

the company was being forced through a state-orchestrated bankruptcy process. Alexanyan's attempts to protect the company's rights in this process ran up against the hostility of government authorities. Mr. Alexanyan was jailed on April 6, 2006. He was held in horrible conditions during his pretrial detention in a freezing cell and subjected to torture. The authorities knew he had HIV and a compromised immune system. They attempted to make him give testimony against Mr. Khodorkovsky and Mr. Lebedev and others at Yukos in exchange for better treatment and medicine. He refused. The European Court of Human Rights repeatedly issued interim measures to the Russian authorities requesting medical care be provided to Alexanyan. The authorities did not comply, leaving Alexanyan without antiretroviral treatment for almost 2 years. Because of this state-sponsored torture, he died when he was just 39 years old.

More than 50 criminal cases against Yukos executives, employees, and others associated with Khodorkovsky or Yukos have been filed by Russian authorities. The strategy of Russian investigators has involved investigating or prosecuting business partners, juniors, or even bystanders to obtain statements or court rulings that would produce "evidence" and establish the "facts" they needed for their trumped up charges against Mr. Khodorkovsky and others connected with Yukos.

There is no question the continuing incarceration of Mr. Khodorkovsky and Mr. Lebedev is a human rights abuse. The European Court for Human Rights ruled that violations of Mr. Khodorkovsky's fundamental human rights did occur in connection with his arrest and detention between 2003 and 2005—including degrading prison conditions, inhuman and degrading conditions in the courtroom throughout his first trial, detention unjustified by compelling reasons outweighing the presumption of liberty, and unfair hearings reviewing his detention. The court has raised similar concerns with Mr. Lebedev.

Other cases are also clear cut, such as Anna Politkovskaya, the renowned journalist and Kremlin critic, who was shot dead while entering her apartment building on October 7, 2006. Ms. Politkovskaya rose to prominence for her in-depth coverage of the war in Chechnya, exposing incidents of state-sponsored torture, mass executions, kidnappings, and war crimes. Four individuals initially accused of killing Ms. Politkovskaya were found not guilty, and no light has been shed on the true architect of her murder. Her case would be captured by this legislation if those responsible can be identified.

Let's not forget that we are demanding Russia abide by the international agreements that it has ratified and live up to the expectations of the organizations it has joined. The Russian Federation is a member of the United Na-

tions, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and the Council of Europe. It is also a party to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the UN Convention against Corruption, and the European Convention on Human Rights.

This legislation is narrowly targeted to hold accountable specific persons for the most heinous of crimes and represents a core U.S. foreign policy value. It is also consistent with targeted sanctions the United States has imposed on other countries with major human rights concerns.

This also strengthens the President's National Security Strategy announced last May, PSD-10, by "closing gaps" in our legal system so our country does not inadvertently become a haven for human rights violators. He enumerated grounds for denying admission to the United States, and this legislation complements his initiative by providing a statutory, legal guidelines for the administration.

This bill enjoys enormous bipartisan and bicameral support with a 365 to 43 vote in the House of Representatives and 92 votes in the Senate. In short, there is consensus for this bill and an understanding of the types of cases that fall within the Magnitsky Act's parameters. In Russia, the Magnitsky Act will serve as a deterrent to those engaged in oppression and provide a shield to millions of Russian activists determined to secure greater human rights and establish the rule of law. This bill gives hope to Russian civil society and to echo my friend from Arizona's eloquent comment to Mr. Khodorkovsky and Mr. Lebedev that "they are not forgotten." Those in Russia who are oppressed, intimidated, or suffering because they are seeking democracy, truth and justice should know they are not forgotten and your spirit and determination inspire us.

The fact that certain Russian Government officials have lashed out against this law speaks to the powerful tool it can be in support of democracy and human rights in Russia. It is not enough to pass this law—the United States must now publically hold those accountable for persecuting Mr. Khodorkovsky, Mr. Lebedev, and so many others in Russia. I look forward to working with my colleagues and the administration to do so.

IMPROPER PAYMENTS ELIMINATION AND RECOVERY IMPROVEMENT ACT

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, this week, the Senate passed the Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Improvement Act of 2012. The IPERA Improvement Act or H.R. 4053. Earlier this month, the House passed the same legislation, which builds on the Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Act of 2010 (IPERA) by taking

additional steps to identify and prevent improper payments by Federal agencies. I look forward to seeing the President sign into law this important, bipartisan legislation.

The Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Improvement Act of 2012 goes beyond IPERA's goals for curbing agencies' improper payments with three main concepts, including provisions that: expand requirements and strengthen estimates for agencies' improper payments; mandate the establishment of a government-wide "Do Not Pay" program; and prevent payments to deceased individuals. As my colleagues know, improper payments are payments made in error, such as payments made to the wrong person or in the wrong amount. These kinds of preventable mistake unfortunately result in billions of lost taxpayer dollars every year.

Although we have made great strides in curbing improper payments in the past year, we still have a ways to go to improve transparency and make agencies and agency leadership more accountable for better protecting the taxpayer dollars we entrust to them. At a time of record deficits, we need to be getting the most out of every dollar and cannot afford to waste more than a hundred billion annually. I will continue to work with my colleagues in Congress and the Administration to see that these measures are enacted, and properly and efficiently implemented.

The bipartisan legislation requires several important steps to curb Federal Government waste and fraud.

First, the bill requires agencies to strengthen the estimation of improper payments. The legislation requires improved and more consistent reporting of improper payment estimates by Federal agencies, based on recommendations from the Department of Defense inspector general and the Government Accountability Office. The legislation, for example, would prevent agencies from relying only on voluntary disclosure of improper payments by contractors, as well as require agencies to produce documentation to prove a payment was correct.

Second, the bill mandates the establishment of a government wide "Do Not Pay" program. Too often, Federal agencies make improper payments to individuals that could easily be identified as ineligible if payments were more routinely screened against Federal databases. Unfortunately, Federal agencies are not doing this basic eligibility screening before payments are made. Through the initiative, before an agency could award a contract or grant, the agency would have to cross check against the "Do Not Pay" database, which will include a central comprehensive database of individuals, contractors, and others who may be ineligible to receive Federal funds, such as companies that are no longer allowed to do work with the Federal Government because of a fraud conviction or similar reason.

The administration is currently establishing a “Do Not Pay” program based on the White House executive memorandum, Memorandum on Enhancing Payment Accuracy Through a “Do Not Pay List.” However, there was no statutory mandate to proceed. The legislation establishes the “Do Not Pay” program in law throughout the Federal Government under a specific timetable.

Third, the legislation targets death fraud and improper payments to deceased individuals. Improper payments include those made to individuals who are deceased, and should therefore no longer be eligible under program rules, yet still receive payments. For example, the Office of Personnel Management Inspector General reported that \$601 million in improper payments were made to Federal retirees found to have already died. However, such payments to dead people were not unique to this one program. Improving the collection and use by Federal agencies of data on deceased beneficiaries will help curb hundreds of millions, if not billions of dollars, in improper payments. The IPERA Improvement Act requires that the Office of Management and Budget, in consultation with other agencies and stakeholders, determine a plan for curbing improper payments to deceased individuals.

Finally, the legislation requires that the Office of Management and Budget report to Congress on the current efforts by agencies to recover improper payments, including a listing of agencies that employ outside contractors for recovery efforts, and their current levels and targets for recoveries. This reporting can easily be done as part of the annual report on improper payments currently conducted by the OMB.

I believe passage of the Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Improvement Act of 2012 represents an important step toward curbing waste and fraud within the Federal Government. I look forward to working with the administration and Federal agencies to implement the legislation’s provisions. I also look forward to working with my congressional colleagues on additional steps during the next legislative session.

CONGRATULATING OLIVIA CULPO, MISS UNIVERSE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am pleased to offer my sincere congratulations to Olivia Culpo, a native of Cranston, RI, on being crowned Miss Universe. After being crowned Miss Rhode Island USA in her first ever pageant competition last year, Olivia’s rise to Miss Universe has been nothing short of meteoric. In quick succession she became the first Rhode Islander to ever win the Miss USA competition, and is now the first Miss USA to win the Miss Universe pageant in over a decade. She has made the people of our State very proud.

The Miss Universe title is an acknowledgement of Olivia’s exceptional intelligence, talent, and compassion. She was recognized by the National Honor Society for her academic excellence at Rhode Island’s St. Mary’s Academy Bay View. She currently attends Boston University in neighboring Massachusetts, where she has made the dean’s list every semester.

In addition to excelling in her studies, Olivia is a talented and dedicated musician. From a young age, her love for music was cultivated by her proud parents, Peter and Susan Culpo, themselves musicians. She took cello lessons from second grade on, and has since performed with the Rhode Island Philharmonic Youth Orchestra, Rhode Island Philharmonic Chamber Ensemble, Bay View Orchestra, and Rhode Island All State Orchestra. This self-described cellist nerd has also had the honor of performing at Boston Symphony Hall and at Carnegie Hall in New York City, and she completed a tour of England in 2010.

Olivia has already demonstrated a strong drive to make a difference in her community and her country. Earlier this year, I had the opportunity to meet with Olivia here in my Washington office, where she advocated passionately for Federal support of ovarian cancer research. I share her deep concern about the terrible effects of cancer. She is a valuable ally in the search for a cure.

Olivia has given the Ocean State something to be proud of. I am grateful to Olivia Culpo for the example she sets for our children and for being a stellar and faithful representative of the State of Rhode Island on the world stage. I wish her all the best.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO ANN MILLNER

• Mr. LEE. Mr. President, Nelson Mandela said, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” In Utah, Weber State University President Ann Millner has lead the charge to increase, improve and enhance higher education opportunities for anyone who has sought them. After 10 years of distinguished service she is stepping down from her post and I rise to honor her today.

Before being selected president of the university, Ann served Weber in a variety of capacities including vice president for university relations, associate dean of continuing education, assistant vice president for community partnerships and director of outreach education in the school of allied health services. President Millner brought with her a well-rounded resume of leadership in education gained at several different universities. She served as education coordinator of the medical technology program at Vanderbilt University, instructional developer in

medical technology at Thomas Jefferson University, a lecturer at the school of health professions, Southwest Texas State University, and associate director of continuing education at the Edmonda campus of Gwynedd-Mercy College. Ann has given her career to the pursuit of improving educational opportunities around the country and that motivation has been central to her administration at Weber.

In 2002, Ann was selected as president of the university from a pool of 55 possible candidates. Regent George Mantes said, “In selecting a president of Weber State University we looked for someone who could lead a university that serves over 17,000 students and who would also be seen as a community leader for Northern Utah. We had terrific people to choose from and feel confident that in selecting Dr. Millner we have found the right person to fill both of these important roles.” Mr. Mantes and the selection committee’s confidence in President Millner has paid off. Under her leadership Weber State University opened a new campus in Davis and enrollment increased from 17,000 to 25,000. The university has added a number of new programs, certificates, baccalaureate and graduate degrees including seven masters degree programs and countless online course work which all serve to both enhance and expand the educational opportunities offered to students. Weber has gained particular acclaim for its growing engineering Computer and Electronics Engineering Technology department, which focuses on training students in the innovations and technologies of the future. In 2010 President Millner announced the “Dream Weber Program,” one of the many scholarship and outreach programs her administration developed to make higher education a possibility for those who would otherwise not have the opportunity.

The new and upgraded facilities on Weber’s campus stand as a powerful symbol of the legacy President Millner leaves behind. In addition to an entire new campus in Weber, President Millner oversaw the construction of the Hurst Center for Lifelong Learning, a two-story facility dedicated to helping provide students with opportunities to continue education. She also oversaw the opening of Wildcat Village, a residential housing facility that serves over 500 students with a fun, low-cost housing experience. She also oversaw the construction and opening of Elizabeth Hall, a state-of-the-art classroom building which features multimedia capabilities, writing and tutoring centers and enough classroom space to offer more classes than any other building on campus. These three buildings exemplify some of President Millner’s major accomplishments during her presidency: to increase focus on education as a lifelong pursuit, to increase educational opportunities and to enhance educational experiences with cutting-edge technologies and facilities.