

imprisonment for alleged “hooliganism” and disturbing the peace. Democratic opposition leaders such as Anatoly Lebedka and Vincuk Viachorka have been arbitrarily detained and sentenced to jail terms which have been as much as 15 days. Last month, opposition activists Artur Finkevich received a two-year corrective labor sentence and Mikalay Rozumau was sentenced to three years of corrective labor for allegedly libeling Lukashenka. Other opposition activists, including Syarhey Lyashkevich and Ivan Kruk have received jail sentences of up to six months.

In a patent attempt to discourage domestic observation of the fraudulent March 19 presidential elections, authorities arrested activists of the nonpartisan domestic election monitoring initiative “Partnerstva”—Tsimafei Dranchuk, Enira Branitskaya, Mikalay Astreyka and Alyksandr Shalayka. They have been in pre-trial detention since February 21, charged with participation in an unregistered organization.

Lukashenka’s pattern of anti-democratic behavior began a decade ago, and this pattern has only intensified. Through an unconstitutional 1996 referendum, he usurped power, while suppressing the duly-elected legislature and the judiciary. His regime has repeatedly violated basic freedoms of speech, expression, assembly, association and religion. In its May 3 annual report, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom included Belarus on its watch list, as Belarus appears to be adopting tougher sanctions against those who take part in unregistered religious activity. The democratic opposition, non-governmental organizations and independent media have been subject to intimidation and a variety of punitive measures, including closure. Political activists and journalists have been beaten, detained and imprisoned. Independent voices are unwelcome in Lukashenka’s Belarus and anyone who, through their promotion of democracy, would stand in the way of the Belarusian dictator puts their personal and professional security on the line. Their courage deserves our admiration, and, more importantly, our support.

Moreover, we have seen no progress on the investigation of the disappearances of political opponents—perhaps not surprisingly, as credible evidence points at the involvement of the Lukashenka regime in their murders. I welcome President Bush’s decision to personally meet with two of the widows in the Oval Office to discuss the situation on Belarus. An Administration report mandated by the Belarus Democracy Act and finally issued on March 17 of this year reveals Lukashenka’s links with rogue regimes such as Iran, Sudan and Syria, and his cronies’ corruption. Despite efforts by the U.S. Government, working closely with the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and other European organizations, and non-governmental organizations, the regime of Lukashenka continues its grip on power with impunity and to the detriment of the Belarusian people.

Colleagues, it is my hope that the Belarus Democracy Reauthorization Act of 2006 and efforts by allies in Europe will help put an end to the pattern of clear, gross and uncorrected violations of OSCE commitments by the Lukashenka regime and will serve as a catalyst to facilitate independent Belarus’ integration into democratic Europe in which demo-

cratic principles and human rights are respected and the rule of law is paramount. The Belarusian people deserve better than to live under an autocratic regime reminiscent of the Soviet Union, and they deserve our support in their struggle for democracy and freedom.

TRIBUTE TO MR. CHARLES
“BUSTER” BOWEN

HON. MARILYN N. MUSGRAVE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 27, 2006

Mrs. MUSGRAVE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory and courageous patriotism of Mr. Charles “Buster” Bowen. As a navigator on a B-25 Bomber, Mr. Bowen proudly served his country in the Army Air Corps during the Second World War. The sacrifices he made to ensure the liberty and freedom of future generations will never be forgotten.

In the late autumn of 1941, Buster Bowen was a senior studying accounting at the University of Texas. He was undoubtedly eager for graduation and full of enthusiasm for the future. However, like many young men and women of his generation, Mr. Bowen’s world was unalterably changed following the attack on Pearl Harbor.

After graduating from the University of Texas in June 1942, Mr. Bowen volunteered for military service. His military career began in the spring of 1943 at Kelley Field near San Antonio, Texas. After completing his training, Mr. Bowen was assigned to the 345th Bombardment Group and sent to the Pacific. In a letter to his concerned mother, Mr. Bowen assured her he was assigned an office job—he didn’t mention that his office was a small table under the turret of a B-25 Bomber.

The crews of the 345th frequently flew low-level bombing runs over enemy targets. On one such mission over Formosa on June 15, 1945, a 40 millimeter explosive shell struck the escape hatch of Mr. Bowen’s B-25 Bomber. The shrapnel from the shell pierced the fuselage and badly injured Engineer Harold Warnick and Mr. Bowen. Mr. Warnick sustained injuries to his foot and Mr. Bowen to his back. Even after being injured, Mr. Bowen plotted a course to an auxiliary air base in northern Luzon so that Mr. Warnick could receive the medical attention he needed.

For the injuries sustained by Mr. Bowen in June of 1945, he was awarded the Purple Heart. His squadron commander even displayed Mr. Bowen’s bloodied shirt in the squad room to emphasize the importance of flight crews wearing the uncomfortable flak jackets.

Following his injuries, Mr. Bowen was taken off flying status, but began flying once again before the end of the war. After hostilities in the Pacific ended, Mr. Bowen was stationed on the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido as part of the American occupation force.

Mr. Speaker, like so many other young members of this Greatest Generation, Mr. Bowen set aside his ambitions and risked his life to ensure the continued freedom of our great nation. I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing the patriotic service of Mr. Charles “Buster” Bowen.

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT FAMILIARLY FARM ENERGY RELIEF ACT

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 27, 2006

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, rising costs tied to current energy prices are adversely impacting family farmers rendering some farms unsustainable. In fact, I have heard from some constituents in my home state of New Mexico who cannot afford to plant crops this year due to energy prices. We are in danger of losing family farms.

That is why I rise today to introduce the Family Farm Energy Relief Act. This legislation proposes to repeal tax incentives to oil and gas companies from the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to instead provide energy rebates to family farmers.

The Energy Policy Act of 2005 provided approximately \$2.633 billion in tax breaks for oil and gas companies over the next 11 years. During times of high gas prices and record profits for oil and gas companies these tax breaks are wholly unnecessary. In fact, the current administration has agreed that they are unnecessary. President Bush recently stated Congress has got to understand that these energy companies don’t need unnecessary tax breaks . . . I’m looking forward to Congress to take about \$2 billion of these tax breaks out of the budget over a 10-year period of time. Cash flows are up. Taxpayers don’t need to be paying for certain of these expenses on behalf of the energy companies.

The Family Farm Energy Relief Act legislation redirects the monies from the Energy Policy Act to family farmers to help pay the cost of farm diesel over the next three years. Approximately 3.4 billion gallons of farm diesel were sold in the United States in 2004, 35 million gallons to New Mexican farmers and ranchers.

The rebate program gives a tax credit to qualified family farmers equaling 10 percent of yearly farm diesel expenses. Additionally, qualified family farmers who produce biodiesel for sale or personal use would receive an additional 10 cents per gallon credit.

The program will redistribute approximately \$870 million per year in tax credits for farm diesel expenditures and approximately \$8 million per year in tax credits for biodiesel production over three years. Expenditures from this program will not exceed the \$2.633 billion oil and gas tax incentives from the Energy Policy Act.

Mr. Speaker, family farmers and the Agriculture sector have been a staple of the American economy since before we were a nation. Many family farmers already face great obstacles to success and may have already succumbed to large agriculture conglomerates. The Family Farm Energy Relief Act is not meant to be a substitute for the long-term energy solutions we all seek for our Nation. As much as each of us understands the necessity of a comprehensive and balanced approach to energy development, so too should we realize that in every state there are hard-working family farmers whose monthly budgets are being stretched to the breaking point by energy costs. While we must approach this country’s energy demand with the willingness to make the tough, long-range choices demanded of