

WILLIAM LEHMAN
13TH DISTRICT, FLORIDA

COMMITTEES:
EDUCATION AND LABOR
POST OFFICE AND CIVIL SERVICE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. 20515

January 19, 1977

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Dear Colleague:

Concern for human rights is increasingly recognized as an important component of our nation's foreign policy. In order to become more fully aware of the problem of human rights in Haiti, a country very close to our own borders, you and members of your staff are cordially invited to a briefing to be held on Wednesday, January 26 in the Gold Room from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. The program is being organized with the cooperation of the National Council of Churches, the American Committee for the Protection of the Foreign Born, and the Haitian Fathers of Brooklyn, N.Y.

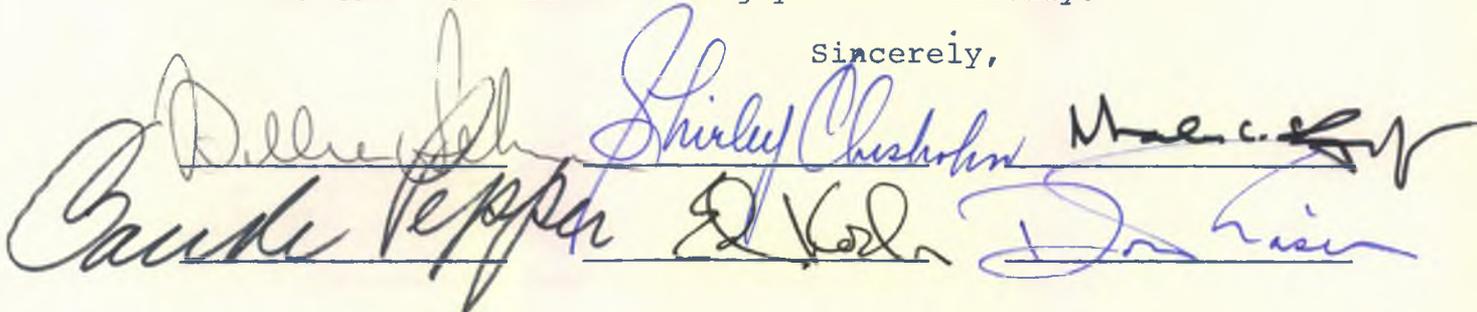
The question of human rights in Haiti is integrally bound up in another pressing problem which affects the United States even more directly. Hundreds of Haitian refugees were imprisoned in South Florida and Texas because the United States will not grant them political refugee status. This status, which the U.S. has granted to thousands of refugees from communist-dominated countries, hinges on determination of a well-founded fear of persecution.

On Wednesday, you will be given the opportunity to learn more about the reasons the Haitians have been fleeing their island. Speakers will include experts in immigration law, researchers in Haitian affairs, Haitian journalists, and refugees themselves. They will describe life under the oppressive regime of Jean Claude Duvalier and the ongoing dilemma of those who have fled.

This is a unique chance to develop a better understanding of the Haitians' case for asylum and the existence of prejudicial treatment of the refugees once inside the United States.

We look forward to seeing you on Wednesday.

Sincerely,


The block contains several handwritten signatures in blue ink. From left to right, the most legible signatures are "William Lehman", "Shirley Chisholm", and "Maec". There are also several other less legible signatures and initials.