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No. 113

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
July 13, 2016.

I hereby appoint the Honorable ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 5, 2016, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

FREE OSCAR LOPEZ RIVERA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GUTIÉRREZ) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Madam Speaker, I will not be on vacation or traveling on junkets to far-off lands during the next 6 or 8 weeks that Congress is in recess because I am going to be involved in a campaign to free Oscar Lopez Rivera from incarceration.

Oscar Lopez Rivera is regarded as the last political prisoner from Puerto Rico that is still being held in a Federal penitentiary. Oscar is a friend and a mentor. And at 73 years old, he is not

beaten, broken, or sad, as you can see by the smile on his face.

Even after spending 35 years in jail, nearly half of his life, he is a hero to many people in Puerto Rico and throughout the Puerto Rico diaspora. It warms my heart that people from every walk of life now understand that the 35 years Oscar has served for crimes that were not violent is too long to be in jail. There is a groundswell of support to tell President Obama that, after 35 years, it is time to let Oscar Lopez Rivera come home to his family, his island, and his community.

Enough is enough—ya basta. Thirty-five years is enough. And this comes from people of every political background: conservatives, liberals, statehooders, Democrats, Republicans, Populares, and, yes, those who believe in independence like I do. And every generation from the youngest, hippest kids, like Residente of Calle 13, to old people like me, from the richest to the poorest, whether you live in Bayamon, Ponce, Orlando, Chicago, or New York City, the Puerto Rican people are united in our call to free Oscar Lopez Rivera.

Internationally, Bishop Desmond Tutu is with us, and a long list of Nobel Peace Prize winners have joined the campaign to free Oscar Lopez, along with world leaders, community leaders, and average people across Europe, Latin America, and the world.

Oscar Lopez is a decorated Vietnam war veteran, a father, teacher, mentor, and a friend. Yet, he has languished in Terre Haute, Indiana, for three-and-a-half decades.

President Obama has less than 200 days left as President, and the chorus of supporters for the freedom of Oscar Lopez Rivera will continue to call on the President every day to release our brother Oscar back to our community so he can live out his days in peace and with his family. Commutation is the only option—the only option.

It will be a minimum of 10 years before Oscar can talk—that is just talk—to a parole board. It is now or never, and President Obama holds all the cards. We could not allow Oscar to die in jail. Obama must commute his sentence.

A coalition, La Coalicion por la Liberacion de Oscar Lopez Rivera, has formed with lawyers, union leaders, elected officials, community leaders, and citizens from every walk of life in Puerto Rico and wherever Puerto Ricans live in the United States. This coalition just announced a unity event, a gathering in Lafayette Square across the street from the White House, on October 9, 2016.

So, Madam Speaker, when the Congress leaves this week for 6 weeks or more, I am not going to go on vacation. I am going to go work to build awareness about Oscar Lopez Rivera and build awareness about October 9 right here in Washington, D.C., at Lafayette Square.

The 9th of October in Washington—el 9 de octubre en Washington. We all have to show up and show our support for Oscar and his family.

So I will be in Lorain, Ohio, this Saturday and in Philadelphia and New Jersey later this month. I will be in Puerto Rico and California. Wherever I go, I will be telling people to come to Washington to show support for Oscar Lopez Rivera on October 9, 2016. If you live in New York, it is about a 3½ hour drive to D.C. Oscar Lopez Rivera has been in jail for three-and-a-half decades, so I don't want to hear any excuses.

October 9th is a Sunday. So if you live anywhere up and down the eastern seaboard, you can go to sunrise service at your church and still make it in time to show your solidarity with Oscar.

If you live in Chicago or Orlando, okay, it is going to take you a little longer. You might even have to pay for

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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