

110<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
2<sup>D</sup> SESSION

# S. 2777

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to Dr. Oscar Elias Biscet, in recognition of his courageous and unwavering commitment to democracy, human rights, and peaceful change in Cuba.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 13, 2008

Mr. MARTINEZ (for himself, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. NELSON of Florida, Mr. ENSIGN, and Mr. COLEMAN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

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## A BILL

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to Dr. Oscar Elias Biscet, in recognition of his courageous and unwavering commitment to democracy, human rights, and peaceful change in Cuba.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. FINDINGS.**

4 Congress finds that—

5 (1) Dr. Oscar Elias Biscet was born on July  
6 20, 1961, in Havana, Cuba;

1           (2) Dr. Biscet is married to fellow democracy  
2           advocate, Elsa Morejon Hernandez, and he has 2  
3           children;

4           (3) Dr. Biscet is currently serving a 25-year  
5           prison sentence for allegedly committing crimes  
6           against the sovereignty of the Cuban regime;

7           (4) in 1997, Dr. Biscet founded the Lawton  
8           Foundation for Human Rights, one of the first inde-  
9           pendent civic groups in Havana, which promotes the  
10          study, defense, and denunciation of human rights  
11          violations inside Cuba and wherever the rights and  
12          liberties of human beings are disregarded;

13          (5) as a physician, Dr. Biscet denounced the  
14          double-standards and systematic repression of the  
15          Cuban National Health Care System, and as a re-  
16          sult he was forbidden from practicing medicine;

17          (6) on February 27, 1999, Dr. Biscet was im-  
18          prisoned for 3 years, after hanging the national flag  
19          sideways at a press conference;

20          (7) although Cuban independence and democ-  
21          racy advocates have always used this statement as a  
22          sign of civil disobedience, the regime nonetheless ac-  
23          cused Dr. Biscet of insulting the nation's symbols,  
24          public disorder, and inciting criminal activity;

1           (8) once released in 2002, and unable to prac-  
2           tice medicine, Dr. Biscet engaged in organizing sem-  
3           inars on the Universal Declaration of Human  
4           Rights;

5           (9) on December 6, 2002, on his way to one  
6           such meeting, he and several of the seminar’s par-  
7           ticipants were beaten and arrested;

8           (10) on April 7, 2003, Dr. Biscet was sentenced  
9           to 25 years in prison and sent to a special state se-  
10          curity prison, Kilo Cinco y Medio in Pinar Del Rio  
11          province;

12          (11) Dr. Biscet has declared himself a  
13          “plantado”, a political prisoner who refuses to un-  
14          dertake ideological “reeducation” or wear a common  
15          prisoner’s uniform and therefor remains in Cuba’s  
16          political gulag.

17          (12) on November 5, 2007, President Bush rec-  
18          ognized Dr. Biscet and presented him (in absentia)  
19          with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, stating that  
20          “Dr. Biscet is a champion in the fight against tyr-  
21          anny and oppression. Despite being persecuted and  
22          imprisoned for his beliefs, he continues to advocate  
23          for a free Cuba in which the rights of all people are  
24          respected.”; and

1           (13) Dr. Biscet is a follower of the Dalai Lama,  
2           Ghandhi, and Martin Luther King, and continues to  
3           fight every day to bring democracy and justice to  
4           Cuba.

5 **SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

6           (a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The President  
7           Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House  
8           of Representatives shall make appropriate arrangements  
9           for the presentation, on behalf of the Congress, of a gold  
10          medal of appropriate design, to Dr. Oscar Elias Biscet in  
11          recognition of his courageous and unwavering commitment  
12          to democracy, human rights, and peaceful change in Cuba.

13          (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For purposes of the  
14          presentation referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary  
15          of the Treasury (referred to in this Act as the “Sec-  
16          retary”) shall strike a gold medal with suitable emblems,  
17          devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the Sec-  
18          retary.

19 **SEC. 3. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

20          The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in  
21          bronze of the gold medal struck pursuant to section 2,  
22          under such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe, at  
23          a price sufficient to cover the cost thereof, including labor,  
24          materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses,  
25          and the cost of the gold medal.

1 **SEC. 4. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

2 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—The medals struck pursu-  
3 ant to this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter  
4 51 of title 31, United States Code.

5 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of sections  
6 5134 and 5136 of title 31, United States Code, all medals  
7 struck under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic  
8 items.

9 **SEC. 5. AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS; PROCEEDS OF**  
10 **SALE.**

11 (a) AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS.—There is  
12 authorized to be charged against the United States Mint  
13 Public Enterprises Fund such amounts as may be nec-  
14 essary to pay for the costs of the medals struck pursuant  
15 to this Act.

16 (b) PROCEEDS OF SALE.—Amounts received from the  
17 sale of duplicate bronze medals authorized under section  
18 3 shall be deposited into the United States Mint Public  
19 Enterprises Fund.

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