

grateful to the APSA for the privilege of working with one of the program's most talented fellows this year, Dr. Frances Lee of Case Western Reserve University.

Frances has been a true delight and an invaluable asset to my office. Both my staff and I feel honored to have had a chance to benefit from her many-faceted intelligence, her unstinting hard work, and her ever-cheerful demeanor. In her short time with us, she has worked on several projects of both local and national impact that are of special importance to my constituents back in the Fifth District.

For example, Frances took principal responsibility in preparing a comment letter to the Internal Revenue Service, protesting its "pre-certification" proposal for recipients of the Earned Income Tax Credit. This credit provides approximately \$89 million in refunds to the hard-working families of my district each year, and its benefit to my constituents cannot be overstated. Frances worked with both local and national community groups and advocates to help raise awareness of the IRS proposal, which would have imposed an onerous bureaucratic burden on EITC beneficiaries by requiring them to "register" for this credit in advance. Frances meticulously researched the details of the IRS plan and crafted a well-written and persuasive letter urging the IRS to reconsider the impact of its proposal. Her efforts have drawn not only attention from the media but the interest of community groups in Nashville, who are now working with our office to make free tax assistance more readily available in our community. I cannot thank her enough for what her work will do to help ensure that my constituents continue to receive the tax credits they have earned through their hard work.

In addition to this effort, Frances provided our office with valuable assistance and advice on issues as varied as diversity in media ownership, prescription drugs and Medicare and social security. She also worked on projects critical to local economic development and charity.

Both my staff and I will miss Frances deeply, and on behalf of my staff, I wish her the very best in all of her future endeavors. And to the APSA for granting us the opportunity to work with Frances, I again offer my sincerest thanks.

HONORING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AMERICAN POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION CONGRESSIONAL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

HON. ROBERT C. SCOTT

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 22, 2003

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to draw attention to the 50th anniversary of the American Political Science Association (APSA) Congressional Fellowship Program.

The goal of the APSA Congressional Fellowship Program is simple: to help participants better understand Congress. It is the oldest such program on Capitol Hill, designed to place highly skilled professionals from a broad spectrum of backgrounds in congressional offices for nine months as legislative aides. Over

the years, the highly selective, nonpartisan program has grown from its beginnings with six fellows in 1953 to the current program, which selects between 40 and 45 professionals who have built impressive records of accomplishment as political scientists, journalists, sociologists, domestic and foreign policy government specialists, health policy experts and international scholars. The relationship between the fellow and the Members of Congress is a symbiotic one as Members obtain access to new sources of expertise, while fellows obtain first-hand perspectives about life on the Hill. There is, after all, no substitute for practical experience to understand Congress as a living institution. I wish to place on record my support for it.

I have had the privilege to be associated with two APSA fellows in my office during the time I have been serving in the House of Representatives. As it turns out both are female journalists from foreign countries. Fardah Assegaf from Indonesia worked at the National News Agency of Indonesia, and served in my office in 1993. Michelle Phipps-Evans from Trinidad and Tobago worked at the Washington Afro American Newspapers and is serving this year. Both have been invaluable in the levels of writing and researching they have brought to the table. Each acted as full members of my staff advising me on various issues.

Other enrichment opportunities continue through the program with the Wilson Seminar Series, which augment the legislative experience with speakers closely involved in the legislative process. A state-federal legislative comparative program at the State House in Annapolis, Maryland, and the Canadian Parliamentary Exchange provide further education. During the Canadian exchange, fellows provide their northern colleagues with a one-week orientation to Congress and receive a similar program through the House of Commons in Ottawa, Canada.

Upon completion of the year on Capitol Hill, which often includes experience in both the House and Senate, the fellows return to their previous employment where their understanding of the political process becomes integrated and disseminated, with a kind of ripple effect among their colleagues. This knowledge of the workings of government enhances their future participation in the democratic process.

Mr. Speaker, I salute the APSA Congressional Fellowship Program, which has given over 1,800 individuals what can only be called an "opportunity of a lifetime."

CARICOM

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 22, 2003

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, last February, members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) met to discuss the prospect of creating a single Caribbean market economy. In mid-April, members of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), a CARICOM subgroup, gathered to examine a similar proposal. Despite widespread enthusiasm among OECS members for economic integration, CARICOM participants Jamaica, Barbados, and other non-OECS members

have expressed their reservations. In response to strains caused by declining tourist revenue and highly competitive pricing in the tropical fruit sector, some of the smaller Eastern Caribbean islands are recognizing that their interests and the interests of other CARICOM members do not always fully coincide. The disagreements between OECS members and the remainder of the CARICOM states merit adequate attention on Washington's part if the final product of FTA negotiations is to result in maximum economic benefits for our own citizens and for our neighbors to the South, including, of course, the English-speaking Caribbean.

As the economies of the region find themselves under increasing stress, and as diplomatic negotiations for the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas marches onward, it seems clearer than ever that careful attention must be paid to the delicate economic relationships presently maintained by each of the hemispheric nations, both small and large. If the world's economy is to recover from its present downturn, and if future economic slumps are to be averted, planners must recognize that support for total economic integration is far from universal. They must strive to understand the reasons behind dissent, where it exists, and the reasons for support, where it thrives. It may very well be that principles of free trade can be implemented more effectively in some places rather than in others, where local economic fundamentals do not entirely coincide with those of the main players, like the U.S.

The following research memorandum was authored by Justin Vance, a research associate with the Washington-based Council on Hemispheric Affairs (COHA), a nonpartisan, tax-exempt organization that has long been committed to addressing issues associated with human rights, democracy and economic justice throughout the western hemisphere.

Fueled by a greater sense of urgency regarding the forging of a single market economy than some of their neighbors and fellow members in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the prime ministers of the Organization of the Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) met in mid-April 2003 to discuss the future of their economic relations. The seven permanent members of the OECS are Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Their governments have already passed EU-style measures that allow people to move freely across each other's borders. New passports for the Eastern Caribbean States are expected to be issued by 2004, while Antigua, St. Kitts, Montserrat, and St. Vincent have further accelerated their economic integration by also allowing the free movement of labor within the island group. The necessary planning to implement a single market economy would obviously take longer, but the group hopes to implement its integration by 2005. "This is only advancing by two years what is really going to take place," said St. Vincent Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves, possibly alluding to the fact that CARICOM is aiming for its own single market economy by 2007, only two years after its original date.

Most people tend to associate the Caribbean with stunning beaches and refreshing oceans. Some insist it is as close to paradise as one can find. Indeed, the Caribbean islands have plentiful resources and boast a soil structure that is perfect for growing a wide array of crops. Despite these riches,

many Caribbean residents equate their alleged Eden more closely with Hades, as they struggle to feed their families. Some EC islands are among the most underprivileged in the world, with an increasing disparity between the rich and poor. Though the per capita GDP of most of the islands is increasing, they are still far behind that of the developed nations.

The Caribbean islands have long faced an array of dilemmas. To cope with some of these, the Treaty of Chaguaramas, signed in Trinidad on the 4th of July 1973, established the Caribbean Community known as CARICOM. The organization has taken on evolving objectives including improving standards of living, safer working conditions, full employment, and enhanced levels of competitiveness and productivity. During the twenty-third meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community in July 2002, Mr. Edwin W. Carrington, CARICOM's secretary-general, called upon those in attendance to celebrate the organization's 30th anniversary by implementing the Caribbean Single Market Economy (CSME). In what may be an understatement, Jamaican Prime Minister, Percival J. Patterson, observed, "Our situation no longer permits time just for talking. It is high time for action here and now. In today's world there is no question of simply standing still. Just to mark the time is to be left behind."

Some island governments argue that the creation of a single market economy that would allow goods, services, people and capital to move freely throughout the Caribbean would be a bonanza for their citizens. They insist that the CSME will increase production and trade among member countries while it also improves the quality of goods and the competitiveness of their prices, creates jobs and improves living standards. Others, such as The Bahamas, contend that such an agreement would infringe on their sovereignty. It may sometimes appear easier and seemingly more beneficial for an island nation to enter into a bilateral agreement with a single country rather than with a multiplicity of its neighbors and fellow CARICOM members.

The Bahamas is content to be a part of CARICOM, but hesitant to integrate into a single market economy. According to Bahamian Prime Minister Hubert A. Ingraham, "the 'free movement of people' aspect of the SME would have serious social and political implications for The Bahamas, given its unique position as the target for massive unregulated migration from many countries." This realistic fear of a domestic job market that becomes inundated by floods of migrants from nearby islands appears justified when one looks at the statistics. The Bahamas currently enjoys a GDP per capita of \$16,800, while the average for other CARICOM members is only \$5,500. The unemployment rate in The Bahamas is a low 6.9% compared to the average rate of 16.6% in other CARICOM nations. (If Haiti is excluded, the average drops to 13%). CARICOM members believe that their economic problems will be ameliorated once they become a part of the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), making them even more competitive on the international level. Although Bahamian officials plan on negotiating in collaboration with CARICOM, they have confirmed that they are prepared to voice opinions that are at variance with the latter's initiatives in order to protect their interests as well as ensure the proper treatment of some of the other smaller, developing economies.

Jamaica also on occasion has exhibited what could be called anti-CARICOM tendencies by negotiating a unilateral air serv-

ices agreement with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in Washington. CARICOM members supposedly were working collectively towards a deal with the FAA, but Jamaica skirted what it saw as a slowmoving CARICOM out of fear of further jeopardizing its already hemorrhaging tourist industry. The Bahamas and Belize have also shown themselves to be willing to strike separate deals with the U.S. As tourism generates a large part of the foreign currencies for these nations, it was a matter of utmost importance to them to reach an agreement.

In view of their individual interests, CARICOM's characteristic grindingly slow approach was producing paralysis. In response to the organization's long term aspirations to also form a political alliance as well, Prime Minister P.J. Patterson confirmed that Jamaica considers CARICOM a "community of sovereign states" and that his country would have no part of it, though they respect and support the rights of other CARICOM nations to negotiate accordingly, if they so desire. These types of divergences are what have kept CARICOM from implementing the single market economy about which they have been talking for the last fifteen years.

Another deterrent to CARICOM's quest for economic unification is the fact that the Caribbean Islands all have fairly similar economies. Chicago School neoliberal economic scholars advocate strict adherence to the law of comparative advantage, specialization, and unfettered access to markets. They insist that if the above criteria are present, an economy will maximize production and benefit from the gains of trade. In the Caribbean, however, specialization has proven difficult due to the similarity of its economic profiles.

Antigua, The Bahamas, Barbados, and Jamaica all depend heavily on tourism. For example, over 60% of the Bahamas' GDP comes from tourism. Over 50% of Belize's exports are from cane sugar, while St. Kitts also relies heavily on sugar, despite the commodity's falling price. St. Lucia and St. Vincent's primary income comes from the production of bananas, but competition involving this fruit is fierce as Central American countries are able to produce at a considerably cheaper price. Dominica also relies on bananas, but since Hurricane Luis in 1995 devastated the crop, the country has relied upon construction and such non-traditional commercial activities as soap production to fuel its recovery.

Guyana has a large mining industry based on numerous gold deposits, but lacks the required skilled labor to fully exploit that commodity. Other resources found on the islands include bauxite, petroleum, and natural gas. This dependence on tourism and limited amounts of economic diversity among the islands has pressured CARICOM members and increased inter-island competition, as they at the same time seek out various bilateral agreements with other countries that best meet their needs. Perhaps for this reason, members of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) have sought a single market economy sooner than CARICOM, hoping to do what the larger body has failed to accomplish thus far.

Some observers claim the OECS is pushing to form a free trade agreement apart from CARICOM in an attempt to increase their collective bargaining power. Such an alliance would allow CARICOM's smaller member states to contract services collectively—including telecommunications services, which are currently over-priced due to their micro markets—as well as to import goods at lower prices through unified buying power. The island nations aspire to eventually be seen as a larger market and to profit

from economies of scale that will also strengthen their voice in an already complex global economy, and, of course, in upcoming FTAA negotiations.

Though not a single market economy, The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between Mexico, the U.S., and Canada was met with considerable opposition when first proposed. It is the world's most extensive free trade agreement short of a common market. Since the beginning of its implementation in 1994, some tariffs have been completely eliminated while others will drop until they too disappear in five, ten, or fifteen years. From 1993 to 2001, bilateral trade between the U.S. and Mexico increased 188 percent. But despite these seemingly beneficial statistics, opponents still point out that hundreds of thousands of Mexicans have been negatively affected due to rising unemployment rates brought about by a contracting economy. In the first three years of NAFTA, over 2 million Mexicans lost their jobs. Many American and Canadian workers also lost out as companies moved south of the border in search of cheap labor. One convincing argument now being made is that those who benefit from NAFTA tend not to need it, while those who suffered before, continue to suffer, but even more dramatically.

At the beginning of the year, U.S. officials announced the commencement of discussions concerning the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA). The hope of negotiators is to eliminate tariffs and other economic barriers to the expansion of manufactured goods, agriculture, and services, as well as increasing FDI and portfolio investment between the United States and Central America. Over 50 programs will be initiated to help Central American countries compete on an international level. It remains to be seen, however, whether CAFTA will truly help stabilize the area's economies and bring relief to all strata of Central American societies.

Some Caribbean authorities feel that a NAFTA-like prescription for the Caribbean would have a monumental effect on the area as the islands' individual economies are becoming more and more obsolete in the international market, based as they are on high cost sugar and banana cultivation as well as an increasingly fickle tourist industry. According to the CARIBNews, the OECS hopes to implement a single market economy by 2005 because "the region is likely to be exposed to tough competition as it joins Latin American and North American countries in signing onto the Free Trade Area of the Americas."

Dr. Richard Bernal, director-general of the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery (CRNM), has said that the Caribbean will inevitably have to increase its participation in the global economy. Its advocates say that each of the nations in the Caribbean region would benefit greatly from being a part of the FTAA, as their worldwide markets would almost certainly expand. But some of the smaller and lesser-developed countries' fate could be far more problematic. If the U.S. and other large economies are interested in what the smaller countries have to offer—such as Guyana's gold and bauxite—they will need to include provisions that help those countries develop instead of marginalizing their exports and forcing down their prices, which will only add to the poverty that already is widely found. The OECS members who are seeking a single market economy and integration within the FTAA will soon know whether their economic prospects under the pending trade pact will fulfill the abundance of sales talk they have heard over the past few years.