modest annual income.

In determining eligibility for pension benefits, VA is required to consider not only the family income, but also the family's "net worth." Currently, unless VA determines that the land can be sold at "no substantial sacrifice", the value of farm and ranch land is included in determining net worth. Some veteran farmers are "land rich." While having little or no liquid assets, the value of their land makes their "net worth" appear larger on paper.

Family farms are important not only for the food and fiber they produce, but also for the values they represent. Family farms should not be considered as simply substitutes for liquid bank accounts or other liquid assets. In good years, family farms and ranches provide an adequate income. In bad times, adverse crop conditions or illness, the income and liquid resources of family farmers and ranchers are quickly depleted. Wartime veterans have made a substantial sacrifice on behalf of our Nation by serving in the Armed Forces. We should not ask them to sacrifice their family farms in order to receive the assistance they have earned by their wartime service.

I believe that an operating family farm can never be liquidated without substantial sacrifice on the part of the veteran. It is never reasonable to require a veteran to sell his or her means of future livelihood in order to obtain pension benefits or VA health care. If the farm is sold, the assets which in future years can be expected to generate income for the veteran and the veteran's dependents, are permanently lost.

Under H.R. 801, farm and ranch land owned by the veteran and the veteran's dependents would be excluded in determining net worth. The bill would also exclude land used for similar agricultural purposes, such as timberland, Christmas tree farms, or horticultural purposes.

During the past century, the number of family farms in our country has declined dramatically. When a veteran is required to sell his or her farm in order to receive necessary VA assistance, another family farm may be lost forever. No veteran should be called on to make this additional sacrifice. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 801. America's family farmers and ranchers deserve the relief which this legislation will provide.

TRIBUTE TO THE REVEREND DOCTOR BENNETT WALKER SMITH, SR.—ST. JOHN BAPTIST CHURCH

HON. JACK QUINN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 1, 2001

Mr. QUINN. Mr. Speaker, I am honored today to pay tribute to my friend, Rev. Dr. Bennett Walker Smith, Sr. for his forty years of service in the ministry.

As Pastor of Saint John Baptist Church on Goodell in the City of Buffalo, Rev. Smith leads one of the largest and most vibrant congregations in all of Western New York. His steady message of service to God and community has inspired us all.

Throughout his remarkable life, Rev. Smith has been actively engaged in social and political change which has served to enhance the lives of all people, and African Americans in particular. His early years in the civil rights movement were shared with the late Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the late Reverend Ralph Abernathy, and the Reverend Jessie Jackson.

Within our Western New York community, Rev. Smith has taken a truly active role in the enhancement of the City of Buffalo. Under his leadership, St. John Baptist Church has built McCarley Gardens and the St. John Senior Citizens Tower, over 300 units in all, which provide housing for our community's seniors. It has also constructed the St. John Christian Academy that provides outstanding educational opportunity to over 250 students. I am honored to be working with him and St. John Baptist Church toward the completion of the next project, a Family Life Center that will provide a host of educational, health, and social services to our community.

In recognition of his service Rev. B.W. Smith has been honored as a member of "Who's Who in Religion," Ebony's "100 Most Influential Black Americans," and by the NCCJ, and has received the prestigious Evans-Young Award from the Buffalo Urban League.

Mr. Speaker, today I would like to join with the congregation of St. John Baptist Church and our entire Western New York community in recognition of the commitment to God, dedicated service, and leadership of Rev. Dr. B.W. Smith. I am honored to bring his great work to the attention of my colleagues and to this honorable body.

GUN VIOLENCE

HON. CAROLYN MCCARTHY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 1, 2001

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, one year ago another special life was taken by gun violence in this country. Kayla Rollins was killed in her first grade classroom by a six year old boy who brought a loaded gun to school. The time has come and gone to end these senseless acts of gun violence by passing meaningful gun safety legislation. The political pandering over this issue must end. How many children should we allow to become victims to gun violence? It's time for

Congress to do the responsible thing and pass commonsense gun safety legislation. Kayla Rollins' family, as well as all families who lost a loved one to gun violence, deserve action.

Mr. Speaker, I submit for the RECORD a statement from Kayla Rollins's mother pleading for the Congress to pass immediate gun safety legislation.

Statement By Mrs. Rollins—March 1, 2001

Hello. I am Veronica McQueen. I am Kayla's mother. These are hard times for me and Kayla's brothers, sisters and her father, and for the rest of my family. Kayla's death was devastating. There is not a day that goes by I do not cry as I go on with my life without my daughter. A part of my heart went with her. It is so hard for me to think that I will never see her smile, laugh or play again. I can never hold her and kiss her again, or see her grow up, get married and have a happy life. The gun that killed my daughter in her first grade class room was a gun that could be loaded by a six year old child, concealed by a six year old child, and held and fired by a six year old child. Please, don't ever forget that. This is proof that there is need for gun safety devices and gun control. I come here today, two days after what would have been her seventh birthday. I am a mom with a terrible tragedy, and I hope it never, ever happens again. Thank you.

HBCUs DESERVE PARITY

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 1, 2001

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, as a graduate of North Carolina A&T University, one of the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), I cannot help but rise to express my shock over the outrageous decision by the majority members of the Committee on Education and the Workforce to exclude HBCUs from the new 21st Century Competitiveness Subcommittee. I know that my friends across the aisle have no intention of riding on the media coattails of what some people perceive as this past fall's denial of minority voting rights; nevertheless, the misguided decision to separate HBCUs as well as Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) and Tribally Controlled Colleges (TCCs) from non-minority higher education institutions on this subcommittee seems to play right into the hands of those who suggest that last fall's events were part of a concerted effort to deprive minorities of our right to vote.

Furthermore, placing these institutions of higher education into a new select education subcommittee which shares jurisdiction with juvenile delinquency, welfare, and child abuse seems to suggest that minority education is more social experiment than higher education program. I cannot tell you how disappointed I am to find out in the 107th Congress that my education is now considered second rate by those in the majority. I join with my fellow Democratic Caucus members in urging the Speaker of the House and the Majority in the House to restore HBCUs, HSIs, and TCCs to their appropriate status as equal institutions of higher education.