

Romania, what he used to do. He would put people who committed crimes in with peaceful activists, political prisoners, and political prisoners of conscience with the hope and the thought that these men of violence would commit violence against these peaceful activists, and God forbid that that happens. We will continue to speak out, and, hopefully, nothing will happen as a result of this emplacement of this thug in with Dr. Biscet.

Let me just point out to my colleagues that in the spring Dr. Biscet, and this just shows the heart of this great man, stated "I am innocent of the charges for which I was condemned, which is why I will maintain my ideological position. A true man cannot betray himself, so I can only appeal to the living God and pray to our Lord. And he is not neutral and never abandons his flock." What a faith. Here is a man crying out from prison, praying to God above, asking that he not be forgotten in a way that is reminiscent of our Lord when he said, why have I been abandoned? Well, in this case he is saying despite his ordeal that God will not abandon him.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot abandon him, and that is why we are speaking out and speaking out so strongly tonight. We cannot allow this prisoner of conscience, and there are hundreds, as the gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART) said so ably earlier, hundreds who live likewise in Castro's gulag. His wife, Elsa Morejon, has said his crimes are honoring the universal declaration of human rights: Opposing abortion and the death penalty and organizing civil rights movements through nonviolent civil disobedience to reclaim the rights of fellow Cubans that he believes are being violated. For that, 25 years being mistreated and being treated in a way that we would not even treat our animals.

Let me just conclude, Mr. Speaker. After months of brutal treatment, his health is very poor. We have to speak out. There are Members who take to the floor here and say we need to have an expansion of travel and trade and the like. Well, not until these individuals, starting with Dr. Biscet, are released. Otherwise, the blame and the crime of complicity rests at your doorstep.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the time of the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

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ENERGY BILL LEAVES NO ENERGY COMPANY BEHIND

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, it has been a great week for the most influential, the most well-heeled lobbyists in Washington. Earlier in the week the House passed an energy bill which one very prominent leader of this country called the "no lobbyist left behind" bill. This energy legislation was full of benefits for oil companies, for natural gas companies, and for electric utility companies. As I said, it was a great week for some of the most well-heeled, most influential lobbyists in Washington.

The energy policy started with bad process as Vice President CHENEY convened a secret group of energy lobbyists to draft the administration's energy plan. Citizen after citizen, group after group have tried to find out who attended these meetings with Vice President CHENEY, what was discussed, and what they were all about. Vice President CHENEY refused; but we should not be surprised that he would bring energy executives into the Vice President's office to secretly write an energy bill. After all, Vice President CHENEY himself was an oil company executive, or should I say still is. He still receives \$3,000 a week from Halliburton, one of the major energy companies in the United States. The Vice President is meeting secretly with energy company, oil company executives, and is still receiving \$3,000 a week from Halliburton, that company that is making billions of dollars in unbid contracts in Iraq given by the administration, and kicking back or contributing large numbers of dollars to the Bush reelection campaign.

So CHENEY is meeting with the energy companies to draft legislation that one prominent Republican said was a no lobbyist left behind bill. It was an early Christmas present for the energy industry, and for oil, gas and utilities, and some have estimated as much as \$100 billion.

Some of the corporate giveaways that harm consumers in this bill were granting Enron's last wish to repeal the consumer-oriented, Public Utility Holding Companies Act, making taxpayers rather than corporate polluters pay to clean up leaking underground storage tanks, even when we know exactly which corporation is responsible for the pollution; allowing power companies to charge consumers more, ostensibly to finance system upgrades without any assurance that the resulting changes will actually benefit consumers; making taxpayers pay to clean up nuclear accidents and compensate

victims even when the accidents result from a private contractor's intentional misconduct; deleting bipartisan provisions to ensure the safety and security of crosscountry nuclear shipments. All of those provisions were in there as gifts to the oil and gas and electric companies that Vice President CHENEY still represents, amazingly enough as Vice President.

At the same time, that energy bill was loaded up with all kinds of tax breaks, all kinds of tax provisions helping those energy companies. At the same time this legislation, this early corporate Christmas present for which they give great thanks, included all kinds of harm to the environment. It allows oil companies to pump diesel fuels and other toxics underground and expand their operations without regard to the Clean Water Act groundwater runoff requirements, opening Federal lands to powerlines and mineral developments, and exempting significant segments of our communities and our industries from Clean Air Act requirements.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Congress earlier in the week passed one major corporate giveaway to the energy industry, to oil, gas and electric utilities. Tomorrow Congress is going to attempt, Republican leadership is going to attempt to do their second major corporate giveaway of tax dollars, and that is the so-called prescription drug Medicare bill. This is not a prescription drug bill; this is a Medicare privatization, insurance company/drug company giveaway bill.

The prescription drug companies under this legislation stand in the next few years to profit \$139 billion more than they already have. And already for 20 years running, the drug industry has been the most profitable industry in America, by any measurement: return on investment, return on sales, return on equity, while enjoying the lowest tax rate of any industry in America.

Mr. Speaker, the second part of this bill gives a \$20 billion gift, \$8 billion this year, \$12 billion in 2006, to the large insurance companies and HMOs in order to get them to offer private drug insurance.

What most of us say is let us do the Medicare bill right, give the drug benefit directly to seniors; do not do it by enriching the drug companies and enriching the insurance companies.

Mr. Speaker, it has been a good week for big business in Washington and for corporate lobbyists, and a bad week for America's consumers.

INHUMANE TREATMENT OF DR. OSCAR E. BISCET GONZALEZ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I stand here today to speak on an issue dear to my heart. At the same moment

that our fellow colleagues deliberated on a decision to weaken the vital and necessary sanctions against the ruthless Castro regime, at that same moment human rights and liberty were hurriedly moved to what is now one of the worst prisons on the island; that is what happened to Dr. Oscar E. Biscet Gonzalez.

At the same time we were going to lift sanctions on Castro, Castro was putting Dr. Biscet in a dungeon. Even as we meet here today, courageous advocates suffer in jail for speaking their minds and advocating for liberty and freedom, and it is a crime to do that in Fidel Castro's Cuba. People such as Dr. Oscar E. Biscet Gonzalez are serving horrific prison sentences for promoting democratic values.

Dr. Biscet is a leader, as Members have heard from the gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART), the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE), and we will hear from the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART) in a moment, is a leader in the Cuban opposition movement. He is a follower of Ghandi and Martin Luther King, and he was arrested earlier this year and has been arbitrarily detained over 26 times in the past 18 months. His body may be weak, rapidly deteriorating; but his courage, his spirit, his commitment to see a free Cuba from its enslavement, they are stronger than ever. Dr. Biscet sits in a jail where prisoners are tortured so intensely that their skulls are cracked, their faces are disfigured, and their bodies are dragged down rugged stairs feet first. But we are going to lift the sanctions against his jailer.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Biscet, together with an incalculable number of victims of a bloody and terrorist regime illustrates the reason why our government, the great United States of America, must remain vigilant against tyrannical regimes. Dr. Biscet's torture and cowardly imprisonment is an attempt to break the spirit of liberty from the minds of Cubans who long for a free Cuba, and there are 11 million of those Cubans on the island.

Dr. Biscet previously served 3 years in prison. He was released October 31 of last year only to be rearrested on December 6 as he was to meet with human rights activists. That is a crime in Cuba. On April 7 of this year, he was summarily tried during a Cuban regime crackdown, along with 75 other activists and independent journalists, and was sentenced to 25 years for serving as a mercenary to a foreign state.

Mr. Speaker, our esteemed halls of democracy have welcomed many distinguished speakers. We have received countless heroes and people of the highest honor, and these are the same caliber and fiber such as Dr. Biscet, who is one of Cuba's many unsung heroes. I would like to quote his most recent note to his wife and have his words ring loudly in these Halls so we may all understand the true brutal na-

ture of the Cuban regime and the reasons why we must bring an end to the misery of the Cuban people.

Dr. Biscet writes, "I don't know why I am in this dismal place. I will not grieve nor be afraid for being punished in this dungeon. I will face life's difficulties in order to enjoy the germination of love. I know I will succeed, for the darker the place, the brighter and more intense the light."

Every day more and more opposition leaders such as Dr. Biscet are sentenced to languish in squalid jail cells subjected to the most inhumane and degrading treatment. We must not be silent. We cannot and we must not be indifferent to the anguish and misery endured by the Cuban people, just 90 miles from our shores, at the hands of this depraved dictator and his agents of terror.

Mr. Speaker, indifference breeds evil. Indifference is the enemy of freedom. Indifference helps cloak the deplorable actions of tyrants.

Mr. Speaker, I would say to Dr. Biscet, inside your jail cell I know you cannot hear our words, but we want to express our profound admiration for you and the just cause that you are fighting for. We support you and we support all of Cuba's independent internal opposition in your struggle to be free. Let us not become indifferent to the plight of our fellow Cuban brothers and sisters. Dr. Biscet, vamos a continuar luchando hasta que usted y el pueblo de Cuba sea libre.

WRONGFUL IMPRISONMENT OF CUBAN DISSIDENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, we have heard tonight the plight of Dr. Oscar E. Biscet Gonzalez and the situation that he finds himself in today, in a dungeon where he is not able to receive light and barely has enough air to breathe, where he has been placed with another person who is a violent person to see if that violent person can do harm to Dr. Biscet. Why is he serving under those conditions? Because he has asked for the one thing that the Castro dictatorship, just 90 miles away from the United States, that that thug fears the most. What Dr. Biscet continues to ask for is freedom. That is it. Freedom to associate, freedom of religion and freedom to speak out and elect one's leaders; and for that, he has been sentenced to 25 years in prison.

There are those that apologize for the Castro dictatorship, and they say we have to normalize relationships with the Castro dictatorship and we should treat Castro as if we were dealing with the government of Costa Rica or Paraguay because he is not that bad. He is ailing. He is an older, ailing individual; and, therefore, we should treat him nicely, while he has people like Dr.

Biscet and many others rotting in prison because all they want is to be free.

As my colleague, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART) said, Where is the outrage?

From time to time we see miniseries on those expensive movie networks glorifying Castro, showing him as a great leader. Where is the news coverage of Dr. Biscet and the story of Dr. Biscet's suffering? Where are the stories of any of the other political prisoners suffering in Castro's prisons? Where are they? Why does the press refuse to cover the plight of these people?

Mr. Speaker, despite the fact that the press has total indifference, that still gives excuse after excuse as to why we need to deal with Castro as if he were a normal human being, not the animal or the murderer that he is, despite all that, we will continue to speak out because the Cuban people deserve to be free and the American people understand more than anybody else how valuable freedom is, which is why the American people have always stood fast and have always supported people like Dr. Biscet.

And until the day that Dr. Biscet is free, we will continue to speak, despite those that want to apologize for Castro, and despite those who want to help the regime and go to Cuba to have sexual tourism with little boys and little girls, we will continue to speak up for those that cannot be heard, and they will ultimately win. They will ultimately be heard, and the Cuban people will be free and the American people will feel very proud that they stood by the people of Cuba in their darkest moments by not treating Castro as if he were a normal human being, by keeping the pressure and making sure that the world understands that Castro is what he is: he is a crazy, sick, senile, murdering animal. And until the day he is gone, we will continue to speak for those like Dr. Biscet who cannot speak.

REGARDING RETIREMENT OF HOUSE RADIO-TV GALLERY DEPUTY DIRECTOR BEVERLY BRAUN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, when we come back for the second session of the 108th Congress, there will be a new face in the House Radio-TV Gallery. That is because, after 20 years of service, the Deputy Director Beverly Braun is retiring December 12th.

When Braun came to the Gallery in 1983, she and her colleagues sat up there in the southeast corner of the House chamber taking notes on floor proceedings by hand because they didn't have a computer, and the television reporters who covered out activities had to physically transport tapes to their bureaus. Beverly has shepherded the staff from learning to use a single 10K floppy disk drive machine to having individual 60 Gig hard drive laptops, and has helped incorporate technical developments that now afford the broadcasters use of fiber optic transmission lines.