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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. 20515

June 15, 1985

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WASHINGTON OFFICE

Dear Colleague,

We want to clear up some apparent misconceptions about the targeted assistance program contained in the Refugee Assistance Authorization legislation scheduled to be considered on the floor.

First, the targeted assistance program provides much needed relief to state and local taxpayers when they are faced with an influx of refugees needing assistance in adjustment. Coming from two states heavily impacted by the influx of unexpected refugees we can attest to the tremendous drain on state and local dollars that the resettlement process can present. According to a recent report from the Committee on Immigration Policy of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, fewer than 20,000 Cuban born residents lived in Dade County prior to 1960; that number has increased to 525,000. The resources of Florida and Dade County simply could not meet the needs of this refugee population without the assistance of the federal government, the situation was created by federal and not state policy.

Secondly, the targeted assistance program is not a cash assistance, give away program, but rather a system by which counties provide employment training and education to this new population. The purpose behind this program is to prepare these individuals for quick assimilation into society and to aid in making them self sufficient. It makes infinitely more sense to make funds available early on to assist in absorption rather than to create a situation where we encourage dependence on welfare dollars down the road.

Lastly, some seem to be under the erroneous impression that this is a program making federal funds available to only a handful of states such as Florida, New York, Texas and California. In reality some 46 counties in 20 states have benefited from targeted assistance funds in 1983 and 1984. Thus, over 150 Congressional districts have received targeted assistance dollars. For example, Ramsey County, Minnesota received approximately \$918,000 in targeted assistance while Suffolk County, Massachusetts was given about \$929,000.

The targeted assistance program is an important tool in the absorption of refugees in counties who must quickly address the problems of these newcomers for the good of the general population.

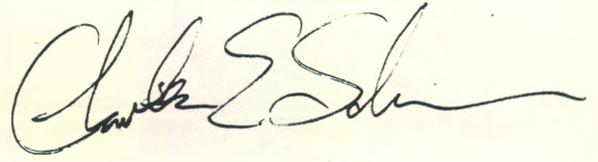
Sincerely,



BILL McCOLLUM



HAMILTON FISH



CHARLES SCHUMER