

Dr. Biscet was released from prison early in 2003, for a few weeks only, before being re-arrested and subsequently sentenced to 25 years in the Communist gulag due to his peaceful pro-democracy activities.

A few days ago, I was honored to receive a congratulatory letter from Ms. Elsa Morejon, Dr. Biscet's courageous and admirable wife.

Oscar Elias Biscet personifies the opposition to the brutal totalitarian regime of Fidel Castro and his brother, who the dictator has given some additional titles to because of the ailing tyrant's failing health. Dr. Biscet is an admirer of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr.

A physician by training, he began his opposition to the totalitarian regime by speaking out against the regime's "forced abortion when there is any indication whatsoever that the pregnancy may have an abnormality" policy. Biscet described that policy as inhuman. He was immediately fired from his job at the hospital, prohibited from practicing his profession as a physician, and his wife was also fired from her job as a practicing nurse. Within hours, the couple and their son were summarily evicted from their apartment and their physical possessions thrown into the street.

Fortunately, an elderly patient of Elsa's allowed the family to move into her house. Dr. Biscet continued peacefully denouncing the totalitarian regime's absolute denial of human rights to the Cuban people—and because of that he has been unjustly and cruelly imprisoned for 9 years, and counting.

Hundreds of other brave human rights activists are also suffering in the political prisons of the Cuban totalitarian dictatorship for the "crime" of supporting democracy and liberty and opposing tyranny, including 23 known journalists, thrown into dungeons because of articles they wrote that bothered the dictator. No regime in the world has more journalists in prison, with the possible exception of another totalitarian dictatorship in an obviously much larger nation, communist China.

Just last week the respected international organization, "Reporters Without Borders" gave one of the Cuban journalists in the gulag, Ricardo Gonzalez Alfonso, sentenced by the Cuban tyrant to 20 years in prison in the year 2003 and currently in very poor health, the "Reporters Without Borders" Journalist of the Year Award. "Reporters Without Borders" is to be commended.

Three other Cuban prisoners of conscience, Adolfo Fernandez Sainz, Pedro Arguelles Moran, and Antonio Diaz Sanchez, are known to have begun a hunger strike due to the brutal conditions they are subjected to.

Where is the outrage? Where is the solidarity in the international community?

The reality is that for too many in the world today, Cubans are supposed to be content with their lot, to be quiet, to . . . "move on", in the words of one of our pro-Cuban dictatorship colleagues here in the U.S. Congress. The regime that enslaves a nation and imprisons hundreds of heroes simply for their beliefs deserves unilateral rewards and concessions, many maintain.

But Dr. Oscar Elias Biscet, and the many other heroes imprisoned in the Castro brothers' gulag will not be able to be ignored forever. They must be freed. And political parties be legalized, as well as independent press agencies, and labor unions. And free and fair elections must take place in Cuba.

Many of those imprisoned today will be democratically elected leaders tomorrow. That is what is going to occur in Cuba tomorrow. Today, as they suffer the most unjust of cruel imprisonments, we here remember and honor them—and once again demand their immediate release.

HONORING JOHN EVANS

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 9, 2008

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Madam Speaker, it is with great respect and sincerity that I take this time to honor one of Northwest Indiana's most accomplished citizens, Mr. John Evans of Miller Beach. On Sunday, November 2, 2008, John was honored by the Indiana Division of the Polish American Congress for his many years of service as a dedicated member of his community, as well as a proud representative of the Polish American heritage in Northwest Indiana. This extraordinary event took place at The Patio restaurant in Merrillville, Indiana.

John Evans, a lifelong resident of Northwest Indiana and the son of Russell Glenn and Eleanor Evans of New Chicago, Indiana, has been recognized by the Polish American Congress, Indiana Division, as the recipient of the 2008 Distinguished Service Award. From his career in the insurance industry to his service with several of Northwest Indiana's churches to his commitment to preserving the Polish heritage, John is truly deserving of this prestigious accolade. Always one to try to improve the lives of his fellow citizens in any way possible, John has spent the last twenty-four years working with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois. After spending many years building relationships between hospitals and providers as a Provider Network Consultant, John moved into a management position in 2000 and was recently promoted to Director of Provider Network Relations. In his current position, John is responsible for overseeing relations with all hospitals, physicians, and ancillary providers for the State of Illinois. As a member of the Blue Cross Blue Shield team, John has been active with the company's Diversity Workforce Committee, serving as Master of Ceremonies for their 2007 Polish Heritage Day.

Mr. Evans, widely known as a truly gifted musician, has been a fixture in the Northwest Indiana for, in all sincerity, most of his life. As a child of only ten years of age, John began formally studying the organ with Mrs. Joanne Sparks of Gary, Indiana. Only a few short years later, John began playing dinner music at Wilson's Restaurant and Lounge in Miller Beach, entertaining diners every Friday and Saturday night. During this time, he also began playing at wedding receptions and other banquets, as well as serving as the organist at Sunday masses at Assumption B.V.M. Church in New Chicago. From there, at a mere fifteen years of age, John took over as the director of the church's choir in 1973. During the twenty-three years he spent at Assumption, John's leadership meant not only an increase in choir membership, but in popularity as well. During this time, the choir was asked to perform at many dances, ordinations, anniversaries, and other special occasions. In fact, they even recorded an album entitled "Christ-

mas in New Chicago" which featured Polish and English Christmas carols.

Fully committed to his faith and his heritage, John also has organized and choreographed dance selections for Polish Women's Alliance Saint Anne's Group 778, directed the choir at events for the Polish Women's Alliance Group 132, and directed the choir for the Polish mass at Saint Stanislaus in Michigan City, Indiana. In 1996, Mr. Evans took over as the organist and choir director for the Saint Cecilia Choir at Saint Stanislaus Parish in East Chicago, Indiana. Since taking over at Saint Stan's, the membership of the choir has nearly doubled, and John has been successful in bringing young people into the choir. Not to be outdone, the choir at Saint Stanislaus has also produced a professional CD of Polish and English hymns and religious selections entitled "Spirit," which has sold over 500 copies, profits from it contributing to various church renovations.

Madam Speaker, at this time, I ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in commending Mr. John Evans as he is honored for his lifetime of service and dedication to the Northwest Indiana community. His years of service have touched and improved the lives of all whom he has served. His unselfish and lifelong dedication is worthy of the highest commendation, and I am proud to represent him in Congress.

IN HONOR OF COLONEL RAYMOND ANTHONY CELESTE, JR.

HON. KAY GRANGER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 9, 2008

Ms. GRANGER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Colonel Raymond Anthony Celeste, Jr., who is retiring from the United States Marine Corps after more than 26 years of faithful service.

Colonel Celeste attended Officers Candidate School in October 1982 and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in December 1982. In 1983, he graduated first from The Basic School and later from the Field Artillery Officer Basic School. His first fleet assignment was at Marine Corps Base, 29 Palms, California in January 1984, where he served first with 4th Battalion 11th Marines and then with 5th Battalion 11th Marines as a platoon commander in 8 inch self-propelled Howitzer Batteries. During his time as a platoon commander, he participated in numerous Combined Arms Exercises, learning the great capabilities of the Marine Air Ground Task Force.

In May of 1985, then-First Lieutenant Celeste transferred to Camp Pendleton, California, where he served in the Tactical Exercise Control Group and assisted in organizing field and staff exercises worldwide. In September of 1986, First Lieutenant Celeste reported as the first Operations Officer of the 1st Remotely Piloted Vehicle Company, where he became one of the first members of the newly established unit. In this assignment, he assisted in integrating Unmanned Aerial Vehicles into the Marine Air Ground Task Force and received an award for his meritorious service. Because of his expertise in this area, an article he wrote on the subject was published in the Marine Corps Gazette.

In September of 1988, then-Captain Celeste transferred to the Marine Corps Reserves. In January of the following year, he joined 3rd Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company where he deployed and participated in numerous bi-lateral exercises in Korea and Japan. During the first Gulf War, Captain Celeste was a commander in charge of training more than 200 Marines for deployment to the Middle East and received an award for his meritorious service. In January of 1992, Captain Celeste transferred to Hotel Battery (155 mm Howitzers), 3rd Battalion, 14th Marines where he acted as Platoon Commander and Forward Observer. In June of that same year, he was selected to be the Executive Officer of Delta Company, 4th Light Armored Infantry Company. In 1993, he became the Commanding Officer of Delta Company and served in that capacity for over two years. Concurrent to his assignment as Delta Company's Commanding officer, Captain Celeste served as the Headquarters Marine Corps counterdrug officer where he monitored Marine Corps counterdrug operations.

In 1995, then-Major Celeste was assigned as the Officer-in-Charge of the Department of the Navy Gulf War Declassification Project where he was responsible for the declassification of tens of thousands of pages of Gulf War I operational records. He subsequently received an award for meeting the mandated declassification deadline as established by the Deputy Secretary of Defense. Due to his expertise in the area, in May of 1997, Major Celeste was assigned as an investigator to the Office of the Special Assistant for Gulf War Illnesses. At this assignment, he assisted in the investigation of the causal factors for Gulf War Illnesses using the documents that he and his team helped to previously declassify. In order to widely disseminate the findings of the investigation, they were published on the World Wide Web which, at the time, was a novel medium for this purpose.

In August of 1999, then-Lieutenant Colonel Celeste was assigned to Headquarters Marine Corps (Office of Legislative Affairs) where he served as a Congressional Affairs Officer. In this capacity, he assisted in the answering of high level congressional inquiries, led the Marine Corps Congressional Fellowship Program, and assisted in the organizing of congressional outreach programs to include the following: The Congressional Marines Group, The Capitol Hill Running Club, Congressional Marine Day, and programs for Veterans Service Organizations and Defense Industry representatives.

Colonel Celeste served in Iraq from February to August of 2007 as the Marine liaison between the Commanding General, Multi-National Forces West and the Commanding General Civilian Police Assistance Training Team. During this period, Colonel Celeste was a member of the Green Zone Council, which supports the Boys and Girls Scouting programs in Iraq. He was also involved in supporting a local orphanage in Baghdad by coordinating and soliciting donations from family and friends.

For more than 26 years, Colonel Celeste's great sense of duty and exceptional work ethic have benefitted his fellow Marines and his nation. We thank him for his steadfast dedication and wish him fair winds and following seas as he starts the next chapter of his life.

TRIBUTE TO THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES FOR A PRESIDENTIAL ORDER ON PRISONER TREATMENT, TORTURE, AND CRUELTY

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 9, 2008

Ms. ESHOO. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of the Declaration of Principles for a Presidential Executive Order on Prisoner Treatment, Torture and Cruelty which is supported by a number of organizations and individuals, including the Council of Churches of Santa Clara County, California, in my Congressional District. I believe these principles will protect our country and the U.S. servicemen abroad by banning the use of cruel and inhumane interrogation methods.

I fully support the core goals of this Declaration of Principles which include implementing a national standard for all U.S. personnel and agencies for the interrogation and treatment of prisoners and banning the use of any methods of interrogation that we would not find acceptable if used against Americans. Many of these issues were addressed in a bill I introduced this year to ban waterboarding as an interrogation technique.

Waterboarding is torture and is recognized as such by the Geneva Convention. Its continued use by representatives of our nation contradicts what so many of our soldiers are fighting for overseas. The United States of America has long accepted that water torture is beneath the standards of a civil nation. In 1947, the United States prosecuted a Japanese military officer for carrying out a form of water torture on a U.S. civilian during the Second World War, securing a conviction and a sentence of 15 years of hard labor. The military has frequently prosecuted American military personnel for subjecting prisoners to water torture, including sentencing a U.S. Army major to 10 years of hard labor for subjecting an insurgent to water torture in the Philippines during the Spanish-American War.

Our nation was able to win two world wars and defeat a rising tide of communism with this prohibition in place. I'm confident we can defeat our current enemies without undermining our moral dignity.

As we move forward with a new Congress and a new Administration, we have the opportunity to change course and restore the rule of law. The Bush Administration has relied heavily on illegal and inhumane interrogation techniques, and by doing so has damaged our country's reputation in the process. We can restore the moral standards that guided us successfully for so many generations and the Declaration of Principles provides a framework for the United States to do just that. Congress and the Obama Administration must work to ensure that torture has no place in the battle against terrorism.

HONORING GRANT GATES

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 9, 2008

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize the outstanding achieve-

ment of Grant Gates of Kansas City, Missouri. Grant has earned a perfect 36 ACT composite score. Grant is one of only three students from the state of Missouri and one of only fifty-two in the country to earn the perfect score.

Madam Speaker, Grant has dedicated himself to his studies and extracurricular activities. As a junior at North Kansas City High School, Grant has participated in the Missouri Scholars Academy at the University of Missouri, the Superintendent's Student Advisory Committee, member of the high school swim team, member of the choir and Harmonaires show choir, and is a part of the school's state championship Scholar Bowl. Grant is currently working toward an International Baccalaureate diploma, Gold Medallion Honors diploma, and A+ Schools eligibility. Grant is also active in Boy Scout Troop 9 in North Kansas City.

Madam Speaker, I ask that you join me, Gary and Elinor Gates, the North Kansas City Schools, and North Kansas City High School in applauding Grant Gates' outstanding achievement. We wish Grant many more years of success.

IN RECOGNITION OF EUGENE PERRIN ELEBASH, JR.

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 9, 2008

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Eugene Elebash, Jr., a veritable northwest Florida community leader who passed away on November 24, 2008. Mr. Elebash spent his entire life serving others, and I am proud to honor his life of dedication and service.

Mr. Elebash was born in Pensacola, FL, in May of 1920 and made his home there. He graduated from Pensacola High School in 1938 and from the University of Florida in 1942. Upon graduating college, Mr. Elebash immediately joined the United States Army Air Forces where he served honorably until the end of World War II, achieving the rank of major. He then returned to Pensacola to take over the family business and remained ever since. Mr. Elebash married his high school sweetheart, Jane, his wife of 66 years.

After returning to Pensacola, Mr. Elebash began a life of dedicated service to the community. Over the years, he was active in innumerable organizations including the Saint Christopher's Episcopal Church, the City Civil Service Board, the YMCA, and the West Florida Children's Home Society. He was a member of the Downtown Rotary Board for 61 years. Mr. Elebash was elected to three terms as a Pensacola city councilman and served as the mayor of Pensacola from 1971 and 1973. His family continues to play an active role in the community.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the U.S. Congress, I am privileged to honor Mr. Eugene Elebash, Jr. for his life of public service to his country and to northwest Florida. Mr. Elebash will be remembered by all as a loving husband and father, as well as a genuine community leader and a true friend.