Southern Rural Development Initiative, National Congress for Community Economic Development, Cabrillo Economic Development Corporation, Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group, Chelsea Neighborhood Housing Services, Rural Opportunities, and Greater Holyoke Community Development Corporation.

Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley, Texas Community Reinvestment Coalition, Charlotte Organizing Project, Common Wealth Development, Wisconsin, Western New York Law Center, and California Reinvestment Committee.

Rural Housing Institute, National Neighborhood Housing Network, Vermont Slauson Economic Development Corporation, Los Angeles, Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, Coastal Enterprises, Inc., and Mon Valley Initiative.

NATIONAL COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT COALITION,
Washington, DC, June 21, 2001.

Hon. JAMES P. MCGOVERN,
House of Representatives, Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN MCGOVERN: The National Community Reinvestment Coalition (NCRC) strongly supports ''the Access and Openness in Small Businesses Lending Act of 2001'' as essential to the efforts of lending institutions, community organizations, and local public agencies to increase access to capital and credit for women- and minority-owned businesses. NCRC's 800 member organizations—community groups and local public agencies—around the country also commend the leadership of Representatives McGovern and Morella in sponsoring this bill.

The Access in Small Business Lending Act of 2001 would amend the Equal Credit Opportunity Act (ECOA) to require banks, thrifts, and credit unions to report the race and gender of the small businesses from which they receive applications and to which they make loans. This data is to be disclosed regardless of whether the application is made in person, over the phone, or received via mail or the Internet.

This data disclosure requirement promises to greatly increase access to credit for minority and women-owned businesses. Working together, community groups, lending institutions and local public agencies would analyze publicly available small business data and identify the small business owners and neighborhoods that remain underserved. Stimulated by data disclosure, these types of community-lenders partnerships are a win-win: bankers seize upon untapped markets and find additional profitable lending opportunities; community organizations and small businesses receive more access to private sector credit with which to revitalize their neighborhoods and expand their commercial base.

An amendment to HMDA (Home Mortgage Disclosure Act) data in 1990 to require the reporting of race and gender of applicants unleashed a tremendous increase in lending to traditionally underserved populations. From 1993 to 1999, for example, the number of conventional home purchase loans increased 119 percent for African-Americans, 116 percent for Latinos, and only 42 percent for whites.

Unfortunately, the state of affairs is not as sanguine in the small business area. The truncated CRA small business data (which only reveals the census tract in which a loan is made) suggests that much progress needs to be made. From 1996 to 1999, the number of small business loans increased 39 percent overall but only 8 percent in low-income census tracts. As a result, the percent of small business loans made in low- and moderate-income tracts declined from 21 percent to 18 percent, despite * * *

WORLD AIDS DAY

(Mrs. CLAYTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I would like first to thank the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) for asking us to really speak out on this worldwide issue. In fact, we have an opportunity to speak out on this issue 2 days before what we call World AIDS Day. As this day approaches, we are faced with the grim statistics about the spread of HIV/AIDS. From the rural South in my area of North Carolina to South Africa, greater efforts have to be made to fight the spread of AIDS. We hear these statistics. They do not even prick our consciousness. We have got to find a way to make sure that these statistics do not become just sheer rhetoric.

A recent story on the AP wire reports that the AIDS epidemic is spreading across eastern Europe, with HIV infection rates rising faster in the Soviet Union than anywhere else in the world. I would like to submit this article for the RECORD.

There has been more than 75,000 new cases of HIV in Russia as compared to 56,000 cases last year. Here in the United States, HIV infections among U.S. women have increased significantly over the last decade, especially in communities of color.

We must do more. We have an opportunity to do more. The United States must provide more resources for the global AIDS fund of the United Nations. We can do this by providing the resources and being a leader. We must develop long-term strategies to make sure that we rid the world of HIV infections.

REPORT: AIDS SWEEPING EASTERN EUROPE
(By Mara D. Bellaby)

MOSCOW (AP).—The AIDS epidemic is sweeping across Eastern Europe, with HIV infection rates rising faster within the former Soviet Union than anywhere else in the world, according to the latest U.N. report on AIDS, published Wednesday.

The combination of economic insecurity, high unemployment and deteriorating health services in the region are behind the steep rise, which shows no signs of abating, said U.N. officials, in Moscow to launch the report.

Worldwide, ''HIV/AIDS is unequivocally the most devastating disease we have ever faced, and it will get worse before it gets better,'' Peter Pilot, executive director of the Joint U.N. Program on HIV/AIDS wrote in the report, which is updated annually ahead of Worlds AIDS Day, held every Dec. 1.

In Russia, more than 75,000 new cases of HIV infection were reported by early November, compared to 56,000 new cases last year.

''That works out to about 10,000 new cases every month,'' said Gennady Onishchenko, Russia's first deputy health minister. ''This is our reality. . . . It is a very serious problem.''

Ukraine has the highest HIV prevalence rate in the region, with an estimated 1 percent of adults infected. In the small Baltic nation of Estonia, 1,112 new cases of HIV infection were recorded in the first nine months of this year, compared to only 12 in all of 1999, officials said.

The U.N. report said that in Eastern Europe, as in the rest of the world, AIDS affects a disproportionate number of young people. The main method of transmission in the former Soviet Union is through injecting drugs.

''It is a teen-age epidemic—teen-agers experimenting with drugs, teen-agers experimenting with sex,'' Piot said.

Officials in Eastern Europe have blamed the epidemic's increase partly on the sudden opening of borders, the growth of organized crime and weakened social services following the collapse of communist rule a decade ago.

Many young people, bored and unsure about their future, turn to drugs or unprotected sexual encounters, officials said.

Since the first clinical evidence of AIDS appeared 20 years ago, more than 22 million people have died. AIDS is the leading cause of death in sub-Saharan Africa, which has been hit hardest by the epidemic.

This year, African nations will experience 3.4 million new infections and 2.3 million deaths—losses that not only drain national budgets but also put future generations at risk, depriving children of parents and local economies of their work force, officials said.

U.N. officials predicted that some of the most affected African nations could lose more than 20 percent of their GDP by 2020 because of AIDS.

The U.N. report said unsafe sex was on the rise in high-income countries such as the United States and some European nations, subsequently triggering a rise in sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV.

''All the emphasis is put on treatment, which has had a major impact, but prevention has been neglected and education has been neglected,'' Piot said. ''The price that we will have to pay for that neglect is very high.''

The report found a bright spot in Cambodia, where prevention measures have had a significant impact, but officials also warned about the deteriorating situation in China and in the Caribbean, which continues to be the second most affected region in the world.

Last June, the U.N. General Assembly held a special session on HIV/AIDS, winning pledges from governments to pursue new preventive actions and contribute more funds to the fight. The United Nations estimates that some $10 billion will be needed every year to fight AIDS in low and middle-income countries.

□ 1645

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JEFF MILLER of Florida). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

JUMPERTOWN QUILT PROJECT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) is recognized for 5 minutes.