

where he received a commendation for outstanding service.

Following his military service, Dr. Poshard returned to Illinois and used the G.I. bill to earn a bachelor's degree in secondary education, a master's degree in health education, and a Ph.D. in higher education administration. He received all three degrees from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

Appointed to the Illinois State Senate in 1984, Dr. Poshard held the seat until the people of the 22nd Congressional District sent him to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1989. During his 10 years in Congress, Dr. Poshard was a strong proponent of campaign finance reform. When he ran for Governor in 1998, he limited individual donations to his campaign and refused to accept contributions from political action committees.

Following his tenure in Congress, Dr. Poshard and his wife Jo founded the Poshard Foundation for Abused Children. For the last 14 years, the Poshard Foundation has helped children who have been victims of abuse, abandonment, or neglect in southern Illinois.

After a 40-year affiliation with the university, Dr. Poshard is leaving his beloved SIU in good shape. At SIU, Dr. Poshard has been a student, a student worker, a civil service worker, an adjunct professor, vice chancellor for administration, and now as he retires—the second longest serving president in the history of the Southern Illinois University system, an experience he calls “the greatest honor of my life.”

I congratulate Glenn on his distinguished career and thank him for dedicating his life to public service. I wish him and his family all the best.

#### POLITICAL PRISONERS AND POLITICAL REPRESSION IN RUSSIA

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, over the years I have come to the floor to raise the plight of political prisoners being held around the globe. These have included journalists, activists, bloggers, musicians, and opposition candidates who all had the misfortune of landing in an autocrat's jail for exercising or advocating for basic freedoms that most of the world takes for granted.

Many of these cases are ones that have received little attention or are not in the world's media spotlight, including: Gambian journalist Ebrima Manneh, who has been held incommunicado since 2006 and probably has died in detention; Vietnamese blogger Dieu Cay, who was jailed for 12 years for anti-state propaganda and is in poor health due to a hunger strike amid his president's recent visit to Washington; Saudi blogger Hamza Kashgari, who was grabbed off a plane in Malaysia while fleeing for his safety and returned to Saudi Arabia to face charges of blasphemy; Turkmen political dissident and human rights activist Gulgeldy Annaniyazov, who has been in jail since 2008; and Belarusian opposition candidate Mikalai, who was

thrown in jail for having the temerity to run against his country's strongman, President Lukashenko.

Many of my colleagues here have helped with these efforts, including 11 other Senators who recently joined in a letter to Uzbek President Karimov asking for the release of activist Akzam Turgunov and journalists Dilmurod Saidov and Salijon Abdurakhmanov.

Others have also championed the cause of political freedom around the world, including Senators MCCAIN and CARDIN, who have been leaders in trying to hold our Russian friends to a higher standard of political and human rights freedom.

In fact, Senator CARDIN was tireless in his effort to pass the Magnitsky law—a law that I supported—that tried to bring about some measure of accountability regarding the death of Russian lawyer Sergei Magnitsky, who was jailed after exposing official corruption and later died from mistreatment while in custody.

I have also watched with great dismay the deterioration of democracy and human rights in Russia.

A few years ago I had the chance to speak to the Lithuanian Parliament on that country's—the country of my mother's birth—20th anniversary of independence from the Soviet Union. One of the other speakers on that memorable occasion was Russian democrat small “d” democrat—Yuriy Afanasyev.

Many probably did not realize or have forgotten that during those heady days in the early 1990s a number of countries—such as Lithuania—were early in declaring independence and, as a result, helped change history in Eastern Europe.

And who helped support many such efforts?

Russian democrats in the streets of Moscow—the same ones who were also instrumental in bringing a transition to democracy in their own country.

Afanasyev was just such a Russian. He helped lead large public protests in Moscow during the January 1991 crackdown against Lithuania's independence movement.

That is why I find myself so saddened by what is happening in Russia today—the systematic state-sponsored harassment and dismantling of those Russian citizens and organizations that are still hoping for a democratic and free Russia so many years later.

Just 2 weeks ago, the Russian government tried and convicted popular opposition leader and candidate for mayor of Moscow Alesksei Navalny on charges that had already been thrown out as baseless after a local investigation.

If his conviction is upheld, he will be banned from public office for life.

Navalny's case is just one of a long list of politically motivated charges and actions in recent years used to squash any criticism of the Russian government or those who might want to run for political office:

A few weeks ago, hundreds of protesters were detained by Russian Interior Ministry personnel when protesting Navalny's dubious conviction—a fate met by scores of nonviolent protesters in recent years;

As of March of this year, the Russian Federal Security Service accompanied by tax enforcement and other government personnel has raided thousands of NGOs across Russia, seizing documents and interrogating staff—all in an orchestrated intimidation campaign;

Opposition leader Boris Nemtsov has been arrested multiple times for peacefully protesting government policies;

Deputy editor-in-chief of Russian newspaper Novaya Gazeta Sergei Sokolov fled Russia after the chief federal investigator took him into the forest and threatened to decapitate him;

Doctor of Political Sciences at Kuban State University Mikhail Savva, who was a member of the that region's Public Oversight Committee and an outspoken voice against corruption was arrested in April and has been held without bail on flimsy charges;

Leader of For Human Rights, Lev Ponomaryov, a prominent human rights advocacy group in Moscow, was kicked and beaten during a forceful eviction of his organization from their headquarters. The assault was carried out by men dressed in civilian clothing, but was observed by riot police officers;

Lastly—and very symbolic of the hundreds arrested at recent protests—human rights activist Nikolay Kavkazsky was arrested last year at his home for allegedly hitting a policeman during a protest although an independent investigation implies he was in fact dodging blows from a policeman.

Let me take a moment to pause and mention an extraordinary story and photo from the Washington Post of Russian schoolteacher Marina Rozumovskaya, standing alone in front of Moscow City Hall in the freezing Russian winter in January of 2011.

In the photo she is holding an 8 by 11 inch sign that said “Freedom to political prisoners” in response to the arrest and jailing of a prominent opposition leader who had criticized the Russian government.

Watching and waiting for her to break the law across the street in the 10 degree weather were a dozen or so Russian police officers.

This brave schoolteacher told the Washington Post, “If you don't exercise your rights as a citizen, nothing will ever change.”

The Russian government has also used almost paranoid legislation to restrict Russian human rights and election monitoring organizations from doing their work.

For example, in March of 2013, Russian officials raided the offices of hundreds of non-governmental organizations, including Amnesty International.

Equally troubling, Russia's largest elections watchdog GOLOS, and its executive director Lilia Shibanova, were

fined for failing to register as a “foreign agent,” even after receiving the prestigious Sakharov Prize by the Norwegian Helsinki Committee and rejecting the monetary portion of the award.

Russia has also passed draconian laws that include fines equivalent to an average annual salary for taking part in unsanctioned protests, stiffer libel penalties, a broader definition of treason, and restrictions on websites—laws that former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev has denounced as an “attack on the rights of citizens.”

Earlier this year Gorbachev also warned Russian President Putin “not to be afraid of his own people.”

Remember Sergei Magnitsky, the Russian who tried to draw attention to massive police and tax fraud who died in Russian custody? He was convicted a few weeks ago of perpetrating fraud himself—4 years after he died.

After what many brave Russian democrats did for countries such as Lithuania and others breaking free from the Soviet Union, we owe it to speak up for those who are fighting for basic political freedoms today in Russia.

These endless show trials are not for criminals or foreign agent organizations. They are not worthy of a great nation.

These are petty attacks on patriotic Russians who want the freedom to peacefully criticize and improve their government, to run for office, to have clean elections, and to have an independent judiciary that is not used to quash political opponents.

The Russian people—our friends—deserve better than to have such aspirations so brazenly and so shortsightedly repressed.

#### SMARTER SENTENCING ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, yesterday, I introduced the Smarter Sentencing Act, bipartisan legislation that would reform our drug sentencing laws to make Federal sentencing policy smarter, fairer, and more fiscally responsible.

This bill, which is cosponsored by Republican Senator MIKE LEE and Judiciary Committee chairman PATRICK LEAHY, would reduce certain mandatory minimum sentences for non-violent drug offenses and give Federal judges more ability to impose individualized sentences for certain offenders. These modest changes will allow Federal law enforcement to focus limited government resources on the most serious offenders and public safety risks.

Why is this legislation needed? Let’s look at where we are as a country. We incarcerate more individuals, including per capita, than any other nation in the world. Our rivals, with far lower incarceration rates, include countries like Rwanda, Cuba, China, and the Russian Federation.

And our incarceration rates are only growing over time. We have 500 percent more inmates in our Federal prisons

than we did 30 years ago. For example, in 1980 we had fewer than 25,000 in Federal custody, and today there are more than 219,000.

Our Federal prison system is at nearly 40 percent over capacity—with more than 50 percent overcrowding at high-security facilities. As the Government Accountability Office has explained, this overcrowding is not only creating financial strain, but it is jeopardizing the safety of both inmates and prison guards.

And who are we incarcerating with our limited resources? Nearly 50 percent of Federal inmates are serving sentences for drug offenses.

Let’s be clear: The price tag for this system is unsustainably high in terms of both financial and human costs. What we spend on Federal incarceration has increased more than 1100 percent in the last 30 years. The number was less than \$330 million in 1980 and had skyrocketed to more than \$6.6 billion by last year.

Our current incarceration policies are swallowing our limited law enforcement budget and forcing choices that many lawmakers and taxpayers would not agree with. Incarceration and detention costs account for nearly a third of the Department of Justice’s discretionary budget. This threatens funding for Federal prosecutions, Federal law enforcement, funding and grant money for State and local law enforcement, and support for treatment, intervention, and reentry programs.

In the era of sequestration, we are faced with a choice: We can either change our sentencing policies or potentially suffer an erosion in public safety. We need to take steps to control Federal prison spending now or we will face significant cuts in the resources available for other pressing criminal justice priorities like making sure there are police on the streets, crime prevention programs in place, and an ability for offenders to reintegrate into their communities rather than become safety risks.

Many States across the country recognize that we are at a crossroads and they are pursuing important reforms with a high degree of success. A New York Times article published this week explains the “new approach to crime” many States are taking and the resulting decline in State prison populations. The Federal Government should follow suit.

And let’s never forget the human costs. We hear every day about heart-breaking cases of mothers, fathers, uncles, aunts, and children who are behind bars for far too long sometimes decades—for nonviolent offenses. This harms communities and families.

One such case is a woman I came to know well, Eugenia Jennings. Because of unjust sentencing laws, she was incarcerated in Federal prison at the age of 23 for more than two decades for a nonviolent drug offense involving the exchange of a small amount of drugs for clothing. Eugenia had three chil-

dren who were forced to grow up without their mother.

Even the sentencing judge acknowledged the injustice of Eugenia’s sentence, lamenting “there is nothing this court could do” because of the laws that existed. Eugenia was a model prisoner winning awards, completing substance abuse programs, and serving as a model employee who worked at a call center and sewed thousands of pairs of shorts for the military. Eugenia suffered from a serious and rare form of cancer while in Federal custody. Eugenia would still be serving a sentence today—a sentence that would be costing taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars and depriving children of a mother—had it not been for the highly unusual grant of a Presidential commutation. Who benefited from the many years Eugenia spent in prison?

How do we fix this problem or at least take an important step toward solving it? We have learned that our exploding prison population is in large part due to ineffective sentencing laws and the increasing number and length of Federal mandatory minimum sentences. Mandatory sentences, particularly drug sentences, can take individualized review out of a judge’s hands by requiring a one-size-fits-all sentence imposed by Congress. And the number of Federal mandatory sentences has doubled during the last 20 years.

More than 60 percent of Federal district court judges agree that existing mandatory minimums for all offenses are too high. Many think they are just bad policy. Justice Anthony Kennedy said: “I am in agreement with most judges in the federal system that mandatory minimums are an imprudent, unwise and often unjust mechanism for sentencing.”

The Judicial Conference of the United States, which represents all Federal judges, has “consistently opposed mandatory minimum sentences for more than 50 years.” The bipartisan U.S. Sentencing Commission recently said, after studying this issue in a 369-page report, “[T]he Commission unanimously believes that certain mandatory minimum penalties apply too broadly, are excessively severe, and are applied inconsistently. . . .”

We subject our Federal judges to a rigorous confirmation process. Congress should allow these judges to use their legal and law enforcement expertise to do their jobs and not micromanage their sentencing decisions. It is important in achieving both justice and public safety to have sentences tailored to the individual facts, background, and circumstances of each case and defendant. Only the judge who hears a case has the ability to set such a sentence.

We are at a crucial moment in history. We can no longer afford sentencing policies that are not working, are draining limited Federal funds, are leading to unjust sentences, and are failing to make our families and communities safer.