

PRESENTING CONGRESSIONAL
GOLD MEDAL TO JOHN CAR-
DINAL O'CONNOR

SPEECH OF

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 15, 2000

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this legislation, and I applaud my colleague from New York City [Mr. FOSSELLA] for his work in bringing it to the floor today. I am proud to be a cosponsor of this bill honoring a great man and a great New Yorker.

I rise too, to celebrate John Cardinal O'Connor's eighty years and his more than fifteen years of service as the Archbishop of New York. Cardinal O'Connor was not only a spiritual leader, but a secular leader as well. He spoke softly—and sometimes not so softly—about our most pressing problems: homelessness, the AIDS crisis, and condition of the poor, and he worked with others on concrete plans and strategies to address them. Former Governor Mario Cuomo recently cited Cardinal O'Connor's efforts as paving the way for the City's aggressive response to AIDS.

Cardinal O'Connor was a great leader and a friend of all leaders in our city. More than one mayor told me they often consulted with him on how to handle their work and to respond to the challenges of leading the City. He received almost every award his Church and City could bestow on him, although he once told me once that the only award that impressed his mother was the time he was named Grand Marshall of the St. Patrick's Day parade.

Cardinal O'Connor was a permanent fixture at many of our City's major events. I remember him at every parade, coming out to greet the people. In addition, he was an outstanding pastor, taking care of individual needs, and putting the most personal of touches into his sermons.

Cardinal O'Connor will be retiring later this year, and will be solely missed by all residents of the City. Whoever is selected as his successor will face a great challenge—to bring together a diverse population, and to serve—as Cardinal O'Connor did—as a beacon and an inspiration to the less fortunate and to all residents of the City.

In light of his years of public service and his devotion to people of all walks of life, it is only fitting that we give him this honor today. I applaud Cardinal O'Connor for his leadership, and for his service to the people of New York and to Catholics around the world. I thank my colleague from New York for introducing this legislation, and I urge all my colleagues to support this bill to pay a fitting tribute to a genuine humanitarian and a great leader.

HONORING THE 1999 FAIRFAX CENTRAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PUBLIC SAFETY AWARD WINNERS

HON. THOMAS M. DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 1, 2000

Mr. DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure today to rise and bring to

the attention of my colleagues some very special public safety personnel in Fairfax City, in the Eleventh Congressional District of Virginia. Every year the Fairfax Central Chamber of Commerce honors police officers and fire fighters who have shown the highest level of dedication to their noble duties. These individuals who are role models to others in their profession were honored on February 24, 2000 at the 1999 Public Safety Awards Luncheon.

The 1999 awards recipients are:

Career Fire Fighter of the Year: Technician James B. Jeckell: Technician Jeckell is recognized with this prestigious award for his diligent efforts, exceptional work, and commitment to the Fire Department. Technician Jeckell's attention to detail and quality is exceptional, and as the protective clothing representative, he consistently obtains the best available protective gear presently made to meet the needs of our station personnel. He also handles equipment procurement and necessary repairs needed on the Department's small equipment. Technician Jeckell serves on the Department's training committee, and is consistently methodical, goal oriented, and focused on performing his duties with the highest standards of excellence during emergency incidents.

Volunteer Fire Fighter of the Year: Hana F. Brilliant: Fire Fighter Brilliant is recognized for her tremendous commitment to the fire department in volunteering an extensive number of overtime/recall hours. She has covered shift vacancies with little or no notice, and consistently and promptly responds to requests for staffing assistance. During calendar year 1999, she volunteered 582 minimum staffing hours. In addition to her service in operational staffing roles, she is dedicated to training, and attends in-station training on a regular basis. During the pilot Fire Fighter I & II certification class, Fire Fighter Brilliant not only served as an instructor, but was also responsible for arranging volunteer coverage for career on-duty instructors. She continues in this role with our current certification class. Additionally, Fire Fighter Brilliant serves as a contributing member of the Department's Quality Council and the Training Committee.

Valor Award: Bruce Suslowitz: Fire Medic Suslowitz is being honored today with an Honorable Mention of Valor for his life-saving actions at the three-alarm fire at 3939 Persimmon Drive on January 7, 2000. As a member of the first-arriving unit on the scene, and after giving the appropriate situation report, Fire Medic Suslowitz approached the building to ensure all tenants were exiting safely. Upon opening the stairway door, Fire Medic Suslowitz heard someone yelling for assistance. Without regard for his own safety, Fire Medic Suslowitz rapidly ascended three floors to find an 80-year-old wheelchair-bound man being assisted by his 17-year-old neighbor. Ultimately, without the assistance of anyone, Fire Medic Suslowitz valiantly rescued the gentleman from the smoke-filled building, who was then treated and taken to the hospital for smoke inhalation.

Police Officer of the Year: Detective Michael D. Boone: Detective Michael Boone is being honored today for his consistently high level of dedication in the performance of his law enforcement duties. An example of his dedication to upholding the law was demonstrated on a peeping-Tom case involving a sexual of-

fender with prior convictions of burglary, rape, and abduction. Over the course of several months, Detective Boone's initiative and excellent investigative techniques triggered a probation violation hearing. As a result, the judge imposed the entirety of a 10-year sentence in the State Penitentiary on the probation violation. Detective Boone's actions successfully removed a violent sex offender from the community.

Life Saving Award: Officer Craig M. Buckley and Officer Martin Nachtman: On July 7, 1999, Officer Nachtman responded to a call in the Fairfax Circle area for an individual panhandling and bothering customers of a business. When he arrived on scene, the individual was not at the building. Upon checking the area for the individual, he was found behind the building. The man, using the belt, had hanged himself from a handrail on the steps to the rear of the building. Officer Buckley then arrived on the scene. The officers immediately lifted the man and removed the belt from around his neck. The individual was non-responsive and not breathing. At this point the officers began to administer CPR to the subject. Their efforts were successful in restoring the man's breathing. City of Fairfax Fire and Rescue units arrived and continued to care for this individual and transported him to the hospital. He was originally listed in critical condition, but has since improved and is expected to make a full recovery.

Several factors stand out in the performance of these officers: the quick response to a seemingly minor call; the diligence in checking for the subject when he was not present at the location; and finally, the teamwork and life-saving action that each of them took. These fine police officers should be commended for the exemplary role they played in saving a man's life.

Due to the dedicated efforts of public service providers, like Technician Jim Jeckell, Fire Fighter Hana Brilliant, Fire Medic Bruce Suslowitz, Detective Michael Boone, Officer Martin Nachtman, and Officer Craig Buckley, who place the safety and well-being of others above their own, the city of Fairfax is a better place to live. They have rightfully earned the highest appreciation and respect from myself, the members of the Fairfax Central Chamber of Commerce, and from all the people of our community whose lives they have touched. I know my colleagues will join me in thanking these heroes for a job well done.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE
COST ESTIMATE FOR H.R. 1749

HON. DON YOUNG

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 1, 2000

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I submit for the benefit of the Members a copy of the cost estimate prepared by the Congressional Budget Office for H.R. 1749, a bill to designate Wilson Creek in Avery and Caldwell Counties, North Carolina, as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

U.S. CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, February 29, 2000.
HON. DON YOUNG,
Chairman, Committee on Resources,
U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the enclosed cost estimate for H.R. 1749, a bill to designate Wilson Creek in Avery and Caldwell counties, North Carolina, as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is Deborah Reis.

Sincerely,

DAN L. CRIPPEN,
Director.

Enclosure.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST
ESTIMATE—H.R. 1749

H.R. 1749 would designate a 23-mile segment of Wilson Creek in North Carolina as a component of the Wild and Scenic River System, to be administered by the U.S. Forest Service. Based on information provided by the Forest Service, administering the Wilson Creek segment would have no significant impact on federal spending. The river segment would remain undeveloped.

Because H.R. 1749 would not affect direct spending or receipts, pay-as-you-go procedures would not apply. The bill contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

The CBO staff contact is Deborah Reis, who can be reached at 226-2860. This estimate was approved by Peter H. Fontaine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

A CALL FOR THE RELEASE OF
CUBAN POLITICAL PRISONER,
DR. OSCAR ELIAS BISCKET

HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 1, 2000

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, a great Cuban patriot, the physician Oscar Elias Biscet, has been sentenced to 3 years in prison by the Cuban dictatorship for peacefully demanding free elections and human rights for the Cuban people.

Dr. Biscet forms part of a new generation of leadership that has risen in the Cuban pro-democracy movement and that will play a key role in the free and democratic Cuba that is near.

Dr. Biscet's imprisonment must be condemned and his immediate and unconditional release demanded by all freedom-loving people.

A number of us here in Congress have written the United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights, urging that she add her voice to the call for Dr. Biscet's immediate release. We will not cease our efforts until he and all of the other Cuban political prisoners are free.

I hereby submit for the record, Mr. Speaker, the letter sent by 13 Members of this House to U.N. High Commissioner Robinson, as well as a translation of a letter by Dr. Biscet that was written on a handkerchief and secretly taken out of Dr. Biscet's prison cell approximately 6 weeks ago. The letter was delivered to Cuban independent journalist Angel Pablo Polanco, who revealed its contents via telephone.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
Washington, DC, February 25, 2000.
Ms. Mary Robinson,
Office of High Commissioner For Human Rights,
United Nations Headquarters, New York,
NY.

Dear Ms. Robinson: This is to request your urgent assistance on behalf of the Cuban human rights activist Dr. Oscar Elias Biscet, who is scheduled to stand trial on February 25th, 2000 at the Municipal Tribunal "10 de Octubre" in Havana, Cuba. The Cuban dictatorship apparently plans years of incarceration for Dr. Biscet for so called crimes of "dishonoring national symbols", "public disorder" and "inciting delinquent behavior".

On October 28, 1999 Dr. Biscet held a press conference, prior to the Ibero-American Summit held in Havana in early November. During the press conference, Dr. Biscet along with other members of the peaceful opposition movement announced a march calling for the release of all political prisoners and respect of human rights for the Cuban people. During the press conference two Cuban flags were displayed in an inverted position as a sign of protest for the countless human rights violations that occur on the island. Subsequently, on November 3, 1999, Dr. Biscet was detained and taken to "Cien y Aldabo", where he was placed in a damp cell without sunlight with three common criminals.

Dr. Biscet represents the noblest of aspirations of democracy in Cuba. His efforts as the founder of the Lawton Foundation for Human Rights, a humanitarian organization which promotes the respect for human rights through nonviolent means, have gained him the respect and admiration of notable human rights activists throughout the world and inspired countless Cubans to continue in their struggle for democratic change.

The Cuban regime, intimidated by the effectiveness of Dr. Biscet's message, has detained him 26 times over that last 18 months, terminated his employment and evicted him and his family from their home. He has been subjected to psychiatric examinations and has been constantly pressured to abandon Cuba.

We respectfully urge you to immediately denounce Dr. Biscet's unjust incarceration and trial and call for his immediate and unconditional release from prison. A statement of this nature would greatly serve to protect Dr. Biscet and his family from further harm by the Cuban government.

Thank you for your consideration.

Lincoln Diaz-Balart, Robert Wexler,
———, Christopher H. Smith,
James A. Traficant, Jr., Dana Rohrabacher, Porter J. Goss, Peter Deutsch, Tillie K. Fowler, Bill McCollum, Luis V. Gutierrez, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Ben Gilman.

HAVANA, JANUARY 20, 2000.

Supreme Court of Justice of the United States of America

EXCELLENCIES: I send you kind greetings. From a "tapiada" cell I write in darkness where it is forbidden to read and write. Under these conditions I pray God may grant you wisdom to make the proper decision in the case of the Cuban child Elian in order to dignify human life and liberty.

Esteemed judges: a nation must never deprive any person of freedom unless the individual becomes a danger to society, always respecting human rights. Nor may parents deprive their children of their right to life and freedom. Limits must prevail for both, nation and parents, to prevent violations of inalienable human rights.

I ask, what is life without freedom? Nothing, as without freedom life is deprived of the love of God.

"Justice exalts a nation, sin becomes its shame." Proverbs.

Magistrates, glorify humanity.

Thank you.

DR. OSCAR ELIAS BISCKET,
Lawton Foundation for Human Rights.

Note: This letter, written on a handkerchief, was clandestinely taken out of the prison at the Department of Technical investigation in Havana where Dr. Biscet is incarcerated. The letter was delivered to the independent journalist in Cuba, Angel Pablo Polanco who revealed its contents abroad via telephone.

HONORING DR. PERLITA NARVAEZ

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 1, 2000

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to recognize a woman who has worked hard to educate women in Bent County about preventing cancer. Dr. Perlita Narvaez works with women in her county to encourage regular checkups and comforts patients with her gentle bedside manner.

Perlita was honored by the local chapter of the Colorado Women's Cancer Control Initiative for her services to help encourage preventative measures in women's health. Perlita has been performing cancer screenings for area women for nearly two years by working directly with the Cancer Control Initiative. The Initiative encourages low-income women to call for an appointment and even offers for a volunteer to go with the woman if she wishes. This Initiative and Perlita have worked diligently to help reduce the number of women who suffer from breast and cervical cancer.

Perlita has been practicing medicine for 12 years. She has made working with women and children her specialty. Her efforts have been applauded by both patients and the Cancer Control Initiative.

It is with this, Mr. Speaker, that I would like to offer this tribute of thanks to Dr. Perlita Narvaez. Colorado is grateful for her service.