

PORTER GOSS
13TH DISTRICT, FLORIDA

224 CANNON BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-0913
(202) 225-2536

COMMITTEES:
FOREIGN AFFAIRS
MERCHANT MARINE AND FISHERIES
STANDARDS OF OFFICIAL CONDUCT

DISTRICT OFFICES
2000 MAIN STREET
SUITE 303
FT. MYERS, FL 33901
(813) 332-4677

2002 RINGLING BOULEVARD
SUITE 152
SARASOTA, FL 34237
(813) 951-7878

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0913

February 26, 1992

REFUGEES: A NATIONAL SOLUTION TO A NATIONAL PROBLEM

Dear Colleague:

As the Haitian crisis continues, hopes have risen for a political solution that will return democracy and permit renewed economic and humanitarian assistance to that impoverished island. Meanwhile, we are being asked to consider H.R. 3844 -- The Haitian Refugee Protection Act. While I and others consider this legislation, as drafted, to have serious drawbacks, I believe we all can find common ground around the proposition that the burden of caring for any Haitian refugees or displaced persons who enter the United States should be equitably shared. The costs incurred by state and local governments should be reimbursed. I am offering an amendment that expresses the sense of the Congress in this regard.

The cost of the U.S. Government interdiction, care, processing and resettlement effort has already reached about \$40 million to date. It has also diverted Coast Guard cutters away from vital drug interdiction efforts along the East Coast.

But the costs do not end there. Many of the Haitians brought to the U.S. will end up in Florida. Historically, the Federal Government has reimbursed Florida state and local governments only about half the calculable costs of resettlement and absorption of new arrivals. Based on my state's experience with the Mariel boatlift, the unreimbursed cost to our state and local governments is expected to be more than \$5 million the first year. Florida's heart remains wide open to refugees, but our resources already are stretched to the limit.

H.R. 3844 is a misdirected effort that should be opposed as currently drafted. I and other colleagues are offering several amendments which deserve careful consideration to make a problematic bill better.

My amendment conveys the Congressional intent that the Federal Government should be prepared to act responsibly and fairly in developing broader-based, burden-sharing solutions to this special immigration problem. As states continue to face serious budget shortfalls, the Federal Government should take steps to ensure that state and local taxpayers, in attempting to provide services for these refugees and displace persons, do not incur what is appropriately a Federal cost.

I welcome your support.

Sincerely,



Porter Goss
Member of Congress

PJG/rd