

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEMIEUX. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### TRIBUTE TO CONGRESSMAN LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

Mr. LEMIEUX. Mr. President, I come to the floor, as many of us have done in recent weeks, to pay tribute to a Member of Congress who is retiring—to a great Floridian and a great American, a man I am proud to call a colleague and a friend, Congressman LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART. Congressman LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART is retiring after 18 years of service in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Born in Havana, Cuba, LINCOLN came to the United States in 1959, at the age of 4 years old. His father, Rafael Lincoln Diaz-Balart, had just been elected a senator in Cuba, but he could not take office or remain in Cuba because of the rise of the dictator Fidel Castro.

LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART rose in the House of Representatives to become a senior member of the Rules Committee, the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Legislative and Budget Process, and is now the co-chairman of our congressional delegation. He is also the chairman of the Congressional Hispanic Leadership Institute.

LINCOLN grew up in south Florida. He attended public schools there and high school, but he also attended school in Madrid, Spain. He received a degree in international relations from New College in Sarasota and obtained a diploma in British politics in Cambridge, England. He received his law degree from Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland.

LINCOLN started the practice of law in Miami. He worked for Legal Services of Greater Miami, providing free legal services to the poor. He was subsequently an assistant state's attorney, prosecuting those who committed crimes, and a partner in the prestigious Fowler, White law firm.

LINCOLN was first elected into politics in the Florida Legislature back in 1986, but quickly—just 3 years later—ran for the U.S. Congress. In 1992, he served his first term as a Representative of Florida's 21st Congressional District and served as a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

In 1994, LINCOLN became the first Hispanic in history to be named to the powerful Rules Committee. In 1996, he drafted much of the legislation that strengthened the embargo against Cuba and its dictatorship.

In 1997, he showed his penchant for helping those in need by successfully carrying out efforts to restore the supplemental security income and food assistance to legal immigrants who were denied aid by the welfare reform law of the previous year.

As a member of the House Rules Committee, on September 14, 2001, Congressman DIAZ-BALART took to the floor of the House the joint resolution authorizing the use of force in Afghanistan after the September 11 attacks.

Congressman DIAZ-BALART lives in Miami with his wife Cristina and their two sons Lincoln and Daniel. When he retires, Florida will lose one of its strongest voices, as will this country and all those who care about freedom around the world.

He has fought for Florida's families with integrity and effectiveness. From his time in the State senate to his service in Congress, he has served with passion, drive, and a steadfast determination to do what is right. Most of all, and what I appreciate him most for, he has been a champion of freedom and democracy, not only in Cuba but throughout Latin America and the world.

No one in Congress is more passionate about ending the oppression that Cubans suffer under the current regime. His efforts are known not only here but throughout the world. He is a voice of change, and he is a passionate believer in the rights of people everywhere to be free. He speaks for political prisoners held in the regime's prisons, he speaks for those who suffer beatings for speaking out against their captors, and he speaks for everyday Cubans who hunger for the freedom they have never felt.

I have heard LINCOLN speak many times about the plight of the Cuban people. I have seen his desire to see the people of Cuba enjoy the prize of liberty that has been denied them for more than 50 years. When he speaks about these issues, you feel his passion. His voice has been a great voice for a life of liberty throughout Florida, this country, and the world.

To know LINCOLN is to know one of his heroes—his father Rafael Diaz-Balart, a well-respected public servant. When he had to leave Cuba in 1959, he arrived in the United States and established the White Rose, the first anti-Castro civic organization. When LINCOLN returns to Florida, he will lead a nonprofit inspired by the White Rose. I know his father is looking down from Heaven and will continue to be proud of his son.

The House of Representatives will not be the same without his talents, but Florida will continue to benefit by having him back at home full time. As an article in his hometown paper—the Miami Herald—noted, even though LINCOLN has announced his retirement, the pulpit will change but the passion will not. To me, LINCOLN will always be a steadfast ally in the cause for freedom 90 miles away from our shores in Florida. He knows that freedom is not negotiable, and its cause is the most noble cause in the world. Our country and our world is better off because of my friend LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART.

I will always be grateful to him because when I came here to the Senate

with him and his brother MARIO DIAZ-BALART, another great champion for freedom, I was mentored in the issues that affect my State and so many of the people in my State who come from Cuba and other countries in Latin America. Through their mentoring and through their passion and through the education they provided to me, I was better able to understand his plight, a plight that I don't think most of my colleagues can know as well as we can in Florida—that just 90 miles from our shore is an evil dictator who oppresses his people.

When I am in Florida talking with folks, oftentimes I will make the remark, if I am, say, in Orlando, FL: Can they imagine that just 90 miles away, say, in West Palm Beach, FL, that it would be illegal to speak out against the government, illegal to practice your religion, illegal to gather together in association to express your political views—all of the freedoms we sometimes take for granted? Just 90 miles from our shore, people are jailed, are killed for trying to exercise those freedoms.

It was brought home to me most when I was visited recently by a man by the name of Ariel Sigler. Ariel was a political prisoner in Cuba for 7 years. He has recently been released, and he was in Miami receiving medical care. Ariel is a man who was a professional boxer, a large, strapping man. But he didn't just fight with his hands; he also raised his voice for freedom in his native Cuba. When he did so, he was thrown in jail, and now he is a man who is about 100 pounds less in weight, whose once towering frame is relegated to a wheelchair because for 7 years he was imprisoned just for wanting to criticize his government. He was put in a small cell with several other prisoners. He was fed maggot-infested food, and he had to wash in a pipe and drink from a pipe sitting outside his cell, as did all the other prisoners. It made him sick, desperately sick. This happens just 90 miles from the shore of this country. It is intolerable.

But I know of this, and my heart bleeds for the Cuban people because of the great work of Congressman LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART. So we will miss him. His voice has fought for freedom in this body, in the U.S. Congress, for 18 years. But as the Miami Herald said: The pulpit will change but the passion will not.

We know he will continue to hold that lamp of freedom and be an advocate for free people and people who yearn to be free throughout the world. I yield the floor.

#### RECESS SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

Mr. LEMIEUX. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now stand in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 7:19 p.m., recessed until 9:38 p.m. and