

Watt gets House post

By Herbert L. White
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Rep. Mel Watt has a new congressional assignment. The Charlotte Democrat has been named ranking minority member of the Subcommittee on Immigration and Claims, which reports to the House Judiciary Committee. Watt succeeds Rep. John Bryant (D-Texas), who retired from the House of Representatives at the end of the 104th Congress.

Watt, who represents the 12th District which stretches from Gastonia to Durham, will help shape legislation on immigration and naturalization policy. Republican Lamar Smith of

Texas chairs the subcommittee. "I am privileged and honored to serve as the new ranking member of the Subcommittee on Immigration and Claims and am eager to begin working with Chairman Smith and the other members on the Subcommittee on difficult, but important challenges we face in the area of immigration, especially illegal immigration," Watt said. "I have met with Chairman Smith and we both have pledged to try to work together to improve our law and policies on these difficult issues."

Some of the issues Immigrations and Claims has jurisdiction over include admission of refugees, treaties, conventions and international

agreements, claims against the U.S., federal charters and private immigration and claims bills. The subcommittee is expected to consider legislation which could restrict legal immigration as well as reconsider proposals that were dropped from last year's Immigration Reform Bill.

One proposal would have allowed states to withhold free public education and other benefits to children of illegal immigrants.



Watt

Fighting Back revival Jan. 24-25

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A nationally-known religious activist will be the keynote speaker for Mecklenburg County's anti-drug program. Father George Clements, founder of the Washington-based One Church-One Addict program will keynote the Fighting Back project's two-day revival Jan. 24-25. The revival will be held at 7 p.m. both days at Our Lady of Consolation Catholic Church at 2301 Statesville Avenue. Clements will urge Mecklenburg churches to become more involved in the fight against drug abuse as well as discuss the national impact One Church-One Addict has made. Clements' program helps churches, synagogues and mosques establish and train committees to help provide counseling and services to recovering addicts. While other American institutions

have been actively engaged in the fight against drugs, he said, the religious community has been slow to get involved. "The medical and mental health systems, the criminal justice system and the educational system are striving to combat addiction," Clements said. "One Church-One Addict will bring eclectic resources of churches to the aid of those who are battling addiction." Michael Brown, executive director of the Ministry of Recovery, a coalition of churches and health care providers working to reduce demand for drugs through prevention, education and counseling, said Clements' presence will help shed light on what the religious community can do to curb drug abuse. "Substance abuse is a national epidemic," he said. "Unfortunately, Charlotte has not been immune to this plague. Our mission is not only to draw attention to the problem, but to provide solu-

tions that are timely, effective and sensitive to the needs of our communities." Ministry of Recovery provides training and support for congregational leaders and church lay persons, as well as aftercare counseling for addicts and alcoholics. The program, which receives most of its funding from Fighting Back, also supports families of recovering addicts. Fighting Back executive director Hattie Anthony said the revival's aim is to energize religious leaders in the battle against addiction by highlighting a successful anti-drug program. "By highlighting Father Clements' highly visible campaign, the program will help Charlotteans realize the battle against substance abuse is winnable and that the war must be fought one-on-one and collectively with the faith community taking a lead role," she said. For more information on Ministry of Recovery or the revival, call 375-9220.



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