

Prior to joining the Defense Department, Secretary Geren represented Texas' 12th District for four terms. During that time, we worked together on the Armed Services committee, where he served with distinction. He also served on the Science & Technology and the Public Works & Transportation Committees.

Secretary Geren's strength of character and visionary leadership has resulted in a better Army and a safer nation. I thank him for his extraordinary service to country, and look forward to applauding whatever new and exciting chapter he now begins.

HONORING GERALD GAW

HON. JAMES P. McGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 17, 2009

Mr. McGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a remarkable leader in the Clinton Community, Gerald Gaw.

Gerald Gaw, Superintendent of Clinton Public Schools, will be retiring this week after 32 years of service to the children of the Clinton Public School District. Gerald dedicated his career to serving his community, beginning as a middle school math teacher at the age of 27. Throughout the past thirty years, Gerald nurtured students as both a middle and high school teacher before serving as principal of first the Clinton middle school and then Clinton High School. In 2004, Gerald was recognized for his outstanding work when he was selected for the position of Superintendent of Schools, where he has helped the school district thrive.

Gerald was born and raised in the small Clinton community. Throughout his many years in the school district, he would often find himself teaching children whose parents had been his students or interacting with school committee members who had cared for him as a child. Gerald was committed to playing his part in the small community too, nurturing the children of Clinton for the futures that lay ahead of them. Educating children is Gerald's passion, a passion that thousands have benefited from during their time in Clinton schools.

Gerald was one of the first principals to work in the new Clinton High School and was largely responsible for the transformation of the new building into a state-of-the-art educational facility. As the MCAS standardized testing was initiated across Massachusetts, Gerald promoted high achievement throughout the school, implementing new programs intended to prepare students for success.

Among Gerald's many talents, foremost was his compassion and his ability to connect with students. Reaching out to students from difficult backgrounds or those who needed just a little extra help was a mission Gerald added on to his already long list of responsibilities as an administrator. Whether it was talking with students during lunch hour, encouraging them in the classroom, or working out with them in the gym, Gerald was known for befriending children who needed a positive presence in their lives. As principal, Gerald coached a Pop Warner football team, and even as superintendent he tried to spend as much time as possible with the children. As he enters retirement, Gerald is looking forward to going back

to the classroom as a math teacher at a college.

Gerald will be missed by the faculty and thousands of students whose lives he shaped in a multitude of ways. I wish him and his wife Carol, along with their three sons, many happy years in a well deserved retirement.

Madam Speaker, I know all of my colleagues join me in thanking this remarkable man for his many years of dedication to the people of the Clinton.

INTRODUCING A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR TEMPORARY PROTECTED STATUS FOR HAITIAN NATIONALS CURRENTLY RESIDING IN THE UNITED STATES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 17, 2009

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce a concurrent resolution expressing support for temporary protected status for Haitian nationals currently residing in the United States, and for other purposes.

The creation of TPS was intended to serve as the statutory embodiment of a safe haven for those who are fleeing—or reluctant to return to—a potentially dangerous situation in their country of origin.

According to section 244(A) of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1990, TPS may be granted when: there is ongoing armed conflict posing a serious threat to personal safety; it is requested by a foreign state that temporarily cannot handle the return of nationals due to environmental disaster; or extraordinary and temporary conditions in a foreign state exist which prevent aliens from returning.

Haiti has continued to meet all three of these requirements, and yet, not once have Haitian nationals been granted TPS.

Last summer, only a few months after deadly food riots led to the removal of the country's Prime Minister, Haiti was ravaged by four back-to-back natural disasters. Thousands lost their homes, many were left starving and isolated from humanitarian assistance, nearly 800 lives were taken, and over 300 people remain missing.

How dire must the situation in Haiti become before the United States is willing to extend this helping hand to Haiti as it has done for other nations under similar circumstances?

The Haitian government's ability to provide basic governmental services—clean water, education, passable roads and basic health care—remains severely compromised by these natural disasters. Repatriating Haitians at this time imposes an additional burden on government resources that are already stretched too thin and poses a serious danger to deportees' personal safety. Further, with hurricane season well underway, the Haitian people will only slip further into despair when another storm inevitably hits their nation.

Concerning stability and overall safety, Haiti is still in dire need of an adequate policing force to maintain order and halt the escalation in kidnappings that are plaguing the nation.

As of today, the Department of State's current travel warning advises Americans that

current conditions in Haiti make it unsafe to travel due to the potential for looting, the possibility of random violent crime, and the serious threat of kidnapping for ransom.

Madam Speaker, if it is unsafe for our citizens to travel to Haiti, then those same conditions should make it much too dangerous and inappropriate to forcibly repatriate Haitians at this time. It is unfortunate and appalling that our current immigration policies hold such harmful double standards.

I want to make it very clear that I acknowledge and heartily congratulate Haiti's efforts toward recovery and to a stable democratic government. However, President Prival's nascent democratic government still faces immense challenges with regards to rebuilding Haiti's police and judicial institutions to achieve the fair and prompt tackling of the ongoing political and criminal violence.

In addition to safety and human rights considerations, halting the deportation of Haitians is also an economic matter.

Under the law, TPS beneficiaries are eligible to obtain work authorization permits. The ability for Haitian nationals to legally work in the United States puts them in a position to contribute to their country's recovery and development until such time when it is safe for them to return to Haiti.

Madam Speaker, the Haitian Diaspora has always played a pivotal role in assisting Haiti. It is widely known that Haitians residing in the United States often work three jobs to send money back to Haiti each month. Many Haitians in the United States often send remittances to support family members, and others travel home to lend their expertise toward rebuilding and humanitarian efforts.

Designating Haiti under TPS status would preserve and increase remittances—totaling approximately a third of Haiti's GDP—from the Haitian Diaspora to relatives and communities in Haiti that are key for welfare, survival, and recovery.

Haiti is more dependent than any other country on remittances with nearly a billion dollars a year sent home by Haitians in the United States. In fact, remittances to Haiti far exceed foreign aid.

Now, many Haitian nationals in the United States who previously sustained relatives in Haiti through remittances are being deported, further depriving Haiti of an important source of financial aid that is well-positioned to assist when based here in the United States.

Madam Speaker, there are currently five countries that are protected under the TPS provision: Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Somalia, and Sudan. By refusing to give Haiti the TPS designation, our inequitable immigration policies continue to send the message that the safety of Haitian lives is not a priority compared to that of Salvadoran, Honduran, or Sudanese lives.

We must act to change this perception. Our immigration policies have to change. They must reflect fairness and treat Haitians equally to Nicaraguans, Hondurans, and Salvadorans whose deportations are suspended and who are allowed to work and support their families back home.

Granting Haitians TPS is necessary to achieve fundamental fairness in our treatment of Haitian immigrants and remedy the accurate and widespread perception that U.S. policy has discriminated against them.