EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

Sec. 504.—Place the administration of the Gauley River National Recreation Area and Meadow and Bluestone wild and scenic rivers under the existing infrastructure established for the New River Gorge National River.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND CHARTER 
"77 IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

HON. DANTE B. FASCHELL
OF FLORIDA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 29, 1987

Mr. FASCELL. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call the attention of our colleagues to the excellent article in the Miami Herald of January 14, 1987, by Mr. Carlos Verdecia on the current political and human rights situation in Czechoslovakia.

Mr. Verdecia recalls the crushing of the Czechoslovak reform movement, the Prague Spring, by Soviet and Warsaw Pact troops in August 1968. He notes how ironic it is that this repression has taken such hold in Czechoslovakia that the Gorbachev leadership in the Soviet Union is now exerting considerable pressure on its Czechoslovak colleagues to induce them to follow the new Soviet line on more "openness" and "restructuring." These new developments in Czechoslovakia are taking place while Charter 77, the most long-lived, organized human rights movement in Eastern Europe, is celebrating its 10th anniversary with the publication of its "10th Anniversary" document signed by many of the most illustrious and active leaders of that determined and inspiring organization. This charter document notes the political and economic stagnation which prevails in Czechoslovakia and calls for a reinvigoration of Czechoslovak society through much needed reforms and a transformation of public attitudes.

Despite systematic harassment and repression, Charter 77 has become an important and significant factor in the life of Czechoslovakia, providing a beacon of hope and light, not just for the people of that unfortunate country, but throughout Eastern Europe. For its outstanding efforts to promote peace, understanding and human rights, members of the U.S. Helsinki Commission have just nominated Charter 77 as a candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1987. I can think of no more appropriate or deserving recipient.

The text of Mr. Verdecia's article follows:

PRAGUE'S SPRING REMAINS DISTANT, YEARNE FOR TIME
(By Carlos Verdecia)

Few pleasures can compare to eating a Czech sausage with mustard at a popular stand in Prague's Wenceslaus Square. Served on a napkin with no bread, the round piece of spicy, reddish meat is large enough to replace a full meal when chased with Czech world-famous pilsner beer. In the northern city of Ostrava, the ideal formula for coping with the cold morning wind is hot, strong soup for breakfast and rice soup at bedtime. And to the thirsty summer traveler driving around Slovakia's Tatra mountains, Nature renders its best blessing in fresh, effervescent water bubbling directly from a natural fountain in a rock by the road.

Of all Czechoslovakia's memories the most indelible is Prague itself, with its Vitava River of dark waters, its 10th Century castles and Baroque churches, its 13 bridges, and its stone-paved narrow streets and squares.

Yet beauty in its most splendid form occurs in the Czechoslovak people. Warm and amiable to friends, they can turn into ferocious antagonists when threatened or attacked. The courage displayed by Czech resistance in the street barricades erected against the Nazi had been again in 1968 against the Soviet tanks and troops that came to crush their "Prague Spring." Outnumbered and defrauded, many of these brave fighters were killed or incarcerated.

Almost 20 years after the tragic event, resistance is still strong, if only on paper and by voice. Resurrecting from all walks of intellectual disidence, prestigious Czech signatories of Charter 77 went public again last week with a new human rights document. Charter 77 was created in January 1977 by more than 300 dissidents and later subscribed by over 1,300. It demanded that Czechoslovak citizens retain their rights contained in United Nations resolutions and the Helsinki Accords, as well as those rights theoretically granted in the Czechoslovak constitution, according to its own definition, Charter 77 was "a free, informal, open community of people of different convictions, different life and different professions, united by the will to strive, individually and jointly, for the respect of civil and human rights."

Of the 300 original signatories, more than 100 have been sent to prison and some 20 to death. A violent crackdown seemed to dissolve the group, only to draw international solidarity from Western countries, where the document was widely published.

Playwright Vaclav Havel and former foreign minister Jiri Hajek, both signatories of the original Charter 77 manifesto, top the list of signers of the new "10th Anniversary" document.

"We must shake off our apathy, rid ourselves of hopelessness, overcome our fears," the new document says. "The more citizens attempt to do, the less reason there will be for fear, since it will become impossible to publish the expression of justified attitudes."

The new document adds: "The sterile rigidity of our present political and economic system, the loss of place that we used to occupy among advanced nations, the inadequate ability of the government to meet many of society's demands and requirements—all of this becomes more apparent and places an increasing burden upon the daily life of our people and awakens the desire for change."

The new manifesto tries to capitalize on the "reconstruction" climate introduced in Moscow May 1980 by Mikhail Gorbachev. Ironically, the Kremlin is now attempting to do what it so violently prevented Czechoslovak leader Alexander Dubcek from doing a little more than 20 years ago in Czechoslovakia. After completing its move to please the Soviets, has had to send its party leaders running to Moscow to take a shoeing on the next stage of Gorbachev's policy.

Jan Pofjik, a high Czechoslovak Communist Party secretary who headed the Czech puppet delegation to Moscow, said upon returning home that the new Soviet reform