

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY
OF OSWALDO PAYA SARDINAS

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 525 and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 525) honoring the life and legacy of Oswaldo Paya Sardinias.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I wish to speak about Oswaldo Paya, a Cuban dissident, and his untimely death in Cuba in a supposed automobile accident. The Cuban people, indeed all freedom-loving people of the world, have recently lost a great advocate for freedom. He was someone who was in peaceful opposition to the tyranny that is on the island of Cuba.

Oswaldo Paya died in a car crash on Sunday, July 22. He was just 60 years old. Another Cuban dissident, Harold Cepero, was also killed in the accident, and two European politicians, one from Spain and one from Sweden, were injured. Paya was one of Cuba's best known dissidents. He pushed for civil and human rights. He pushed for an end to one-party rule. He pushed for freedom for political prisoners. And he pushed for support for private businesses. In 2002, his Varela Project delivered more than 24,000 verifiable signatures in support of these ideals to the Cuban Government. It was the largest petition drive in Cuban history. Paya bravely led this initiative at great risk to himself, to his loved ones, and to his colleagues. For his work, he received the European Parliaments' Sakarov Prize for Freedom of Thought in 2002, and he was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

The reason I am bringing this up, other than pointing out that planet Earth has lost a friend for freedom, is to note that the circumstances of the car accident are the topic of some debate. Cuban officials insist the driver was speeding and that he lost control and he hit a tree. But others are saying that witnesses saw another vehicle hit Mr. Paya's vehicle and drive it off the road. Paya's daughter Rosa Maria says she holds the Cuban Government responsible. She has told CNN en Espanol that "we think it's not an accident. They wanted to do harm and then ended up killing my father." That is a direct quote.

Paya's loved ones and the Cuban people and the international community deserve to have all the facts surrounding this tragic event examined and put out in the public. That is why I have submitted, along with a number of our colleagues, S. Res. 525, which

honors the life, legacy, and exemplary leadership of Oswaldo Paya. This resolution also calls on the Cuban Government to allow an impartial third-party investigation into the accident. I urge the Senate to unanimously pass this resolution.

This request comes on the heels of other disturbing news out of Cuba. We have learned that more than 40 pro-democracy activists were detained after Paya's funeral last Tuesday. The reason? They dared to shout "libertad" at that time—"freedom"—during the ceremony. Reports also indicate that several of the dissidents were severely beaten.

These peaceful activists were only honoring one of their own and they ended up as victims of an authoritarian regime. Now more than ever before the United States must continue policies that promote the fundamental principles of political freedom, democracy, and human rights, to all of which Oswaldo Paya devoted his life.

Senator DURBIN, we are quite concerned the Castro regime continues to hold an American hostage, Alan Gross. Once again, another Senator rises to urge the Cuban regime in the strongest possible terms to immediately and unconditionally release him.

We will never forget Paya's passion and dedication to freedom and faith. The least the regime can do is to release Alan Gross.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I further ask that the amendment offered by the Senator from Florida, Mr. NELSON, which is at the desk, be agreed to; the resolution, as amended, be agreed to; the preamble be agreed to; the motions to reconsider be made and laid upon the table, with no interviewing action or debate, and that any statements relating to the measure be printed in the RECORD at the appropriate place as if read.

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

The amendment (No. 2740) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To condemn the Government of Cuba for the detention of nearly 50 pro-democracy activists following the memorial service for Oswaldo Paya Sardinias)

On page 4, line 13, strike ";" and" and insert a semicolon.

On page 4, line 17, strike the period and insert ";" and".

On page 4, after line 17, insert the following:

(7) condemns the Government of Cuba for the detention of nearly 50 pro-democracy activists following the memorial service for Oswaldo Paya Sardinias.

The resolution (S. Res. 525), as amended, was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, as amended, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 525

Whereas, on Sunday, July 22, 2012, 60-year-old Cuban dissident and activist Oswaldo Paya Sardinias died in a car crash in Bayamo, Cuba;

Whereas at a young age, Oswaldo Paya Sardinias criticized the communist govern-

ment in Cuba, which led to his imprisonment at a work camp on Cuba's Isle of Youth in 1969;

Whereas, in 1988, Oswaldo Paya Sardinias founded the Christian Liberation Movement as a non-denominational political organization to further civil and human rights in Cuba;

Whereas, in 1992, Oswaldo Paya Sardinias announced his intention to run as a candidate to be a representative on the National Assembly of Popular Power of Cuba and, 2 days before the election, was detained by police at his home and determined by Communist Party officials to be ineligible to run for office because he was not a member of the Communist Party;

Whereas, in 1997, Oswaldo Paya Sardinias collected hundreds of signatures to support his candidacy to the National Assembly of Popular Power, which was rejected by the electoral commission of Cuba;

Whereas the Constitution of Cuba supposedly guarantees the right to a national referendum on any proposal that achieves 10,000 or more signatures from citizens of Cuba who are eligible to vote;

Whereas, in 1998, Oswaldo Paya Sardinias and other leaders of the Christian Liberation Movement created the Varela Project, a signature drive to secure a national referendum on "convert[ing] into law, the right of freedom of speech, the freedom of press and freedom of enterprise";

Whereas, in May 2002, the Varela Project delivered 11,020 signatures from eligible citizens of Cuba to the National Assembly of Popular Power, calling for an end to 4 decades of one-party rule, to which the Government of Cuba responded by beginning its own referendum that made Cuba's socialist system "irrevocable", even after an additional 14,000 signatures were added to the Varela Project petition;

Whereas the Varela Project is the largest civil society-led petition in the history of Cuba;

Whereas Oswaldo Paya Sardinias bravely led the Varela Project at great risk to himself, his loved ones, and his associates;

Whereas, in March 2003, the Government of Cuba arrested 75 human rights activists, including 25 members of the Varela Project, in the crackdown known as Cuba's "Black Spring";

Whereas Oswaldo Paya Sardinias's dedication to freedom and faith earned him the Sakarov Prize for Freedom of Thought from the European Parliament in 2002;

Whereas Oswaldo Paya Sardinias received the W. Averell Harriman Democracy Award from the United States National Democratic Institute for International Affairs in 2003;

Whereas Oswaldo Paya Sardinias was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize by Vaclav Havel, the former president of the Czech Republic, in 2005; and

Whereas President Barack Obama stated, "We continue to be inspired by Paya's vision and dedication to a better future for Cuba, and believe that his example and moral leadership will endure."; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes and honors the life and exemplary leadership of Oswaldo Paya Sardinias;

(2) offers heartfelt condolences to the family, friends, and loved ones of Oswaldo Paya Sardinias;

(3) praises the bravery of Oswaldo Paya Sardinias and his colleagues for collecting more than 11,000 verified signatures in support of the Varela Project;

(4) in memory of Oswaldo Paya Sardinias, calls on the United States to continue policies that promote respect for the fundamental principles of religious freedom, democracy, and human rights in Cuba, in a

manner consistent with the aspirations of the people of Cuba;

(5) in memory of Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas, calls on the Government of Cuba to provide its citizens with internationally accepted standards for civil and human rights and the opportunity to vote in free and fair elections;

(6) calls on the Government of Cuba to allow an impartial, third-party investigation into the circumstances surrounding the death of Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas; and

(7) condemns the Government of Cuba for the detention of nearly 50 pro-democracy activists following the memorial service for Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas.

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY,
AUGUST 1, 2012

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m., on Wednesday, August 1; that following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be

deemed expired, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; that the majority leader be recognized, and the first hour be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first half and the majority controlling the final half.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, the majority leader filed cloture on the cyber security bill today. As a result, the filing deadline for first-degree amendments to S. 3414 is 1 p.m. on Wednesday.

I want to indicate to my colleagues that we continue to work on an agreement on amendments to the bill which I hope we can reach. If no agreement is reached, the cloture vote will be on Thursday.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M.
TOMORROW

Mr. LIEBERMAN. If there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it adjourn under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 7:14 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, August 1, 2012, at 9:30 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

INSTITUTE OF MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES

ERIC J. JOLLY, OF MINNESOTA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES BOARD FOR A TERM EXPIRING DECEMBER 6, 2016, VICE KAREN BROSIUS, TERM EXPIRED.

SUSANA TORRUELLA LEVAL, OF NEW YORK, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES BOARD FOR A TERM EXPIRING DECEMBER 6, 2015, VICE KATHERINE M. B. BERGER, TERM EXPIRED.