

International Ice Hockey Federation to suspend the 2014 Ice Hockey Championship in Minsk until all Belarusian political prisoners are released.

Let me add that former National Hockey League Hall of Famer and EU Parliamentarian Peter Stastny; chair of the House Hockey Caucus, Representative MIKE QUIGLEY; and I wrote to International Ice Hockey Federation President René Fasel urging him not to give the dictatorial Lukashenko regime the prestige afforded by the World Ice Hockey Championship while political prisoners continue to languish in his KGB prisons.

So far the federation has ignored this commonsense appeal.

Today, a year after the election crackdown, at least 60 candidates and/or activists remain imprisoned or face harsh restrictions on their freedoms, including limits on their travel, the ability to work in certain professions, and to freely participate in the political process.

For example, Presidential candidate Andrei Sannikov remains in a KGB jail. His family—which is granted only sporadic contact with him—suspects that he has been tortured and pressured to sign a letter asking for pardon.

Mikalai Statkevich, Zmitser Dashkevich, Eduard Lobau, Paval Seviarynets, and Zmitser Bandarenka—just to name a few—are also still in jail for their participation in demonstrations during and after the December elections.

I hope the Ice Hockey Federation's corporate sponsors for the Minsk championship also recognize the potential stain to their image by sponsoring this event while Lukashenko continues to imprison and torture these innocent people.

On the 1-year anniversary of the brutal crackdown we must not forget the Belarusian people and those detained who only wished to exercise their basic rights of free speech and expression. That is why I am pleased to see that just this week the Senate passed the Belarus Democracy and Human Rights Act of 2011, which I hope the House will do as well before we break for recess.

Through legislation such as this and unwavering pressure on the Lukashenko regime to open its political system, the people of the United States will continue to stand by the Belarusian people and support them in their efforts to bring justice to their country.

EXPIRING TAX PROVISIONS

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, in only two weeks, many critical tax incentives will expire. These provisions are vitally important to many families and businesses. Once again, Congress is leaving town without taking care of business. Once again, Congress is creating uncertainty. During these tough economic times, uncertainty in the tax arena is the last thing that Americans need.

Today families are struggling because of lost jobs and high costs. Extending expiring tax incentives will help many American families get through these tough times.

For example, with the rising cost of a higher education, families need help to cover their costs. The Tax Code includes a tuition deduction to assist college students with the rising cost of tuition. In 2009, about 2.4 million families took this much needed benefit.

Also expiring is a provision that gives tax relief to the people that we trust with America's future, our children. Many teachers dedicated their lives to educating our young people. To further this endeavor, teachers take money from their own pockets to buy supplies for the classroom. Many do not get much help with these costs. The least we can do is provide a little tax relief. This bill would extend the teacher expense deduction. Over 3.8 million families took this deduction in 2009.

There are also several provisions expiring that benefit American businesses. Without the tax incentives, businesses will have less certainty and fewer tools to compete in the global arena. This will further hamper job creation and growth.

One such incentive is the research and development credit. The provision rewards companies that strive to create new and improved products and services by performing research and development. The extension of the R&D credit is essential to American businesses being competitive in the global market. The extension of the R&D credit will boost America's economy and create good-paying jobs.

There are also several provisions expiring that incentivize businesses to invest in alternative fuel sources. For example, the dollar-per-gallon credit for biodiesel and renewable diesel helps move us to a cleaner and more energy independent future.

These are just a few of the provisions that must be renewed each year. Members on both sides of the aisle worked hard to extend these and many other provisions before the end of the year. We must continue to work to get these provisions extended so that American businesses and families can continue to receive these tax incentives. We must not keep people in limbo. That is one of the very first and highest priorities we have when we come back in session in January.

I have been working with ranking member Hatch for more than a year now on broad-based, fundamental tax reform. That reform is much needed and long overdue. A bedrock principle for reform is to increase the certainty that Americans have in what their tax laws will be from year to year. So we will work hard to eliminate temporary provisions that are dependent on the whim of Congress at the end of each year for renewal. In the interim, it is time to extend these provisions.

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 9:02 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following joint resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.J. Res. 95. Joint resolution making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes.

At 12:08 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 3672. An act making appropriations for disaster relief requirements for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2012, and for other purposes.

The message further announced that the House agrees to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 1892) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2012 for intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes.

ENROLLED JOINT RESOLUTION SIGNED

At 2:45 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled joint resolution:

H.J. Res. 95. Joint resolution making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes.

The enrolled joint resolution was subsequently signed by the acting President pro tempore (Mr. REID).

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 886. An act to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the 225th anniversary of the establishment of the Nation's first Federal law enforcement agency, the United States Marshals Service; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

H.R. 2594. An act to prohibit operators of civil aircraft of the United States from participating in the European Union's emissions trading scheme, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

H.R. 3237. An act to amend the SOAR Act by clarifying the scope of coverage of the Act; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bills were read the first time:

H.R. 440. An act to provide for the establishment of the Special Envoy to Promote Religious Freedom of Religious Minorities in the Near East and South Central Asia.

H.R. 3012. An act to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to eliminate the per-country numerical limitation for employment-based immigrants, to increase the per-country numerical limitation for family-