

PAYING SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO AN
HIV/AIDS ACTIVIST

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 20, 2008

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge Debra Fraser-Howze, a constituent and HIV/AIDS activist, for her many years' of dedication and hard work to find ways to test, educate, and treat those that have HIV/AIDS.

The November 11, 2008, CARIB News article, "Debra Fraser-Howze: Making a Difference," points out her more than 20 years' commitment to helping the fight against HIV/AIDS in New York where she resides, across America, and around the world. Since the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, PEPFAR, passed, which will allocate \$48 billion in Federal money towards fighting this epidemic in Africa, she is now pushing to have some of the money go towards battling HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean. There are 14 Caribbean nations that could get some of the money, including Jamaica where her mother is from. This is a great initiative that Debra Fraser-Howze has made. With her leadership, I am confident that she will be able to get funds from PEPFAR to go towards fighting this epidemic in the Caribbean.

Again, I commend Debra Fraser-Howze for her determination to find cures, provide funding and to educate people about HIV/AIDS around the world.

[From CaribWoman, Nov. 11, 2008]

DEBRA FRASER-HOWZE: MAKING A DIFFERENCE
(By Causewell Vaughan)

There's growing optimism for fighting AIDS in the Caribbean region as billions of dollars become available to fund programs aimed at preventing and containing the disease.

With \$48 billion in federal money being set aside to battle the disease in Africa, the Caribbean is actively seeking to qualify for a share.

The funds will be allocated through a U.S. foreign aid program known as the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). It is the largest commitment in history by any nation to fight a single disease.

"It's going to open doors to a new stream of funding where those doors were not open before," said Debra Fraser-Howze, a longtime HIV/AIDS advocate.

"The Caribbean will have the same positioning as some of those African nations with whom they share a similar AIDS situation."

Fraser-Howze has been helping to lead the fight against HIV/AIDS for more than two decades. She founded the National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS in 1987 and subsequently advised two presidents while she served on the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS.

In 2003 she was appointed to the New York City Commission on AIDS and last year to the New York State Governors Advisory Council.

Fraser-Howze is now vice president of External and Government Affairs for OraSure Technologies, a medical diagnostics company. While her responsibilities with the company focus on domestic matters, she remains an active advocate for anti-AIDS funding for the Caribbean.

"It's a personal issue with me," Fraser-Howze said, "because I know the numbers, and I see the rising rate of infection."

That's why she's resolute about the funding, especially since the Caribbean did not receive any of the initial PEPFAR money, which became available in 2003. "The Caribbean islands to which Americans travel all the time need to get the same focus as Africa," she said.

There are 14 Caribbean nations that could get some of the new money. They are Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Lucia, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago. Any PEPFAR money they receive will be for AIDS testing, prevention, treatment and care.

Fraser-Howze is quick to credit U.S. Rep. Donna Christiansen of the U.S. Virgin Islands for taking the lead in getting those nations included in the PEPFAR funding. "I've known her for more than 25 years, and I've worked with her and her staff on this issue. We understand that it is imperative that the Caribbean have a robust testing initiative," Fraser-Howze said.

But, she added, even with funding the battle against AIDS is truly difficult in the Caribbean because the region's culture is almost an ally of the disease. Fraser-Howze's mother is from Jamaica so she has knowledge of the cultural barriers to AIDS testing.

"Sex and drugs are very taboo topics in the Caribbean, and there is a lot of homophobia because the disease is very much focused on gay men," she said. "That is why the key to testing in the Caribbean is to have those barriers broken down by the community itself.

"I've seen government send in different people and different groups who are not culturally competent. The best approach is for Caribbean nations to develop their own plan. We want them to craft their own proposals to PEPFAR."

Fraser-Howze cited Barbados as already having "a major HIV/AIDS initiative."

She said she's "extremely optimistic" the Caribbean will get PEPFAR money and, she added, "I'm humbled at playing some small role in opening up this opportunity."

HONORING REP. JIM MCCRERY

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 20, 2008

Mr. STARK. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the service of my colleague JIM MCCRERY of Louisiana who is retiring after over 20 years as Member of the U.S. House of Representatives. JIM and I have also served together on the Committee on Ways and Means for 16 years.

Though we are from opposite sides of the aisle—and we frequently take opposite perspectives on issues—he is a colleague I admire greatly and a friend I will miss.

One of the many downsides to the increased partisanship in Congress is that many Members do not take the time to develop personal relationships across the aisle. JIM has never adhered to that philosophy. Maybe that's because he started in Congress on the staff of a Democratic Member of Congress. But I believe it's because JIM values the array of opinions to be had in Congress and is willing to look at the data and listen to others' thoughts before he makes up his mind—not necessarily always toeing a straight party line.

As the Ranking Member on the Committee on Ways and Means during this session of

Congress, JIM and our Chairman CHARLIE RANGEL restored civility and respect to the proceedings of our Committee—something that didn't exist under the leadership of the previous Chairman.

For JIM, the title "Honorable" is truly representative of him. He's served his constituents and this country well. His leadership and service will be missed. I wish JIM and his family all the best.

HONORING THE DISTINGUISHED
SERVICE OF DOLORES HUERTA

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 20, 2008

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the distinguished public service of community organizer Dolores Huerta. She has been selected as this year's honoree from the Center for Kern Political Education. For more than half a century, Dolores has devoted her life's work to ensuring economic justice for farm workers and their families as well as securing rights for women.

Dolores was born on April 10, 1930, in the small mining town of Dawson situated in northern New Mexico. She spent much of her childhood and young adult years in Stockton, graduating from Stockton High School. Dolores continued her studies at University of Pacific's Delta College where she received a provisional teaching credential. Soon after, she began a career in teaching where Dolores became acutely aware of the pressing need to address economic injustice.

During her post in leadership with the Stockton Community Service Organization (CSO), Dolores became christened as an organizer. In 1955, she encountered CSO Executive Director Cesar E. Chavez who shared in her vision of organizing farm workers, distinctively separate from the CSO mission. Thereafter, in 1962, Dolores and Cesar launched the National Farm Workers Association. In 1963, Dolores' lobbying and negotiating skills prevailed in securing Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and disability insurance for California farm workers. The Agricultural Labor Relations Act of 1975 was also enacted with her efforts.

Dolores wielded her powerful voice as the United Farm Worker's spokesperson to gain political power for farm workers. She helped in the election of many candidates: Robert F. Kennedy, President Clinton, Congressman Ron Dellums, Governor Jerry Brown, Congresswoman Hilda Solis, and, most recently, Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama. Currently, Dolores acts as President of the Dolores Huerta Foundation which principally serves to protect, organize and educate working poor immigrants.

In her honor, 5 elementary schools and a high school are named in recognition of Dolores Huerta. Among the countless prestigious awards received include the Eleanor Roosevelt Human Rights Award from President Clinton in 1998, Creative Citizenship Labor Leader Award from Puffin Foundation in 1984, Kern County's Woman of the Year by California State legislature, and the 100 Most Important Women of the 20th Century by Ladies Home Journal. Nine honorary doctorates from