

Today, I want to recognize and congratulate Doug and Heather Hutchens. Their commitment to their pro-life and conservative views on life has made them the proud parents of three beautiful boys, and we wish them well in their future endeavors.

HONORING THE WORK OF WYCLEF JEAN AND HERMAN MENDOZA IN STRENGTHENING DOMINICAN/HAITIAN RELATIONS

**HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 21, 2005*

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the humanitarian efforts of Mr. Wyclef Jean and Herman Mendoza in addressing the needs of the Dominican and Haitian communities through their newly formed organization, "One Voice" in a much needed effort to create goodwill between Haitians and Dominicans on the Caribbean island of Hispaniola.

Hip-hop musician Wyclef Jean, founder of Yele Haiti, a nonpolitical, nonprofit foundation that provides education and other opportunities for children in his impoverished nation, is working with Herman Mendoza, co-founder and director of operations for Stepping Stones Ministries, a College Point, New York nonprofit organization that provides humanitarian aid to countries hit by disasters and funds programs for troubled youth.

"One Voice" is geared toward uniting Dominicans and Haitians through mutual support and aid. Its design is to encourage Dominicans in the U.S. to help Haitians in Haiti, and Haitians in the U.S. to help Dominicans back home.

Relations between Haiti and the Dominican Republic have been fractious for generations. Haiti—a prosperous French colony known as St. Domingue in the 17th century and later, the first black republic—annexed the Dominican Republic (when it was known as Santo Domingo) in the 19th century. Haiti ruled all of Hispaniola from 1822 to 1844, when forces led by Juan Pablo Duarte established the Dominican Republic as an independent state.

Other conflicts between the two countries have fueled mutual distrust. In 1937, under orders from President Rafael Trujillo, Dominican soldiers killed close to 30,000 Haitian sugar cane workers along the border. These events occurred in a matter of weeks for various reasons but mainly because the skin of the Haitians was a few shades darker than that of the Dominicans.

The historical events surrounding the Dominican/Haitian relationship have continued to divide the Dominican Republic and Haiti so deeply that there may as well be an ocean not only around them but between them.

The tenuousness of the Dominican/Haitian relationship remains, but the efforts of Mr. Wyclef Jean and Herman Menendez are an important first step in developing a mutual understanding between the two nations.

I applaud their leadership on this issue and am pleased with their commitment to giving back to their communities in an effort to ease long seated resentment and unify the island and its people to achieve political, social, and economic development that will benefit the people of both nations.

[From Newsday, July 3, 2005]

HAITIANS, DOMINICANS JOIN VOICES TO HELP

A popular Haitian-American entertainer and a Dominican-American have joined forces to create goodwill between Haitians and Dominicans on the Caribbean island of Hispaniola.

Hip-hop musician Wyclef Jean, founder of Yele Haiti, a nonpolitical, nonprofit foundation that provides education and other opportunities for children in his impoverished nation, is working with Herman Mendoza, co-founder and director of operations for Stepping Stones Ministries, a College Point nonprofit organization that provides humanitarian aid to countries hit by disasters and funds programs for troubled youth.

Jean said the movement he and Mendoza started, called One Voice, "will encourage Dominicans in the U.S. to help Haitians in Haiti, and Haitians in the U.S. to help Dominicans back home. This never happens," he said. "Believe me."

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Jean pointed to striking disparities between Haitians and Dominicans. He said in his country—which has been wracked by coups and invasions and is now the poorest nation in the hemisphere—most Haitians live on less than \$1 a day; unemployment is close to 80 percent; more than 50 percent of the people are illiterate. In contrast, he said, there is 15 percent unemployment in the Dominican Republic and 15 percent of the population is illiterate.

Mendoza said he did not notice tension during a recent visit to his homeland, but he said numerous Haitians are there looking for work and are subject to checks by immigration officials. "As far as Dominicans embracing Haiti, I don't see a problem," Mendoza said. "We want to work out our differences socially, politically and economically. People will see there's no bias."

One Voice is reaching out for medical and educational supplies for needy areas of both countries, sections of which were devastated by floods last year. Jean and Mendoza are asking the public to share some of what's in their medicine cabinets. They are collecting items for babies and adults, such as disinfectant and toothpaste, plus pens, crayons and notebooks, among other things.

"Numerous humanitarian service organizations as well as entertainment and music celebrities have pledged their support of this drive," Jean said. "If each family puts together one kit, it can mean so much to our countries."

A service that Stepping Stones Ministries sponsored on April 15 in Washington Heights—home to many Dominicans in New York—raised \$1,000 to support the cause. A similar service is scheduled for July 30 at the True Worship Church in the East New York section of Brooklyn.

One Voice hopes to help children in both countries fulfill their dreams.

"Despite what history tells them about the conflicts between Haiti and the Dominican Republic, we want them to know they are one," said Jean. "Our project is set up to

show them that at least Dominicans and Haitians in the U.S. can live that reality.

"The first step," Jean added, "is for us to send aid to the most impoverished communities, not as Haitians or Dominicans, but as One Voice."

RECOGNIZING THE 110TH ANNIVERSARY OF IMMACULATE CONCEPTION LITHUANIAN CATHOLIC PARISH

**HON. JOHN SHIMKUS**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 21, 2005*

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Immaculate Conception Lithuanian Catholic Parish as it celebrates its 110th Anniversary on October 16, 2005. Since its founding in 1895, the Parish has been symbol of faith to the East St. Louis community.

The church was founded by Lithuanian immigrants after they fled religious bondage and famine occurring in Russia during the late 1800s. The first purely Lithuanian Catholic congregation was organized in 1885 in New York. Soon afterwards separate Lithuanian churches were built in other places like Immaculate Conception of East St. Louis in 1895.

The challenge of the Church is to be a constant light in a dark world and to bring resilience and hope to the people who need it most. Throughout these 110 years Immaculate Conception Lithuanian Catholic Parish has done just that. My family and I are proud to have attended mass at Immaculate Conception Lithuanian Catholic Parish.

My prayer is that God will continue to bless this small congregation and that they would remain a positive influence for the future of the Parish and the community of East St. Louis.

CONGRATULATING MR. PERRY M. SIMMONS ON HIS ACHIEVEMENTS AND SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC

**HON. GENE GREEN**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 21, 2005*

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend Mr. Perry M. Simmons on a lifetime of work and dedication to the public. Mr. Simmons has spent his life serving the city of Baytown, Harris County, the State of Texas, and his country.

Mr. Simmons served in the Navy during World War II on board the ship that carried General Douglas MacArthur back to the Philippines, the USS *LST 709*. He would advance through the ranks to become lieutenant and go on to earn four combat medals and a Philippine Liberation Medal. After serving in World War II Mr. Simmons returned to Texas to earn his bachelors degree in Journalism. After short but successful careers in advertising and management, Governor Dolph Briscoe personally appointed Mr. Simmons Deputy Director for the Governor's Committee on Aging.

Mr. Simmons won his first election to Baytown City Council in 1980, and was hired by then-Harris County Judge Jon Lindsay as his