

Senate rules. As majority leader, I intend to run the Senate with respect for the rules and for the minority rights the rules protect.

The Senate was not established to be efficient. Sometimes the rules get in the way of efficiency. The Senate was established to make sure that minorities are protected. Majorities can always protect themselves, but minorities cannot. That is what the Senate is all about. For more than 200 years, the rules of the Senate have protected the American people, and rightfully so.

The need to muster 60 votes in order to terminate Senate debate naturally frustrates the majority and oftentimes the minority. I am sure it will frustrate me when I assume the office of majority leader in a few weeks. But I recognize this requirement is a tool that serves the long-term interest of the Senate and the American people and our country.

It is often said that the laws are "the system of wise restraints that set men free." The same might be said of the Senate rules.

I will do my part as majority leader to foster respect for the rules and traditions of our great institution. I say on this floor that I love so much that I believe in the Golden Rule. I am going to treat my Republican colleagues the way that I expect to be treated. There is no "I've got you," no get even. I am going to do everything I can to preserve the traditions and rules of this institution that I love.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

THE VALUE OF FREEDOM

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. President, later today we will be considering the Vietnamese proposal for permanent normalized trade relations. Before consideration of that issue, I wanted to take a few moments to discuss what I believe to be the beauty of freedom and the power that just one individual can have in personifying a truly transcendent value.

Recently I had the opportunity to come to know a young woman in Orlando, FL, a constituent of mine named Liz McCausland.

She contacted my office some months ago with a seemingly simple request. She wanted to see her mother. Her mother is Thuong Nguyen Foshee. She goes by "Cuc." At the time of the request, Mrs. Foshee, a U.S. citizen, born in Vietnam, was sitting in a Vietnamese jail. She had been in that jail for some period of time and she had not been charged with a crime. She had not had the benefit of counsel. She had not been informed of the charges against her in any way, shape or form.

For several weeks immediately after her arrest, her family didn't even know where she was. This ordeal began in September 2005. She had no hope for due process. She had the need for some medical care and attention, and this went wanting for several weeks, if not

months. She finally began to have contact with the U.S. consul, and it was a 20-minute visit once a month.

At the time of her arrest, Mrs. Foshee had gone to Vietnam, her native country, as a U.S. citizen to attend a nephew's wedding. The Vietnamese Government, at some point or another, finally said she was suspected of terrorist activity. The fact is that it should not come as a surprise that the Vietnamese Government was not fond of Mrs. Foshee because she was one of those people, whom I can certainly identify with, who believes it is the right of every person, no matter where they live, to elect their leaders—something as simple as what we did on November 7 in this country, which we take for granted. There are still people around the world who are denied such a right.

The Vietnamese people today cannot elect their leaders. Cuc Foshee believes that a Vietnam that is free to elect their leadership is a Vietnam that would respect also the rights of all of its people. So because she was someone who was vocal in the Vietnamese-American community and spoke freely of her hope and wishes for her native land, she actually became an obvious target to a government that felt threatened by the voice of a common citizen who believed she should speak out.

For that, Cuc Foshee and several other Americans, in fact, were arrested, interrogated, and sent to jail, without the knowledge of when or if they would ever be released or allowed to return to the United States. Many people went to work on this problem. Today, I thank our Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, for her interest in this matter, and I particularly thank U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam, Michael Marine, and the staff of the U.S. State Department, and others, whether in Vietnam or in the State Department here, who worked on her case. Volunteers came to help. The law firm of Holland & Knight offered their services pro bono. In addition to that, I particularly note and thank members of my staff who worked diligently and passionately to seek the release of Mrs. Foshee. Melissa Hernandez, in my office in Florida, and John Goetchius, here in Washington, worked hand-in-glove with Mrs. Foshee's daughter, Liz McCausland, and others, to see that Mrs. Foshee came safely back to the United States. She has been returned to the United States, and it has been a wonderful blessing to her family.

We recently celebrated, in Orlando, her return home. Congressman RIC KELLER was also there, my colleague, who also step-by-step was a partner for me in seeking the release of Mrs. Foshee.

So when the permanent normal trade relations between the U.S. and Vietnam came to be considered, I objected to the legislation being considered until I was confident that Mrs. Foshee would be able to receive the kind of due

process that we expect as a matter of course, which she deserves under any observance of human rights, and until she would be back with her family in Orlando. That has now occurred.

Mrs. Foshee's freedom has allowed me to lift any objections to consideration of the PNTR status as it relates to Vietnam. While I will vote for that today, I must say that concerns remain. Vietnam's disregard for the rule of law is something that is not only troubling, but it will make normal trade relations difficult with free societies.

It would be good for the Government of Vietnam to understand that tolerance, as it relates to people's willingness to practice religion as they see fit, is important in order to join the family of nations in a full and complete way.

I appreciate the cooperation of the Government of Vietnam in allowing Mrs. Foshee to come back to America and be free. But I must suggest that, at the same time, it is hollow if it is only for Mrs. Foshee because of the pressure brought to bear her case. The right of people to freely speak, elect their leaders, and to live in a democratic system is the only way for the people of Vietnam to fulfill the promise that they have, to fulfill the promise that can come through normalized trade relations with the United States.

The people of Vietnam not only can have normal trade relations, they must live it. They will find that the rule of law will be a troubling matter if it is not observed. Whether it is foreign businesspeople traveling to Vietnam, whether it is the rule of law as it applies to contracts, it is a fundamental, essential, integral part of normal trade relations. Mrs. Foshee's hope was that others in Vietnam would have the opportunity to live in freedom such as she has tasted in America. I hope that day will come as well.

My career as a public servant has been irrevocably influenced by this experience. I believe I will never do anything greater than to have played a part in securing the freedom of one individual. I know what it means. I understand what it is like to live under oppression. I believe that all people, no matter where they are, are entitled to live with the dignity and the hope that comes from understanding that there is freedom and there are human rights that are observed.

Each of us owes a debt of gratitude to Mrs. Foshee for taking a stand for freedom and, in her own example, leading us to know that it has a value, even if at times a price must be paid for it.

REAUTHORIZING THE OFFICE OF NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL POLICY

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 6344, which was received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.