

dealers in the United States. He acquired three homes, a 36-foot yacht and a host of prominent friends and political connections. He was president of the Bronx Chamber of Commerce for more than 10 years in the 1980s and '90s, and was chairman of the Bronx County Democratic Committee for several years in the 1980s.

On his showroom walls were photos of Mr. Gidron with President Ronald Reagan, Gov. Mario M. Cuomo, Mother Teresa and Muhammad Ali. Super Bowl parties at his home drew a pantheon of judges, politicians and celebrities. Friends included George Steinbrenner, the principal owner of the Yankees; Stanley M. Friedman, the former Bronx Democratic leader; Mayor David N. Dinkins; State Senator Guy J. Velella; Representatives Mario Biaggi and Charles B. Rangel; and Dave Winfield, the Yankees slugger.

But by the 1990s, as the nation's love affair with Cadillacs waned, America's most prestigious car had become an outside relic, overtaken by fuel-efficient imports and other luxury brands. As Mr. Gidron's sales plummeted, he fell behind in his corporate taxes, General Motors terminated his franchise, and revenue agents seized parts of his business.

In 2002, Mr. Gidron was indicted on charges of evading more than \$1.5 million in state and federal taxes from the sale and leasing of cars from 1995 to 2000. In 2003, he pleaded guilty to two counts of grand larceny and one of offering a false instrument for filing—admitting that he kept car payments meant for lending institutions—and was ordered to pay \$1.6 million in restitution and sentenced to three years of home confinement and five years of probation.

In 2005, state tax agents shut down Gidron Cadillac-Oldsmobile in Yonkers, seizing assets for what they said was his failure to pay more than \$800,000 in sales taxes. Three other Gidron dealerships were also closed. Mr. Gidron was arrested after a monitor appointed to oversee his business charged that he had again kept car payments intended for lending institutions. He pleaded guilty to violating probation and defrauding nine victims of up to \$100,000, and was sentenced to one to three years in prison. State officials said his former dealerships still owed \$12 million in taxes.

In 2006, Mr. Gidron emerged from a year in prison, said he hoped to make a comeback and sued General Motors for \$150 million, charging that the automaker had reneged on a deal to sell him an auto repair center in Yonkers that he had restored at a cost of millions after it was damaged in a fire in 2000. The suit is pending.

Richard Daniel Gidron was born in Chicago on Oct. 10, 1939, and was raised by his mother and grandmother after his father died when he was 7. At 19, he got a job in a Cadillac dealership on Chicago's South Side. He went to night school but learned salesmanship on the lot and in the showroom. By 26, he had become Cadillac's first black salesman, a natural who did not come across as a super pitchman but moved cars with drumbeat regularity.

Besides his son, of Scarsdale, Mr. Gidron survived by his wife, Marjorie; a daughter, Bridgett Gidron of Scarsdale; two sisters, Dorothy J. Holmes of Stone Mountain, Ga., and Freddie M. Kessee of Aliso Viejo, Calif.; a brother, Thomas Parker of Little Rock, Ark.; and two grandchildren.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TIMOTHY V. JOHNSON

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 16, 2007

Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois. Madam Speaker, unfortunately yesterday, October 15, 2007, I was unable to cast my votes on H. Res. 738, H.R. 2089, and H.R. 20 and wish the RECORD to reflect my intentions had I been able to vote.

Had I been present for rollcall No. 961 on suspending the rules and passing H. Res. 738, Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the Government of Syria's continued interference in the internal affairs of Lebanon, I would have voted "aye."

Had I been present for rollcall No. 962 on suspending the rules and passing H.R. 2089, To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 701 Loyola Avenue in New Orleans, Louisiana, as the "Louisiana Armed Service Veterans Post Office," I would have voted "aye."

Had I been present for rollcall No. 963 on suspending the rules and passing H.R. 20, the Melanie Blocker-Stokes Postpartum Depression Research Care Act, I would have voted "aye."

TRIBUTE TO IC CORPORATION OF TULSA, OKLAHOMA

HON. JOHN SULLIVAN

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 16, 2007

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize IC Corporation of Tulsa, Oklahoma, and its parent company, Navistar International. This year, the IC school bus facility in Tulsa, Oklahoma will manufacture its fifty thousandth school bus since the company became part of the Tulsa community in 1999. I am honored to represent the employees at IC Corporation who build the school buses that provide a reliable means of transportation and keep our children safe as they travel to and from school.

The current IC facility originally opened 19 days after the bombing of Pearl Harbor and was built to make B-24 Bombers to help our Nation win WWII. Based on a history of hard work, the first school bus was built by IC Corporation in January 2001. Still one of the largest industries in Tulsa County, the buses built by the employees of the Tulsa IC Bus Plant carry hundreds of thousands of children around the country to and from school.

The employees at the Tulsa plant exemplify dedication and are one reason that the IC Corporation has more than 60 percent market share in the school bus industry. The fifty thousandth school bus will be delivered to the Ardmore City Schools in Oklahoma at a ceremony on October 17, 2007. Congratulations again, and thank you to IC Corporation and the more than 900 employees who work at the Tulsa Bus Plant in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

FREEDOM FOR ERNESTO DURÁN RODRIGUEZ

HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 16, 2007

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak about Ernesto Durán Rodriguez, a prisoner of conscience in totalitarian Cuba.

Mr. Durán Rodriguez is a pro-democracy activist currently imprisoned in a dungeon for his peaceful work to liberate Cuba from the grasp of the terrorist totalitarian regime. His insistence on freedom, fundamental human rights and speaking openly about the plight of the Cuban people under the tyranny's machinery of repression has made him a target of the totalitarian regime.

Mr. Durán Rodriguez has been repeatedly harassed and detained by regime thugs since 1995, when he was first arrested and in a farcical trial "sentenced" to 22 years in the regime's heinous gulag on charges of "evasion" and attempting to exit the country without "proper permission". Let me be very clear, Mr. Durán Rodriguez has been thrown in the gulag for daring to dream of and working on behalf of a democratic Cuba.

On August 8, 2002, Mr. Durán Rodriguez and another political prisoner, Leoncio Rodriguez Ponce were brutally beaten by regime thugs and thrown into the wretched squalor of punishment cells. On August 28 of that year, both men were tried on trumped-up charges that they had "disrespected" the demented tyrant. Both men were denied the right to a defense, and although the exact motive for their second trial is unknown, the so-called "court" found "sufficient cause" to increase their prison terms by two years.

While incarcerated in the squalor of the heinous gulag, Mr. Durán Rodriguez has suffered beatings, lack of medical treatment and being persistently denied the opportunity to communicate with his family. On January 29, 2006, prison thugs without warning entered his cell during the early morning hours and placed him in shackles on mere suspicion that he might have circulated leaflets in the prison. With his movement constricted, they proceeded to ransack his cell, stealing what few documents he kept and leaving his few precious personal effects thrown throughout his cell.

Mr. Durán Rodriguez is one of the many heroes of the Cuban pro-democracy movement who are locked in the dungeons of an oppressive totalitarian dictatorship for their beliefs. These men and women are symbols of freedom and democracy who will always be remembered when freedom returns to Cuba. Mr. Durán Rodriguez's courage in defiance of tyranny serves as an inspiring reminder that the tyranny's gulags are full men and women who represent the best of the Cuban nation.

Madam Speaker, it is absolutely unacceptable that peaceful pro-democracy activists are languishing in the heinous and depraved prisons of tyrants. My Colleagues, we must demand the immediate and unconditional release of Ernesto Durán Rodriguez and every prisoner of conscience in totalitarian Cuba.