Ossie Davis was selected to be the speaker at the first annual Congressional Black Caucus dinner, I recall, because we wanted to have someone who, as a celebrity and a highly respected civil rights leader, would both entertain and inspire. Ossie, in a speech that was still remembered and quoted today, set out on a course to sustain the achievement of the civil rights era and to build upon them. He exceeded our collective expectations.

Ossie was one of the noblest individuals I knew. He lived a life of dignity and pride that was so exemplary that one wanted to emulate him. He was a true legend that used his position to advance positive images of the Black male. To challenge those who would accept the subjugation of an entire group based on their race. He has a history of over one hundred films, plays, television series, and other productions that range from the personal experiences of the Black male in America today.

Ossie was always working, always raising important issues, left us in the film on which he was working at the time of his death, an inspiring story that serves as a metaphor for the struggle by African-Americans for equality of opportunity and inclusion. We are fortunate in the Harlem community to have Ossie’s film to screen as a highlight of our celebration of Harlem Week.

The movie Proud, which was released two months after his death, is a heroic story about an all-Black crew on the U.S.S. Mason, World War II. Ossie and his fellow cast members tell the important story of how the War and a segregated Navy changed them. True to his nature, Ossie Davis made this experience a personal investment in the struggle for justice and equality in Black America for his audience. This movie allows Ossie one last opportunity to tell the story of Black America in this country. It is also our last opportunity to witness this great man in action.

I submit for the Record the press release announcing the movie and describing how it came to be made. I look forward to attending the screening of Proud in my community next week and encourage everyone to take time out and see this wonderful film.

OSSIE DAVIS (LORENZO DUF AU)

As U.S.S. Mason veteran, Lorenzo Dufau, Ossie Davis, known as WWII veteran, forms the head of the movie “Proud.” He is the grandfather who passes the story of the “men of the Mason” on to his grandson and thus ensures that his ship’s tale will live on. “I am a part of American history,” he says. “Proudly we served and I want that acknowledgment.”

As an actor, writer, producer and directo, Ossie Davis has himself shaped American history and insured that the richness of African-American experience is presented with artistry and joy.

Born in Coddell, Georgia, Mr. Davis attended Howard University and began a career in the arts. He began his career in the arts and entertainment. In 1946, Mr. Davis made his Broadway debut in “Jeb,” the first of many roles that included following Sydney Poitier into the lead of “Raisin in the Sun.” Mr. Davis also appeared in his butler role to write “Purlie, Victorious” which he starred in 1961. The artistically acclaimed play became the musical “Purlie” and introduced Melba Moore and Cleavon Little. The film career of Ossie Davis is legendary. Beginning with “No Way Out” in 1950 with Sydney Poitier, Davis appeared in dozens of film features from “The Cardinal,” “The Hill,” and “The Scalphunter” through recent movies such as “Dr. Doolittle,” “The Right Thing,” and “On The Bus.” He directed “Cotton Comes to Harlem” in 1970 and continued to direct and produce movies and plays. Mr. Davis did not neglect television. Beginning in 1965 in the title role of “The Emperor Jones,” he’s given award-winning performances in “Teacher, Teacher, King,” and such as “Dr. Doolittle,” “On The Bus” and “Purlie.” He’s been a regular on “Evening Shade” with his friend Burt Reynolds. Davis’ partnership with his wife actress/writer Ruby Dee has produced such notable achievements. As the television special “Today Is Ours,” “Martin Luther King: The Dream and The Drum,” “A Walk Through the 20th Century with Bill Moyers” and the series “With Ossie and Ruby.”

Mr. Davis received many honors and citations including the New York Urban League Frederick Douglass Award and the NAACP Image Award. With Ruby Dee, he received the Screen Actors Guild Life Achievement Award and in 2002 the Kennedy Center’s National Medal of Arts at the Kennedy Center.

Mr. Davis died of natural causes in Miami Beach, Florida on February 4, 2005.
The bill before the House made 14 of these provisions permanent with two of the provisions scheduled to sunset in ten years.

The purpose of a sunset is to allow Congress oversight over the implementation of the law. By making these fourteen provisions permanent, Congress abdicates its responsibility to review these provisions in favor of granting power to the executive branch. As co-equal branches of government, I strongly believe Congress has a responsibility to check the power of the executive branch, not cede authority that can threaten the civil liberties of our citizens today and tomorrow.

Provisions in the Patriot Act continue to allow for government access to business records, private e-mail accounts, library reading lists and the monitoring of Internet habits. Credit card information and other private records including medical, employment and personal financial records can also be monitored. Virtually every aspect of an individual’s life can come under profound scrutiny by government officials based on suspicion. This to me is frightening and to millions of honest, hardworking Americans.

Fighting terrorism, organized crime and narco-terrorism is critical to keeping our communities and families safe. The men and women in law enforcement from local, state and Federal agencies—and throughout the criminal justice and counter-terrorism systems—have my deep admiration and respect. Their job is difficult, but this legislation fails to provide additional resources to confront threats and keep our communities safe. It instead creates endless opportunities for the violation of civil liberties and the freedoms we deeply cherish as a nation.

Many people speak of sacrificing some of our freedoms in the name of security. This is a formula that empowers terrorists and encourages the very enemies of freedom. It is the wrong approach. I applaud my Republican colleagues who have joined Democrats in fighting the terrorism that embraces the American people’s respect and unconditional release of Rene Gomez Manzano for simply supporting freedom for his people. My colleagues, we must demand the immediate and unconditional release of Rene Gomez Manzano and every political prisoner in totalitarian Cuba.

Mr. Speaker, it is completely unacceptable that, while the world stands by in silence and acquiescence, Mr. Gomez Manzano languishes in this gulag because of his belief in freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. We cannot permit the brutal treatment of a demented and murderous tyrant of a man of peace like Mr. Gomez Manzano for the terrorist regime in Havana.

I have never had the honor of personally meeting Mr. Gomez Manzano, but I can certainly say that I know him quite well. I have spoken to him by telephone during various Congressional hearings and other public events dedicated to highlighting the suffering and oppression of the Cuban people. He is a great patriot, a man of the law, a man of peace, and an apostle of freedom for Cuba.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about Rene Gomez Manzano, a political prisoner in totalitarian Cuba. Mr. Gomez Manzano is a lawyer and a distinguished member of the pro-democracy opposition in Cuba. Along with fellow Cuban patriots Martha Beatriz Roque and Felix Bonne Carcasses, he is a leader of the Assembly to Promote Civil Society. The Assembly is an umbrella organization of over 300 groups of Cubans who have asserted their independence from the totalitarian state. On May 20, 2005, the Assembly carried out a meeting of approximately 200 Cubans who publicly denounced their rejection of totalitarianism and their support for democracy and the rule of law in Havana. Mr. Gomez Manzano was one of the primary architects of that historic, admirable accomplishment. Accordingly, he has been the constant target of Castro’s machinery of repression. He has been harassed by the tyrant’s thugs and, now, unjustly incarcerated as a political prisoner for his peaceful activities.

Eight years before, in 1997, after co-authoring the important anti-terrorism legislation “La Pasion de Mi Tocayo” (“The Homeland Belongs to All”) with Martha Beatriz Roque, Felix Bonne Carcasses and another Cuban patriot, Vladimiro Roca, Mr. Gomez Manzano was arrested by the dictatorship and sentenced to various years in the gulag. During his unjust imprisonment, and after being released, Mr. Gomez Manzano never wavered in his commitment to bring freedom, democracy and human rights to the Cuban people. Unfortunately, in an additional act of extreme and despicable repression by the dictatorship, Mr. Gomez Manzano, along with dozens of others, was arrested once again on July 22, 2005, before he could attend a peaceful demonstration in front of the French Embassy in Havana to protest the resumption of the European Union’s policy of so-called engagement with the terrorist regime in Havana.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be joined by a number of my New Jersey colleagues to introduce legislation that will close a glaring loophole in current law that allows railroads to brazenly flout the critical Federal, State, and local environmental protections that keep our rivers clean, our air clear, and our families healthy.

In my district, a small railroad has recently begun operation of a solid waste transfer facility for construction and demolition debris. These sites are open to the air, polluting the surrounding neighborhoods with wind-blow debris and have extreme leak and runoff controls, if any at all, allowing rain to leach through the trash piles and into sensitive wetlands. I have seen video of these sites, which