

*Governmental Affairs and the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform” after “Senate”;* and

*(3) in subparagraph (E), by striking “2011” both places it appears and inserting “2017”.*

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the motion to concur currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

□ 1640

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I support H.R. 1059 and thank Mr. CONYERS for sponsoring it. I also thank Mr. COHEN of Tennessee and Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia for serving as cosponsors.

H.R. 1059 promotes an important goal, providing security for Federal judges. Under the Ethics in Government Act, judges and other high-level judicial branch officials must file annual financial disclosure reports. This requirement increases public confidence in government officials and better enables the public to judge the performance of those officials. However, Congress enacted legislation that allows the Judicial Conference to redact statutorily required information in a financial disclosure report where the release of the information could endanger the filer or their family.

Those who seek to harm or intimidate Federal judges might use a disclosure form to identify where someone's spouse or child works or goes to school on a regular basis. Individuals targeting judges for harassment have also been known to file false claims on property owned by judges and their families. Harassers could use judicial financial disclosure reports to more easily identify such property.

The Judicial Conference delegated to its Committee on Financial Disclosure the responsibility to implement the financial disclosure requirements for judges and judicial employees under the Ethics in Government Act. The committee monitors the release of financial disclosure reports to ensure compliance with the statute.

In consultation with U.S. Marshals Service, the committee also reviews and approves or disapproves any request for redaction or statutorily mandated information where the filer believes the release of the information could endanger the filer and their family. Under the Judicial Conference's

regulations, no redaction will be granted without a clear nexus between a security risk and the information for which redaction is sought.

The law has worked well through the years and has been reauthorized twice since 2001; but it expires at the end of this calendar year if we fail to act, an outcome that is unacceptable.

Last year the Marshals Service investigated and analyzed almost 1,400 threats and inappropriate communications to judicial officials, nearly three times as many threats as recorded in 2003. And there were more than 3,900 incidents and arrests at U.S. court facilities in 2010.

Financial disclosures help maintain an open and transparent government, but government transparency should not come at the cost of personal security for government officials. Judges and other judicial employees perform important work that is integral to our democratic system of government. In order to preserve the integrity of our democracy, we must protect the integrity of our courts; and that means ensuring the security of judges and other judicial employees from intimidation and threats.

The Senate made two minor amendments to the bill, which we accept. The first amendment involves an annual report that the administrative Office of the U.S. Courts submits to the House and Senate Judiciary Committees. The report summarizes the redactions made in the preceding year and explains why they were made. The first amendment mandates that the report also be sent to the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, as well as the Senate Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs Committee. The second amendment sunsets the redaction authority after 6 years, in 2017.

Mr. Speaker, I support H.R. 1059, as amended by the Senate, and urge my colleagues to extend the redaction authority.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to commend the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, the gentleman from Texas, LAMAR SMITH, for his cooperation in bringing this bill out of committee and through the Congress.

On September 12 of this year, my bill passed the House unanimously. The requirement that judges and judicial branch employees disclose their personal finances promotes openness in the Federal Government. It reduces the risk of corruption, prevents the appearance of impropriety, and also sheds some transparency on what we do in the third branch of government.

Unfortunately, sometimes these required disclosures can include specific information about the filer's residence, a spouse's workplace, a child's workplace, or a vacation home. This information has the potential to place individual judges, employees, and their families at risk. So what we're doing

here is allowing a redaction by the Judicial Conference. The bill's redaction authority is critical to ensuring that this information does not get into the wrong hands and the whole idea is to make sure that some of the Federal judges whose lives have been lost and others whose family members have lost their lives by disgruntled litigants will not be made available to them.

The Judicial Conference is very careful in granting redaction authority. And although I would have preferred a permanent redaction authority, I'm perfectly willing to support a 6-year authority with extension possibilities. I look forward to the President signing this bill into law immediately.

I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time as well.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill, H.R. 1059.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

BELARUS DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS ACT OF 2011

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendments to the bill (H.R. 515) to reauthorize the Belarus Democracy Act of 2004.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the Senate amendments is as follows:

Senate amendments:

On page 6, line 19, strike “and” and insert “expanded its visa ban list, imposed additional financial sanctions on certain state-owned enterprises, and initiated preparations to freeze the assets of several individuals in Belarus. The”.

On page 10, line 9, strike “continue to”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I ask unanimous consent that all Members may

have 5 legislative days to submit for the RECORD statements and extraneous materials on this measure.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H.R. 515, the Belarus Democracy and Human Rights Act. Before I begin my prepared remarks, however, I would like to take a moment to honor the life of former President Vaclav Havel, an inspirational leader and lifelong advocate for the cause of freedom.

Throughout his lifetime, Havel was part of an incredible transformation of Czechoslovakia, from an oppressive, communist Soviet satellite to the free, democratic, independent nation that is the Czech Republic. Many people at that time had given up hope that such a transformation was possible. It was beyond their imagination. But Vaclav Havel never lost faith and believed that people yearning for liberty could come together and affect incredible change.

Even following the liberation of his own country, Mr. Havel continued to champion the cause of the oppressed around the world, adding his voice to those calling for freedom in countries throughout Europe, the Balkans, and even my native homeland of Cuba.

□ 1650

As he eloquently said after the Velvet Revolution that brought liberty to his people: "None of us know all of the potentialities that slumber in the spirit of the population, or all the ways in which that population can surprise us when there is the right interplay of events."

It is therefore fitting that we come here today to consider this measure to support the democratic movement in a country relatively near Mr. Havel's homeland, a country called the "last dictatorship in Europe."

The brutal Lukashenko regime in Belarus has time and again proven itself to be unrepentant in the oppression of its own people. Despite claims of reform by those in leadership positions, there have been no real changes in Belarus. It seems that's the same script that all communist or communist-style dictators are using these days. It's the same facade the Cuban dictatorship seeks to perpetuate.

Hundreds of political prisoners remain in jail in Belarus, including two former Presidential candidates and a well-respected human rights defender, and credible reports indicate these prisoners are frequently subjected to degrading and inhumane treatment. Even those who have been previously released in attempted overtures to the West frequently are rearrested or face some other type of intimidation and retribution.

Mr. Speaker, last year, the world watched as over 700 pro-democracy pro-

testers were arrested en masse. Their crime? Simply clapping their hands—their hands. This was their peaceful expression of dissent with the regime and fraudulent elections which kept it in power. For clapping their hands.

Today marks the 1-year anniversary of those protests, and how does Belarus' dictator choose to mark this occasion? He has had police summon a key democratic opposition leader and has detained several independent journalists. This clearly shows that the regime is not interested in reform, only in retaining power—power through the muzzling of the opposition, power through the silencing of independent journalists, and power through the repression of its own people.

But as Mr. Havel stated, there is great potential in people who are calling for their own liberty. The people of Belarus are actively calling for their liberty, and this measure before us today provides them with the assistance and the resources they need to continue their valiant struggles.

I urge my colleagues to join us in showing their support for the people of Belarus by passing this important bill today.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of this legislation. One year ago today, Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko staged a fraudulent election.

After tens of thousands of ordinary Belarusians gathered to protest the conduct and results of that election, he arrested hundreds of them, including opposition candidates who dared to run against him. Last May, most were convicted and handed heavy sentences of up to 6 years in prison.

Since then, the Lukashenko regime has continued to harass members of opposition political parties, human rights activists and civil society, and to suppress Belarusians' access to free press and information.

This summer, when citizens of Belarus gathered over several weeks to protest peacefully against Lukashenko and his regime and the deteriorating economic situation there, he had them arrested for simply clapping their hands.

Just last month, the government tightened restrictions on the ability of civil society groups to receive foreign grants and placed even greater restrictions on peaceful protests.

The Obama administration, to its credit, has led the strong international reaction to the fraudulent elections, postelection crackdown and further deterioration of the human rights situation in Belarus. On February 2, the United States significantly expanded the list of Belarusian officials subject to travel restrictions and to having their assets blocked, and restored full U.S. sanctions against Belarus' largest state-owned oil and gas concern and all of its subsidiaries.

On July 2, Secretary of State Clinton met with activists from Belarus during her visit to Lithuania for a meeting of the Community of Democracies. She repeated her demand that Belarus release political prisoners and embark on the path of democratic reform. Just last night, Secretary Clinton and EU High Representative Catherine Ashton released a joint statement highlighting American and European concerns about continued human rights abuses in Belarus on the 1-year anniversary of the December 19, 2010, political crackdown.

In coordination with the European Union, the Obama administration has significantly expanded democracy assistance to the private sector in Belarus this year. These new resources will support the kind of assistance called for in the Belarus Democracy and Human Rights Act of 2011 which we consider here today. By passing this legislation, Mr. Speaker, we are doing our part to encourage the free exchange of ideas in Belarus and helping to ensure a brighter future for the people of that tortured nation, people who, like people everywhere, have the right to free expression and self-government.

I support this bill and encourage my colleagues to do the same, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Human Rights, a strong advocate for freedom everywhere and the author of the bill before us.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. I thank the distinguished chairwoman for yielding and join her first in mourning the passing of Vaclav Havel, the great President and human rights crusader, one of the founders of Charter 77, a magnificent human rights manifesto, that took the Helsinki final act and turned it into a very durable and tangible program of action for the people of Czechoslovakia. Charter 77 has been replicated all over the world, including in Belarus—it's called Charter 97 there—as well as in places like Vietnam, where it's Bloc 8406.

I would note parenthetically that, back in the 1980s, I and some members of the Helsinki Commission, including STENY HOYER, sought to meet with members of Charter 77. All but one, Father Vaclav Maly—now Bishop Maly—got through to our meeting. The rest were detained by the secret police, including Vaclav Havel.

It's interesting and very important to point out that Vaclav Havel, before he passed away, tragically, sent a strong letter to the people of Belarus encouraging them to hold firm and expressing his overwhelming solidarity with the people of Belarus as they seek their universally recognized human rights. Again, this man never ceased in his promotion of human rights anywhere—from Burma to Belarus—including to his dying day, sending this

very important letter to the Belarusian people.

Mr. Speaker, I do rise in strong support and urge my colleagues to pass H.R. 515 again. We passed it last July, but it came back from the Senate with a couple of additions which are very much appreciated.

I especially want to thank Chairman JOHN KERRY and Senator LUGAR for their cooperation in helping to bring this legislation back to the House; and I want to thank the distinguished gentlelady for her leadership, and HOWARD BERMAN, as well as the Speaker and ERIC CANTOR, for bringing this legislation to the floor.

This is a very timely piece of legislation. As was noted, it is exactly 1 year ago today since the bloody December 19, 2010, election-night crackdown in Belarus which swept up more than 700 opposition supporters, many of whom I know personally, who dared to challenge the rule of Belarusian dictator Alexander Lukashenko.

On this day of remembrance, we are here in the House to pass legislation that we know President Obama will sign—he supports it—that demonstrates our country's support for the human rights of the Belarusian people for democracy and the rule of law in Belarus through sanctions targeted against the dictator Lukashenko and his senior officials.

□ 1700

This legislation tracks legislation that I authored in 2004 and '06, which is current policy, called the Belarus Democracy Act, and it builds on that framework of trying to target those who are actually inflicting the abuse. It's timely and necessary. As I said, those jailed—and remember, there are many who have been jailed and more that are being jailed as we meet—have been subjected to degrading and humiliating treatment, and some have been tortured. More than 40 were convicted, and about a dozen, including several presidential candidates, remain imprisoned to this day. At a Helsinki Commission hearing that I chaired only last month, we heard shocking, heartbreaking testimony from one of the presidential candidates who had endured torture during his 2-month stay at a KGB prison—and, yes, Mr. Speaker, in Belarus, it is still called the KGB, reminding one how little Belarus has strayed from its dark, Soviet roots. In addition to the arrested, the families, the lawyers, the independent journalists and the democratic activists who are not yet in prison continue to be harassed and intimidated and their homes watched by the KGB. This has been the worst political crackdown in Europe in well over a decade.

The postelection crackdown has followed the pattern, however, of repression that has characterized Lukashenko's nearly 17-year rule. Through a series of rigged elections, large-scale intimidation, and the suppression of independent media and civil

society, the dictator has long consolidated his control over virtually all national institutions. His dictatorship has the worst record for human rights by far of any government in Europe.

Specifically, and significantly, the sanctions outlined in the bill are aimed at the senior leadership of the dictatorship that displays utter contempt for the dignity and the rights of the Belarusian people. With these sanctions we stand with the Belarusian people and against their oppressors.

H.R. 515 requires the State Department to issue a new report to Congress on the sale, delivery, or provision of weapons or weapons-related technologies or training; Lukashenko's personal wealth and assets; and cooperation by the Belarusian Government with any foreign government or organizations related to censorship or surveillance of the Internet.

H.R. 515 states a U.S. Government policy of strong support for the Belarusian people in their struggle against Lukashenko to live in a free, independent country where their human rights are respected. The bill encourages those struggling despite overwhelming pressures from an anti-democratic regime. It calls for a full accounting of the 1999 to 2000 disappearances. This morning I was with a woman whose husband disappeared, presumed to be dead by this regime, and she continues to this day struggling for human rights on behalf of her people now in exile.

It calls for and supports radio, television, and Internet broadcasting to Belarus, specifically Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, Voice of America, European Radio for Belarus, and the satellite television station BelSat.

It calls for a release of all of the political prisoners. We can't say that enough. We can't say it one day and forget it the next. We need to redouble our efforts, beginning today, to promote a free Belarus where all can live in peace, freedom and prosperity without that knock in the middle of the night by the KGB.

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to congratulate my friend from New Jersey. He has been a passionate advocate for human rights across the board. He and I may not always agree on all issues, but his passion and his commitment to human rights universally cannot be questioned and has made a great contribution to this institution, and I thank him.

I believe that the yearning for human rights is a basic human yearning. It is not limited to the American culture or the Western culture, as we have seen in the outpouring of support during the Arab Spring for the basic human freedoms: the right to organize, the right to express politically, the right to practice one's religion freely, the right to organize political parties and to involve themselves in political dissent. These are universal yearnings, as our

Founders understood, in their genius, in the writing of the Declaration of Independence. And it is absolutely a fundamental American value that we proclaim those freedoms, and we assist those who seek actively in that yearning to implement those freedoms.

Again, I congratulate the distinguished chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and our colleague from New Jersey for their leadership.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I have no further requests for time. I just wanted to thank my friend from Virginia for his statements, and I want to thank the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) for his leadership on all things related to human rights, freedom, and liberty.

What an interesting weekend that we saw, not just the death of Mr. Havel but, at the same time, the death of Kim Jong Il. What an incredible juxtaposition to see a wonderful human rights leader like Mr. Havel and then at the same time a terrible despot like Kim Jong Il who was responsible for actually starving his people as well as having them hunger for freedom and justice.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendments to the bill, H.R. 515.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

#### PROVIDING FOR PLACEMENT OF STATUE OR BUST OF WINSTON CHURCHILL IN CAPITOL

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 497) to provide for the placement of a statue or bust of Sir Winston Churchill in the United States Capitol.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 497

Whereas Sir Winston Churchill was Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1940 through 1945 and from 1951 through 1955;

Whereas the United States and the United Kingdom led the Allied Powers during World War Two;

Whereas President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Sir Winston Churchill formed a