

(Mr. FRANKS of Arizona addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HELP CUBA BE FREE

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. Madam Speaker, last week the Cuban tyranny sunk to an all new low as the communist thugs brutally attacked a procession of mothers, daughters, and wives of Cuban political prisoners collectively known as the Ladies in White, Las Damas de Blanco.

Their crime? Walking. Walking to commemorate the seventh anniversary of the dictatorship's March 2003 crackdown against human rights and pro-democracy activists, a grim event known as the Black Spring.

Many of those imprisoned at the time continue to languish in squalid jail cells and endure unspeakable suffering at the hands of their oppressors.

The processions of the Ladies in White was led by Reyna Luisa Tamayo, whose son, Orlando Zapata Tamayo, died only a few weeks ago at the hands of the Castro regime. Carrying flowers and wearing their white clothing as symbols of peace, they were suddenly and viciously confronted, beaten, and some temporarily detained by agents of the dictatorial regime.

Reyna described the confrontation, explaining, and I quote, "They dragged me. I am all bruised. They beat me. They cannot be forgiven."

Further reports indicate that nearly one-third of the Ladies in White marching that day had to seek hospital treatment for the attack. The cowardice of the regime's agents could not be more obvious in the wake of this attack.

Confronting the nonviolent actions of these women in such a vicious and hateful manner makes it clear: the dictatorship fears these women because the regime officials fear the truth.

The repression by the regime knows no boundaries. Now they are even attempting to deny the people of Cuba the right to mourn the loss of their loved ones.

For anyone who had doubt, these attacks make it clear: the regime has no conscience. There is no limit to its abuse and its indecency.

I was pleased, however, to see the European and the Chilean parliaments deliver strong statements of condemnation and reproach following the regime's actions last week. However, responsible nations must do more.

The newly inaugurated president of Chile understands this moral obligation. He recognized the suffering of the Cuban people, that it must come to an end, and that free nations must lead the charge. President Sebastian Pinera said, and I quote, "The government of Chile will do everything it can so that

in Cuba there is a process of peaceful recovery of democracy and a full restoration of respect for human rights and individual freedoms."

But where is the rest of the world? Why are regional leaders silent on the regime's gross human rights violations in Cuba and the abuses of power? Where is the Organization of American States? On the wrong side of history.

It was almost 1 year ago when the OAS voted to reincorporate the Cuban tyranny into the Inter-American system. What a mistake. The United States made a mistake then by shepherding such an effort.

But it is not too late to do the right thing by the Cuban people and take up the cause of freedom for the island nation. The U.S. Ambassador to the OAS should immediately call for consideration of a resolution condemning the tyranny in Cuba for its attack on the Ladies in White and demanding that all political prisoners be immediately released.

The U.S. should call on the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to immediately convene a meeting to hear testimony on the systematic violations of human rights and the universal freedoms by the Castro dictatorship.

The U.S. must request an investigation by the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression in our Western Hemisphere on the assaults of independent journalists.

It is time for the world to admit the full brutality of the butchers in Havana and to provide the people of Cuba the solidarity and the support that they deserve. It is time for the people of Cuba to have the rights and liberties they deserve and for which they fight every day.

Let this Congress pave the way, Madam Speaker. I ask my colleagues to support H. Con. Res. 252, a resolution I introduced to recognize the life of Orlando Zapata Tamayo, and calling for a renewed focus on the promotion of human rights and democracy in my native homeland of Cuba.

□ 1715

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

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with amendments a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 1586. An act to impose an additional tax on bonuses received from certain TARP recipients.

IN RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT OF COLORADO GEAR UP

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

Mr. POLIS. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition and support of Colorado GEAR UP because college access and success is more critical than ever for making our economy strong and competitive and to give every child the access to the gateway of opportunity that an education provides.

Each and every day, Colorado GEAR UP helps us meet the President's goal to lead the world in college graduates by 2020. It prepares our State's low-income students for college. It's funded by the U.S. Department of Education and managed by the Colorado Department of Higher Education. Unfortunately, way too many students are left behind across the country, both in secondary and postsecondary education. Designed to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter into and succeed in postsecondary education, GEAR UP provides 6-year grants to States and partnerships to provide services at high-poverty middle and high schools, and funds are used to provide college scholarships.

Colorado GEAR UP's vision is to engage, encourage, and enable Colorado's low-income students, including first-generation college-goers and new immigrants to get on a pathway to college so they can reach their potential and pursue their dreams. With its current grant, Colorado GEAR UP has served over 2,500 students in 8 middle schools and 12 high schools across Colorado.

Colorado GEAR UP is an effective tool for helping students to close Colorado's Achievement Gap by preparing students to meet rigorous expectations and to level the playing field for Colorado's low-income students. Beginning in the seventh grade, Colorado GEAR UP selects cohorts of students in 10 middle schools and 8 school districts Statewide. Pre-collegiate advisors follow their students through high school, where they empower students and families with the information, resources, academic, and cultural support that they need to finish high school and enroll in college.

A vital element of the program is the connection between students and their advisors. Advisors have a lower student-counselor ratio, and meet with their students at least twice a month. If a student is struggling academically, culturally, or socially, the counselors meet with the student even more often than twice a month. Data drives the programmatic decisions. They enter all data about meetings in a data base and they provide monthly reports to the principals of the school. Colorado GEAR UP also measures success through an annual online student survey that takes place each spring.

The Colorado GEAR UP model focuses on college and career exploration, exposure, and experience. Students participate in monthly college knowledge workshops. They visit college campuses. They learn about different kinds of degrees and different kinds of financial aid that might be available to them. Juniors and seniors use the GEAR UP online college portfolio as a navigation tool to help them with their college selection process, the admissions process, and financial aid. In 2008 and 2009, more than 80 percent of Colorado GEAR UP students understood the financial aid options, compared to 30 percent of their peers.

Colorado GEAR UP has partnered with community colleges and 4-year institutions to offer concurrent enrollment courses as early as the second semester of their sophomore year in high school. This allows students to take courses for actual college credit while they're still in high school. Not only are Colorado GEAR UP students taking advantage of college coursework, they're succeeding. This past fall, 80 percent in the GEAR UP junior cohort completed at least one college course, and 77 percent received at least a C or better in a college course while they were in high school.

As a result of their participation, Colorado GEAR UP students will enter college with a significant amount of college credit, and some may even earn an associate's degree. As students go onto college campuses, GEAR UP partners with the institutions to continue to track progress and make sure that the students have the support services they need to succeed at college.

I want to share with you what some students say about Colorado GEAR UP. "GEAR UP is an opportunity to achieve an education. It just makes a person realize about the real world. GEAR UP is there to make it a little easier," said a tenth-grader from Pueblo East High School. A tenth-grader from North Ridge High School said, "GEAR UP means opportunity to me. It means a chance to go to college and succeed in my life."

Moving forward, Colorado GEAR UP plans to expand to serve even more students across Colorado. This program's performance clearly demonstrates that students can be successful in early college initiatives, can succeed at a 4-year university, given the proper guidance and support and opportunities. Early college experience can even save money by preventing students from dropping out of high school. That's why I applaud Colorado GEAR UP as a national model for innovation and effectiveness in expanding college access for low-income students and first-generation college goers, and I strongly support its continued expansion and success.

CONGRATULATING EVAN LYSACEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentle-

woman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Evan Lysacek, the 2009 Men's World Figure Skating Champion and the 2010 Olympic gold medalist. What a feat. Evan started figure skating as a young boy in Naperville, Illinois, a town located in my district. He attended Neuqua Valley High School, where he was on the honor roll and earned many other academic achievement awards while still maintaining a very intense training schedule for figure skating. His discipline and focus certainly paid off. Evan won several titles and championships at the junior level before making his senior international debut at the age of 19. Evan has competed and medaled in several United States Figure Skating Championships, World Figure Skating Championships, and the 2006 Winter Olympics before his thrilling gold medal win at the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver. But he is more than an accomplished figure skater. Word has it that Evan finds time in his grueling schedule to support a variety of charities, including the Ronald McDonald House Charities, the Make-a-Wish Foundation, and the Special Olympics.

I am proud to say that Evan Lysacek and his family call the 13th District of Illinois their home, and I would like to extend to him my congratulations and wish him the best as he takes on his next challenge—"Dancing with the Stars"—which premiered this week.

RESPECT THE INSTITUTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE from Texas. It's always a historic pleasure to be able to sign legislation that can change millions of lives. It is a rare opportunity for Members of Congress, no matter how long they may serve, to be able to serve the people and then to be able to grant the people privileges that they would not have had but for the acts of this Congress. So I stand here today very proud of the fact that just a few hours ago, the President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States, the Democratic leadership and Members, signed legislation that would provide opportunities for 32 million Americans. Polling over the last 24 hours have characterized Americans as enthusiastic, uplifted, and happy. Quite contrary to some of the unfortunate drama that played out over the last 3 or 4 days as we were debating on the floor of the House.

Today, in Roll Call, a local Hill paper, the headline reads, "House decorum is fraying." It cites a comment about House Democratic leaders may have lost control of this body. I beg to differ with them. They are wrong. This institution is sacred and the House Democratic leadership maintains that

sacredness. But, tragically, those who differed with us took to tactics that I believe calls for an apology by the Republican leadership—the actions of Members on the balcony that were beyond the pale; holding up posters that denigrated House leadership on the balcony of the United States House of Representatives; signs that were inappropriate.

Certainly, I have no control, and welcome the First Amendment rights of anybody, including the protestors. Interestingly enough, more than a hundred thousand had gathered on Sunday for immigration reform. Polite, orderly, respectful, and getting their point across. But lo and behold, there were some who decided to disrespect this institution. And I'm offended. Yes, there can be cheers. There can be boos. We do that. It is the order of the day. But to call out words that are offensive to our fellow Members is unacceptable.

I rise today calling on our leadership to ask for an apology from the minority and to have a review and an investigation—that's a too harsh word—but a review of the actions of those who decided to hold signs and I believe disrespect the institution.

So we're not losing control of this body. Individuals may have acted inappropriately. But I will assure you that the debate that was carried on by Democrats were on the issues, albeit you may have agreed or disagreed. It was respectful. And we won the vote. Thank God, we won it on behalf of the American people. But they are my friends on both sides of the aisle. I claim them. But the point is that this kind of behavior is unacceptable and offensive. We must learn that there are some things more important than our individual opportunity to express ourselves as Members of Congress outside of this body. It is the institution and the respect that it's held over the years for the institution that is known as the most powerful lawmaking body in the world. We are owed, then, the duty and responsibility of acting like we have the respect for this body. If no one else does, we need to have it.

Madam Speaker, the behavior was unacceptable. The behavior was without description and without comparison. And I'm offended by the insults to the Democratic leadership. They've got tough skins. But it's not Democratic leadership. It is the Speaker, the Majority Leader. It is the majority whip, the majority chairperson of the Democratic Caucus. It is the vice chairperson and a variety of leaders. Not one did I see on a balcony holding up any untoward message that would have offended the minority.

The time comes now when we'll take back this House in a way that all of us can respect this institution. I'm grateful that we had the courage to do what was right for the American people.