

CITY OF BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA
SHELTER PLUS CARE CURRENT
RENEWAL CRISIS

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 13, 1999

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I want to call to your attention a grave housing situation in my congressional district the 9th of California and all across the Nation. Funding for renewals of the Shelter Plus Care Programs is in a state of crisis, and unfortunately, the fiscal year 2000 Veterans, Housing and Independent Agencies bill does not address this critical funding situation.

By the way of background, the City of Berkeley, which I represent, administers a HUD-supported Shelter Plus Care Program which currently provides permanent, supportive housing to 145 households, involving 105 formerly homeless individuals and 40 formerly homeless families. All of the individuals and families served by this program are disabled, either by severe mental illness (34 percent), chronic substance abuse (23 percent), dually diagnosed (both severe mental illness and chronic substance abuse) and/or by AIDS/HIV-related diseases (5 percent).

The Shelter Plus Care Program has been key in moving these individuals and families from chronic homelessness to self-sufficiency. All of the City of Berkeley's Shelter Plus Care participants are now living in private market housing with a range of needed support services (mental health, primary health care and social services).

The current lack of available McKinney Act funding to renew the City of Berkeley's existing Shelter Plus Care Program threatens these households that have made such significant strides with displacement to homelessness. This result is both unnecessary and potentially a major impact to the more costly emergency and safety net systems of care in the Berkeley and Oakland community.

Let me tell you about two individuals who are currently participants in the City of Berkeley Shelter Plus Care Program.

Killian is a 54-year-old male veteran who served in the United States Air Force from 1963-67. In the fall of 1989 he was hospitalized in the VA Hospital with severe symptoms of mental illness; he has been seriously disabled and homeless since then. Three years ago, the Shelter Plus Care Program provided him with housing and needed mental health services in the Berkeley community. Killian has achieved a level of stability in terms of both his housing and mental health issues since entering the Program. In his words, "without the Shelter Plus Care Program, I would have been unable to survive."

Glenda is a single mother in recovery who until recently was homeless in Berkeley with her young son. She has been diagnosed with clinical depression, ADD and bulimia. Since entering the Shelter Plus Care Program, she participates in regular case management counseling as well as receiving needed medical follow-up for her health conditions. In her words, "I know that without Shelter Plus Care I would still be on drugs, homeless or dead

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and my son not with his mother like God intended him to be. Without the services that Shelter Plus Care requires, I would never be where I am today. In September I start school. I need Shelter Plus Care to continue to progress in my life and future."

The positive impact that Shelter Plus Care housing has had on people could be repeated in any other city in the U.S., because it is such a vital and successful program. Mr. Speaker, I hope we can work together in conference to make the expiring Shelter Plus Care projects eligible for renewals from the Section 8 program rather than the current year McKinney appropriation. I also ask that Section 8 be provided with adequate funding to incorporate this request.

AMERICAN ZIONIST FUND
BANQUET

HON. WILLIAM J. COYNE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 13, 1999

Mr. COYNE. Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, October 10, the Pittsburgh District of the Zionist Organization of America will hold its 54th Annual American Zionist Fund Banquet. The banquet, which is dedicated to the memory of Doctor Norman Cohen, a longstanding supporter of Israel and the Pittsburgh Jewish community, will honor community businessman Jeffrey Markel and Pittsburgh City Council President Bob O'Connor.

Mr. Markel will be honored with the Israel Service Award for his many efforts in support of Zionism. Mr. Markel is currently the chairman of the United Jewish Federation's Partnership 2000 Initiative, which links Jewish communities in the United States with communities in Israel. The Partnership 2000 Initiative works to foster person-to-person contacts and economic development between American and Israeli Jews. Mr. Markel has served the UJF in many other capacities as well. In addition, Mr. Markel serves or has served on the Board of Directors of the Jewish Family and Children's Service, the Board of Directors of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, the Board of Directors of the American Jewish Information Network, and as a member of the Technical Advisory Board of the Jerusalem One Network, the first computer network to link the major universities in Israel with the Knesset.

Pittsburgh City Council President Bob O'Connor will receive the Natalie E. Novick Community Leadership Award for his many contributions to the Pittsburgh Jewish community and to community life in Pittsburgh. Council President O'Connor is in his second term on Pittsburgh City Council. His service on City Council has been marked by action on transportation issues, public safety, and programs that benefit children. Mr. O'Connor also serves on the Board of Directors of a number of civic and charitable organizations, including St. Francis Central Hospital, the Carnegie Institute, the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust, the Southwest Regional Planning Commission, and the Sudden Infant Death Syndrome Alliance. Mr. O'Connor was a founding member of the Pittsburgh Center for Grieving Children. In addition,

he was actively involved in the United Jewish Federation's Renaissance Project, which built or renovated a number of Jewish community facilities. And Mr. O'Connor provided substantial assistance to Pittsburgh's Beth Shalom Congregation after a 1997 synagogue fire.

On behalf of my constituents and myself, I want to thank Mr. Markel and City Council President O'Connor for their many contributions to the City of Pittsburgh and Pittsburgh's Jewish community, and I want to congratulate them on their selection as honorees at the 54th Annual American Zionist Fund Banquet.

TRIBUTE TO ISOLINA FERRÉ

HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 13, 1999

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Isolina Ferré, an outstanding individual who has devoted her life to serving the poor. Sister Isolina, a Missionary Servant of the Most Blessed Trinity, received the nation's highest civilian honor during a White House ceremony on Wednesday, August 11, 1999. She was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Sister Isolina, known as the "Angel of Ponce Beach," was born on September 5, 1914 to one of the most affluent families in Puerto Rico. Raised in a wealthy family, she decided early in life that she wanted to dedicate her life to the less fortunate. She joined the Missionary Servants of the Most Blessed Trinity at age 21 in Philadelphia. After she completed her training, she was assigned to the Appalachian coal mining region of West Virginia and then worked among Portuguese immigrants on Cape Cod, Massachusetts.

In 1957 Sister Isolina went to work at the Doctor White Community Center in Brooklyn, where she offered to be a mediator between African-American and Puerto Rican gangs. For her efforts she received the key to the city of New York from Mayor John Lindsay and the John D. Rockefeller Award for Public Service and Community Revitalization.

Mr. Speaker, Sister Isolina Ferré founded community service centers, clinics and programs to empower the poor in Puerto Rico, New York and Appalachia. She does this through the Centros Sor Isolina Ferré, a group of five community-service centers she has run for 30 years. One U.S. author who wrote about turning around poor, crime-ridden communities called her "Mother Teresa of Puerto Rico."

The Centros Sor Isolina Ferré has 350 employees, five offices throughout Puerto Rico, a postgraduate business and technical school and 40 programs aimed at stemming juvenile delinquency and strengthening families. With government and private funding, it serves more than 10,000 people a year.

The operation is built on Ferré's main principle: Poor communities have many resources they can use to improve their condition, and they can be taught to seek their own solutions and take control of their lives. Staff members teach leadership and strategic planning to people in public-housing projects, in Ponce—