

108TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. CON. RES. 16

Calling for the immediate release of all political prisoners in Cuba, including Dr. Oscar Elias Biscet, and for other purposes.

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IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 28, 2003

Mr. ANDREWS submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

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## CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Calling for the immediate release of all political prisoners in Cuba, including Dr. Oscar Elias Biscet, and for other purposes.

Whereas the Cuban Government found Dr. Oscar Elias Biscet, a 39-year-old Afro-Cuban physician and human rights activist, guilty of “dishonoring the symbols of the fatherland” and sentenced him to 3 years in a Cuban prison merely because he placed the Cuban flag upside down as an international symbol of distress;

Whereas as documented by Amnesty International, Dr. Oscar Elias Biscet has joined the ranks of thousands of political prisoners being held in Cuba’s abysmal prisons;

Whereas some of these prisoners are being held merely for expressing their frustration with the Cuban Government’s

refusal to provide better health care and improve prison conditions;

Whereas in 1999, the Cuban Government adopted the Law for the Protection of National Independence and the Economy of Cuba, also known as “Law Number 88” or the “Gag Law”;

Whereas under this law Cubans face up to 5 years in prison for the harmless act of writing a letter that describes food shortages and up to 20 years in prison for supporting the United States embargo of Cuba;

Whereas the Cuban Government uses its food rationing system to promote tyranny and control the Cuban populace;

Whereas in cases in which the Cuban Government is unable to establish grounds for long prison terms for political dissidents, these dissidents are continually harassed, detained for short periods of time, subject to their phones being tapped, and otherwise under constant surveillance;

Whereas foreign dignitaries are seldom allowed by the Cuban Government to meet with Cuban political dissidents; and

Whereas Cuban dictator Fidel Castro continues to deny that the Cuban Government holds any political prisoners:  
Now, therefore, be it

1        *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*  
2 *concurring), That*

3            (1) it is the sense of the Congress that the em-  
4        bargo of Cuba should not be lifted until the Cuban  
5        Government agrees to decriminalize free speech, as-  
6        sociation, and movement, and other elements crucial

1 to the development of democracy and the protection  
2 of fundamental human rights; and

3 (2) the Congress calls on the Cuban Govern-  
4 ment—

5 (A) to immediately release all political pris-  
6 oners in Cuba, including Dr. Oscar Elias  
7 Biscet;

8 (B) to eliminate all of Cuba's criminal laws  
9 that unnecessarily restrict the fundamental  
10 human rights to freedom of speech, association,  
11 and movement; and

12 (C) to respect fundamental human rights  
13 and free multiparty and internationally super-  
14 vised elections in Cuba.

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