

*September 6, 2001*

VIOLENCE PREVENTION WEEK

**HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 6, 2001*

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the community of Brownsville, Texas, for reminding our children about the values we cherish by commencing "Violence Prevention Week" as the new school year begins.

Each year, parents, students and educational professionals begin the school with more trepidation than we ever did, for today the worst-case scenario is not that our children will get in a fight, but that they will be a victim of gun violence.

Here in Texas, we know that if the central component of these tragedies were merely the

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

existence of guns, the level of school violence we see today would have always been so. It is much more: the responsibility that family teaches (including gun safety and proper storage); the faith and tolerance taught by family, churches, synagogues and mosques; the entertainment our children see; and the everyday examples of behavior to which young people are exposed.

In short, it is many things. Our society at large is far less to blame for the incidents of violence we have seen in communities across the country than are the individual families and communities whose job it is to be a good example every day. We should teach responsibility, emphasize faith, and offer age-appropriate entertainment and examples of behavior to children.

Brownsville is taking an important step in speaking to the issue of school violence by planning Violence Prevention Week, spon-

sored by the Brownsville Independent School District, the local law enforcement agencies, the Brownsville Chamber of Commerce and the local church community.

Events throughout the week include: a formal proclamation and efforts to bring up the subject around the dinner table, essay contests to make the subject pertinent to students, a "Violence Prevention Fair" at a local mall, school addresses by Dana Scott, sister of Rachel Scott, was killed at Columbine, and the incorporation of topics relating to violence prevention into the school curriculum.

Events will culminate in a LIFE (Laborers in Fields of Education) breakfast for educators and community leaders on Saturday, Sept. 8. The guest speaker will be Darrell Scott, father of Rachel Scott, whose story of refusing to deny her faith at her killer's request inspired millions around the world.

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