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Every major doctors, nurses, and patients organization in the country knows the difference. I believe that the will of the people will still prevail in this Congress.

Statement on the Death of Congressman George E. Brown, Jr.

July 16, 1999

I was greatly saddened to learn of the death of Congressman George Brown. When he last visited the White House, I noted that he was affectionately known as Mr. Science. His legacy of service and lifetime of contributions helped sustain American leadership across the frontiers of scientific knowledge. George Brown's support for science was drawn from his deep belief that science and technology could help achieve a peaceful world and a just society. For almost 40 years, from his earliest days fighting racial inequality, George Brown challenged us to build a better world. Our Nation has lost a good man and an irreplaceable voice for science and justice.

Hillary and I extend our deepest condolences to his wife, Marta, and to his family.

Statement on Review of Title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996

July 16, 1999

Today I am notifying the Congress of my decision to suspend for another 6 months implementation of provisions of Title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act that allow legal action against firms trafficking in confiscated properties in Cuba. I take this action because it is in America's national interest and because it will hasten the day when the people of Cuba enjoy freedom and democracy.

I allowed Title III to enter into force in July 1996. It has put businesses around the world on notice that by trafficking in expropriated American property in Cuba, they risk significant liability in the United States. Coupled with aggressive implementation of Title IV of the law, this provision has helped deter such activities.

Since 1996, I have exercised the authority provided by the law to suspend the right to file suit. This has enabled the United States, in efforts led by Under Secretary of State Eizenstat, to work constructively with our friends and allies for the promotion of freedom and democracy in Cuba.

During this last 6-month period, friends and allies, in both word and deed, have steadily increased pressure on the Cuban Government to respect human rights and move toward democracy. Many national leaders have publicly and privately pressed senior Cuban officials on the need for reform. The United Nations Commission on Human Rights passed a resolution, sponsored by Poland and the Czech Republic, condemning Cuban human rights abuses. The European Union renewed its Common Position, committing member countries to take concrete steps to promote democracy in Cuba. A number of nongovernmental organizations have also increased support to democratic groups on the island.

The Cuban Government's disgraceful human rights record underscores the need for our coordinated international strategy. Showing disdain for universally recognized human rights, the Government in February promulgated a draconian law that criminalizes a wide range of democratic activities, including any journalism independent of the state. After a closed trial in March, the regime sentenced four courageous leaders of the "Internal Dissident Working Group" to harsh prison sentences merely for speaking out about their nation's future. International condemnation of these acts has been clear and swift. Countries long eager for warm relations with the Castro regime have clearly reassessed the wisdom of that approach.

The growing international consensus on the need for concrete steps to promote democracy in Cuba gives us confidence that our multilateral strategy is working. It is sending a strong message to the Cuban Government that the time for change is now—and a strong message to the Cuban people that we stand with them in their efforts to build a democratic future. I once again pledge my administration's strongest efforts to work with our friends and hasten the day when our Cuban brothers and sisters enjoy the rights and freedoms that we all cherish.