

As the founder and co-chair of the Congressional Caucus on Sri Lanka and Sri Lankan Americans, I would like to express my willingness for the U.S. to play a constructive role in supporting the peace process. In addition, I plan to encourage the Bush administration to take the steps necessary to support Sri Lanka during the peace process and to take the steps necessary to strengthen ties between the U.S. and Sri Lanka.

Mr. Speaker, I am encouraged by the leadership and dedication to peace so clearly exemplified by Prime Minister Wickremesinghe. I am pleased that his visit to the U.S. was a success and it is now time for the U.S. to proceed and actively support peace and reparation in Sri Lanka.

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 26, 2002

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to show my strong support for National Night Out. This year, over 30 million people in 9,700 communities in all 50 states will celebrate National Night Out. Each year, National Night Out is our nation's night to say no to crime and help take back and preserve the safety of our neighborhoods.

In 1984, the Executive Director of The National Association of Town Watch, Matt A. Peskin, introduced National Night Out. Searching for a way to heighten the awareness and strengthen participation in local anti-crime efforts, Mr. Peskin believed that a high profile, high-impact crime prevention event was needed.

In the first year of the event, over 2.5 million Americans in 400 communities across 32 states participated by turning on their porch lights. Today, while the front porch vigil remains a custom, National Night Out now includes block parties, cookouts, parades, festivals, neighborhood walks, safety fairs, rallies and safety meetings. This year's event will prove to be a bigger success than ever and I am pleased to announce that many of the communities of California's 27th Congressional District will be proud participants.

The communities of my district will call on their residents to participate in this national show of solidarity. Whether it is through large gatherings, community walks, small neighborhood vigils or a lighted porch light, the residents of the 27th District have always made a commitment to safe neighborhoods and streets.

Such an evening proves an opportune time to celebrate and thank our local police and fire departments. The men and women of these departments spend each day helping to ensure our safety and it is only with their help that we will be able to ensure the long-term safety of our children and our neighborhoods. On this night in particular, they deserve our respect and our praise for their dedication to serving all of us.

It is with all this in mind, that I ask all Members to join me in their strong support of National Night Out—America's night to support safe neighborhoods and safe communities.

A SPECIAL TRIBUTE IN HONOR OF
TEN YEARS OF INCORPORATION
FOR THE TOWN OF AWENDAW,
SOUTH CAROLINA

HON. HENRY E. BROWN, JR.

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 26, 2002

Mr. BROWN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, small towns are God's little wonders and today I would like to recognize the small town of Awendaw in my district. Awendaw is known as the "land of the Seewee Indians." It has a rich history that included a visit from the 1st President of the United States, George Washington while on a southern tour in 1791. During the 16th century, records show four Indian tribes that inhabited the land—the Samp, Santee, Seewee and the Wando. Agriculture was their way of life. In 1670, English colonists came to South Carolina at Port Royal in Beaufort. They traveled down the coast until they sighted what is now called Bull's Bay. They were captivated by the beauty of the unspoiled beaches, tall trees and dense forest. As the colonists approached the shore, Indians were waiting with bows and arrows. But the crew yelled out an Indian calling "Appada" meaning peace and the Indians withdrew their bows and welcomed them to shore. The Indians shared their food and the English colonists gave them goods such as, knives, beads and tobacco. Auendaugh-bough was the name of the settlement when the English colonists arrived but the name was later shortened to Awendaw.

Awendaw is a special place. The arms of nature surrounds it and radiates its beauty. The Cape Romain Wildlife Refuge, the Francis Marion Forest and the Santee Coastal reserve create a natural wall of protection around the area. Hunting and fishing are still a means of getting food just as it was for the Seewee Indians.

The Churches of the Awendaw community are a "testimony of their faith." The Ocean Grove (formerly Pine Grove), Mt. Nebo A.M.E., Ocean Grove United Methodists and First Seewee Missionary Baptist are all historical churches that play a significant role in the lives of the people who live there.

In November 1988, the people of Awendaw began its fight to become a town. For four years, the people gathered once a month at the Old Porcher Elementary School to plan, organize and share information with the people. There were many hurdles set before the people of Awendaw by the Justice Department. In 1989, Hurricane Hugo interrupted the process, but it was resumed in 1990. The Awendaw community made two unsuccessful attempts to incorporate. Finally, after the third try, the Secretary of State granted a certificate of Incorporation on May 15, 1992. On August 18, 1992, the town of Awendaw elected its first mayor the Rev. William H. Alston. The first town council were Mrs. Jewel Cohen, Mrs. Miriam Green, the Rev. Bryant McNeal and Mr. Lewis Porcher (deceased).

This year the town of Awendaw will celebrate ten years of incorporation. The town has grown from 175 to over 1000 in population. Over the last seven years, the town of Awendaw has become famous for its annual Blue Crab Festival. This grand celebration brings thousands of people from neighboring communities to share in the festivities.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues would join me in a salute to one of God's little wonders, the Town of Awendaw, South Carolina. "Thank God for small towns and the people who live in them."

PROJECT VARELA

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 26, 2002

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to once again draw attention to important developments in Fidel Castro's continued oppression of the Cuban people.

Needless to say, this summer has proved to be a memorable one for Fidel Castro.

It began on Friday, May 10, when over 11,000 citizens of Cuba took a courageous stand and petitioned the Cuban National Assembly to hold a nationwide referendum vote on guarantees of human rights and civil liberties. Named for the 19th-century priest and Cuban independence hero, Padre Felix Varela, the Varela Project was the first-ever peaceful challenge to Castro's four-decade long control of the island. Varela received no funding or support from foreign organizations or foreign governments and is a grassroots effort by the Cuban people to call on their government to provide them with internationally accepted standards of human and civil rights.

In an attempt to negate the effects of Varela, Castro scrambled to respond. Exactly one month to the day that Varela was delivered to the Assembly, Castro and his regime organized mass demonstrations all over Cuba in a sign of so called "support" for Cuba's socialist form of government. Castro began his own petition effort that asks members of the Cuban National Assembly to adopt an amendment to the Cuban constitution that stipulates that Cuba is a "socialist state of workers, independent and sovereign, organized with all and for the good of all, as a unified democratic republic, for the enjoyment of political liberty, social justice, individual and collective well-being and human solidarity." Castro has supposedly "obtained" the signatures of approximately 98% of Cuba's voting population.

However, Castro's poorly veiled attempt to erase the impact of the Varela Project has only backfired. As we near the middle of summer, Castro continues to strong-arm Cuban citizens into signing his petition, and word of the Varela Project continues to spread. Oswaldo Paya, Varela's organizer, continues to collect signatures and continues to garner the world's attention for his efforts.

It is critical that we continue to draw attention to and commend the efforts of Paya, his fellow organizers and all those who have signed Project Varela. Castro cannot continue to hide behind his forced petition and continue to ignore Project Varela. If Castro is so assured of his having the support of the Cuban people, then he must schedule a referendum on Varela's reforms and allow the true voices of the Cuban people to be heard.