

TRIBUTE TO MR. LEON WEST

**HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, August 3, 2007*

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Madam Speaker, it is with great honor and gratitude that I stand before you today to recognize the many accomplishments of Mr. Leon West. I can truly say that Leon is one of northwest Indiana's most dedicated, distinguished, and honorable citizens. I have known Leon for many years, and he is one of the most passionate and involved citizens that I have ever known, especially when it comes to his service to the Democratic Party and the people of the First Congressional District. For the past 14 years, Leon has been a constant fixture in Porter County, serving as chairman for the Porter County Democratic Party, and more recently, as First District chairman. At the age of 72, Leon has decided to retire from these posts to spend more time with his family, but his efforts over the course of his tenure and the impact he has had on transforming the government in Porter County will forever be remembered. To honor Leon, a farewell reception will be held at the Woodland Park Community Center in Portage, Indiana, on Monday, August 6, 2007.

Leon West was born in Osceola, Arkansas, on September 17, 1934. He was one of six children. Known for his passion and unwavering devotion to the betterment of his community, it is no surprise to learn that Leon, as a young man, served in the U.S. Army from 1957 to 1959 and again from 1961 to 1962. While serving his community in various capacities throughout his lifetime, Leon came to be known for his strong work ethic, a trait he undoubtedly developed during his 42 year career at United States Steel.

Early on, Leon knew that the best way to improve his community and to help the people of Porter County was to get involved in public service. In each of his roles, Leon focused on the same goal, to make a difference in society, starting with his own community. Some highlights of Leon's career include his service on the Portage Board of Zoning Appeals, his 18 years on the Portage City Council, and his service on the Porter County Council. In addition, Leon further demonstrated his commitment to the people of northwest Indiana through his membership with the Portage Jaycees, the Exchange Club, Dunes Lodge #741, and the Shriners, to name a few. It was through his work with the Jaycees that Portage, Indiana, received its status as a city in 1968. He has also served on various councils and boards. From issues ranging from taxes and transportation to caring for the elderly, Leon West has always been an active participant in seeking to improve his community in every way possible. For his efforts, he was awarded the prestigious Sagamore of the Wabash in 1997 by the late Governor Frank O'Bannon.

While his everyday presence will be missed in northwest Indiana, Leon will now have a chance to fully commit his time to those closest to him, his family. A loving husband, father, and grandfather, Leon's commitment to his community is surpassed only by his love for his family. Leon and his loving wife, Beverly, will soon be moving to Texas, and they plan to spend as much time as possible with

their three children: Kathy, Kerri, and Ken, and their adoring grandchildren: Blake, Paige, Andrew, Claire, Duncan, and Lou.

Madam Speaker, Leon West has selflessly given his time and efforts to the people of the First Congressional District and to the Democratic Party in northwest Indiana throughout his years of service. At this time, I ask that you and all of my distinguished colleagues join me in commending him for his lifetime of service and dedication, and I ask that you join me in wishing him the best of health and happiness in the years to come.

IN HONOR OF THE 2007 SUSSEX COUNTY SENIOR OF THE YEAR, MARIA RATH

**HON. SCOTT GARRETT**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, August 3, 2007*

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I rise to commend Maria Rath of Hainesville for her kind and generous service to her community. In her retirement, Maria has turned her tremendous energy and heart into a true blessing for all of Sussex County. Next week, her good deeds will be recognized at the State Fair when she is named the 2007 Sussex County Senior of the Year. I join my Sussex neighbors in honoring her for her work.

Maria has established the Bread of Life's Ministry, a one-woman show distributing donated baked goods to area food pantries and families in need. She has partnered with places like Panera Bread, Manna House, and Sussex County Technical School to take their donations of leftover bread, repackaging it, and distribute it to institutions like Liberty Towers and Nutrition Center, Brookside Apartments, the Newton Adult Day Care Center, First Presbyterian Church of Sparta, and, my own church, Lafayette Federated Church. In addition to her regular rounds, Maria will take whatever extra time or effort is necessary to help a family she hears may need her loving touch.

In addition to this important project, Maria and her husband, Wilbur, started a furniture ministry six years ago. Through that endeavor, they bring household furniture to families in need. Maria also cooks at the Manna House once a month and volunteers at the Newton Hospital labs. Her labors are truly labors of love, bringing joy and hope to people as well as the material goods they need so badly.

Maria notes, "I'm 77, but I feel like 49." Age is no match for a young and vibrant spirit and heart. Maria is an extraordinary example for men and women of all ages, demonstrating the power of a single life to influence so many lives in a very positive way.

CARIBBEAN STATES MAKE ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF POVERTY ON DEVELOPMENT

**HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, August 3, 2007*

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to enter into the RECORD an opinion editorial

published in the CaribNews newspaper the week ending July 31, 2007 titled "St. Vincent & the Grenadines: Launches Poverty Assessment Survey" and an article entitled "Poverty Picture in the Caribbean: Barbados to Undertake Assessment." Both examine the initiatives these countries have taken to address poverty.

As CARICOM nations look to move to a single market economy, they should be encouraged to take a proactive approach to assess poverty in their individual nations. Poverty assessments serve as the key instrument of poverty reduction strategy. They are designed to assess the extent and causes of poverty in a given country and to propose a strategy to ameliorate its effects. Understanding the causes and characteristics of poverty in the Caribbean is particularly important at this time as there are indications that living conditions in some countries have declined in recent years.

The data gathered from these assessments will be used to evaluate the quality of life and living conditions being experienced at the community, family and individual levels, with particular interest and emphasis placed on vulnerable groups like women, and children.

The increases in competition stemming from global economic changes in trade and capital markets, the erosion of preferential market access, the vulnerability of the tourist industry and competition from other destinations, and decline in official capital flows from bilateral sources all present a particularly difficult challenge for the Caribbean. Given this environment, there is an urgent need for countries to pursue policies that will stimulate and sustain economic growth and prioritize investments aimed at reducing poverty and developing human resources. So I commend the leadership of the governments of Barbados and St. Vincent & the Grenadines for the steps they are taking to assess poverty in their countries.

[From CaribNews, July 17, 2007]

ST. VINCENT LAUNCHES POVERTY ASSESSMENT SURVEY

KINGSTOWN, ST. VINCENT, CMC—St. Vincent and the Grenadines has launched an EC\$2 million-dollar (US \$749,000) poverty assessment programme that Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves said would be welcomed regardless of the outcome.

"Only on the foundation of truth we can build efficacious policies," Gonsalves said as he addressed the launching of the project on Tuesday. The poverty assessment project will seek to create a profile of poverty on the island and is being funded by the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme.

The last poverty assessment survey was undertaken in 1996 and it found that 37.5 per cent of the population was poor, while 20.4 per cent of the households and 25.7 per cent of the population was indigent, or living below the poverty line.

Gonsalves, who said that poverty reduction is one of the central pillars of his government's programme, said he was prepared to accept the results of the new survey.

He noted that in the event that the assessment showed there had not been a significant enough reduction in poverty, more would have to be done in addition to what is already in place.

"History is replete with failed leaders who want to hear what they want to, they don't last long," he said, blaming the then New Democratic Party (NDP) government of not properly preparing the nation for the quickly changing economy.