

I have been a consistent supporter of the Cuban people in resisting tyranny. I am fortunate to have known many great Cuban dissidents, first and foremost Armando Valladares, whose autobiography *Against All Hope* was a first-hand account of Castro's tyranny, on par with the great work of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. I have also stood with the Ladies in White, or Las Damas de Blanco, and courageous leaders such as Ivonne Malleza Galano, and with heroes such as Dr. Oscar Biscet, a medical doctor and courageous human rights advocate who testified before our human rights subcommittee in February 2012 on "Further Human Rights Violations in Castro's Cuba: The Continued Abuse of Political Prisoners."

Dr. Biscet's story is far too commonplace to ignore. For the QUOTE UNQUOTE "crime" of organizing meetings on behalf of human rights, Dr. Biscet was first arrested and detained by Cuban police in 1999 along with two dozen other advocates. He was released after 5 days, but was rearrested again later that year, this time spending three years in prison. After he got out, he was rearrested a third time in December 2002, beaten and released. Presumably, the Castro regime saw his beating as sufficient warning not to speak out in defense of liberty and human dignity. When he continued to do so, however, the Castro regime arrested him a fourth time, in March 2003, and sentenced him to 25 years in prison.

Fortunately, the Catholic Church intervened to secure his release and that of 50 other unjustly-jailed dissidents in March 2011. He was able to testify via phone at our hearing from Cuba from the US mission. To this day he is unable to leave the Island, prevented by the Castro Brothers.

Dr. Biscet is just one example of the many who suffer under the Castro Brothers. I join my voice with those of my colleagues to express my dismay that the Administration would squander so much leverage in seeking this rapprochement with Cuba, and not doing more to gain concessions from the Castro regime to advance the cause of human rights, offering so much in exchange for so little.

Despite today's news confirming that Cuba released 53 dissidents, which we welcome, since the Administration announced that it would seek normalization of relations with Cuba, hundreds have been arrested, and critics of the government who thought this might signal a new openness continue to be suppressed. This includes Cuban artist Tania Bruguera, who along with other freedom advocates was detained following her attempt to speak and assemble freely in Havana's Revolutionary Square.

There should be no easing of the pressure until Cuba has met definitive and concrete human rights and democratic milestones. Among this is the release of all political prisoners, the end of harassment and a policy of releasing and then re-jailing, the ending of restrictions on freedom of speech and the press,

and on the rights of Assembly. Moreover, the Church must be allowed to conduct its affairs fully and freely without government interference.

And, finally, the Castro regime must be held to account for their harboring of some seventy fugitives from justice, including Joanne Chesimard, who was convicted of killing a state trooper from my home state of New Jersey in 1973, Werner Foerster, leaving his then-young wife a widow. The events of the past several weeks remind us how political violence done in the name of ideology destroys lives and creates deep divisions in the fabric of our society. That this Administration would fail to condition normalization upon the return of fugitives such as Joanne Chesimard, who is on the FBI's Most Wanted Terrorist list, shows where its priorities are.

In closing, I want to assure the Cuban people that I will do everything to make sure that human rights milestones are met before our government makes concessions that are effectively unilateral, squandering leverage. Mind you, this lifeline thrown by the Obama Administration to the Castro regime came at a time when Cuba's oil patrons, Russia and Venezuela, were themselves hurting for cash, and unable to continue subsidizing the regime in Cuba.

To that end, I plan to hold a hearing on the human rights situation in Cuba, focusing in particular on the plight of Afro-Cubans. I also intend to seek a visa to go to Cuba, so I can meet with political prisoners languishing in jail and visit churches, which are spheres independent of government control. I have on multiple occasions sought a visa, only to never have one granted. I say to the Cuban regime—if today marks a new day of openness, then prove it, and let one of your most consistent critics visit Cuba and have freedom of movement to meet with victims of the regime. And, finally, I will introduce legislation to make sure that human rights are not forgotten.

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF  
DR. DALE PATTERSON, PASTOR  
OF EAST BRENT BAPTIST  
CHURCH IN PENSACOLA, FLORIDA

**HON. JEFF MILLER**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, January 12, 2015*

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dr. Dale Patterson, Pastor of East Brent Baptist Church, upon the occasion of his retirement after 33 years at East Brent Baptist Church in Pensacola, Florida, and for more than 50 years of ministry.

Pastor Patterson is a native of Sumrall, Mississippi, and he started his long and distinguished career in the ministry in Mississippi, where he served congregations in Hattiesburg, Mendenall, Shuqualak, and Picayune, while

also pursuing his education at Mississippi College, William Carey College, Mississippi State University, and the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, where he received his master's and doctoral degrees.

In 1981, Pastor Patterson and his family moved to Northwest Florida, where he took the important position of Pastor of East Brent Baptist Church. During his three-plus decades in Northwest Florida, Pastor Patterson became a staple of the community, leading his ministry based on a simple plan to minister to those within the church, while also reaching out to spread the Gospel to all the members of the community in need of the Lord's guidance.

Under Pastor Patterson's leadership, and with the grace of God, East Brent Baptist Church has grown significantly over the past decades. Pastor Patterson supervised the purchase of property surrounding East Brent Baptist Church to expand the grounds and facilitate the construction of many new facilities, including the Family Life Center, the Worship Center, the G Building—used to house various events from Sunday School classes to GED classes and weddings—as well as the reutilization of existing property to provide recreational opportunities for children in the church community. In addition, during his tenure, East Brent Baptist launched Care Ministries, Inc. to help further spread the word of Jesus Christ far and wide.

There is no question that Pastor Patterson's record of leadership and accomplishments at East Brent Baptist are myriad; however, he has also served in important leadership positions throughout the state and in the larger Southern Baptist Community. During his time in ministry, Pastor Patterson has served as President of the Associational Pastor's Conference, Moderator of Association and has served on State Board of Missions for Florida Baptist Convention. Pastor Patterson has also held the chairmanship of various committees, including: the Evangelism Committee, Mission's Committee, Sunday School Committee, Program Committee, State Order of Business, State Nomination Committee, State Loans and Grants Committee, Budget and Allocations Committee, and the Health and Hope Committee.

Pastor Patterson's many accomplishments, however, are only a small window into the exceptional work that he has done serving the Lord and the congregation of East Brent Baptist Church, and his many successes in life are a testament to what can be achieved through faith and adherence to the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, my wife Vicki and I wish Pastor Patterson, his wife Louise, and the entire Patterson family all the best as Pastor Patterson enjoys his retirement years spending time with his family and the many friends he has made throughout the Northwest Florida community.

## SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference.

This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this infor-

mation, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Tuesday, January 13, 2015 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.