

110TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 2777

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to Dr. Oscar Elias Biscet, in recognition of his courageous and unwavering commitment to democracy, human rights, and peaceful change in Cuba.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 13, 2008

Mr. MARTINEZ (for himself, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. NELSON of Florida, Mr. ENSIGN, and Mr. COLEMAN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

A BILL

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to Dr. Oscar Elias Biscet, in recognition of his courageous and unwavering commitment to democracy, human rights, and peaceful change in Cuba.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. FINDINGS.**

4 Congress finds that—

5 (1) Dr. Oscar Elias Biscet was born on July
6 20, 1961, in Havana, Cuba;

1 (2) Dr. Biscet is married to fellow democracy
2 advocate, Elsa Morejon Hernandez, and he has 2
3 children;

4 (3) Dr. Biscet is currently serving a 25-year
5 prison sentence for allegedly committing crimes
6 against the sovereignty of the Cuban regime;

7 (4) in 1997, Dr. Biscet founded the Lawton
8 Foundation for Human Rights, one of the first inde-
9 pendent civic groups in Havana, which promotes the
10 study, defense, and denunciation of human rights
11 violations inside Cuba and wherever the rights and
12 liberties of human beings are disregarded;

13 (5) as a physician, Dr. Biscet denounced the
14 double-standards and systematic repression of the
15 Cuban National Health Care System, and as a re-
16 sult he was forbidden from practicing medicine;

17 (6) on February 27, 1999, Dr. Biscet was im-
18 prisoned for 3 years, after hanging the national flag
19 sideways at a press conference;

20 (7) although Cuban independence and democ-
21 racy advocates have always used this statement as a
22 sign of civil disobedience, the regime nonetheless ac-
23 cused Dr. Biscet of insulting the nation's symbols,
24 public disorder, and inciting criminal activity;

1 (8) once released in 2002, and unable to prac-
2 tice medicine, Dr. Biscet engaged in organizing sem-
3 inars on the Universal Declaration of Human
4 Rights;

5 (9) on December 6, 2002, on his way to one
6 such meeting, he and several of the seminar’s par-
7 ticipants were beaten and arrested;

8 (10) on April 7, 2003, Dr. Biscet was sentenced
9 to 25 years in prison and sent to a special state se-
10 curity prison, Kilo Cinco y Medio in Pinar Del Rio
11 province;

12 (11) Dr. Biscet has declared himself a
13 “plantado”, a political prisoner who refuses to un-
14 dertake ideological “reeducation” or wear a common
15 prisoner’s uniform and therefor remains in Cuba’s
16 political gulag.

17 (12) on November 5, 2007, President Bush rec-
18 ognized Dr. Biscet and presented him (in absentia)
19 with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, stating that
20 “Dr. Biscet is a champion in the fight against tyr-
21 anny and oppression. Despite being persecuted and
22 imprisoned for his beliefs, he continues to advocate
23 for a free Cuba in which the rights of all people are
24 respected.”; and

1 (13) Dr. Biscet is a follower of the Dalai Lama,
2 Ghandhi, and Martin Luther King, and continues to
3 fight every day to bring democracy and justice to
4 Cuba.

5 **SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

6 (a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The President
7 Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House
8 of Representatives shall make appropriate arrangements
9 for the presentation, on behalf of the Congress, of a gold
10 medal of appropriate design, to Dr. Oscar Elias Biscet in
11 recognition of his courageous and unwavering commitment
12 to democracy, human rights, and peaceful change in Cuba.

13 (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For purposes of the
14 presentation referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary
15 of the Treasury (referred to in this Act as the “Sec-
16 retary”) shall strike a gold medal with suitable emblems,
17 devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the Sec-
18 retary.

19 **SEC. 3. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

20 The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in
21 bronze of the gold medal struck pursuant to section 2,
22 under such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe, at
23 a price sufficient to cover the cost thereof, including labor,
24 materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses,
25 and the cost of the gold medal.

1 **SEC. 4. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

2 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—The medals struck pursu-
3 ant to this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter
4 51 of title 31, United States Code.

5 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of sections
6 5134 and 5136 of title 31, United States Code, all medals
7 struck under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic
8 items.

9 **SEC. 5. AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS; PROCEEDS OF**
10 **SALE.**

11 (a) AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS.—There is
12 authorized to be charged against the United States Mint
13 Public Enterprises Fund such amounts as may be nec-
14 essary to pay for the costs of the medals struck pursuant
15 to this Act.

16 (b) PROCEEDS OF SALE.—Amounts received from the
17 sale of duplicate bronze medals authorized under section
18 3 shall be deposited into the United States Mint Public
19 Enterprises Fund.

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