

James P. McGovern (MA-03)
One Minute Special Order
February 24, 2010

SORROW AND OUTRAGE AT DEATH OF CUBAN DISSIDENT ORLANDO ZAPATA TAMAYO

Mr. Speaker, I want to express my deepest sorrow and outrage at the death of Cuban dissident Orlando Zapata Tamayo. Imprisoned since 2003, he had been on a hunger strike for several weeks. We first heard he was seriously ill last week. Yesterday, he died at the prison clinic.

Zapata Tamayo paid the ultimate sacrifice for his commitment to changing Cuba's system. He commands our respect. No one has starved himself to death in a Cuban prison in over forty years. Surely the Cuban government could have and should have intervened earlier to prevent this tragedy. His death is on their conscience.

I have always felt – and continue to believe – that if we are truly going to do a better job of standing with the Cuban people, then we need to be closer to them and in greater numbers. We need to travel freely to the island to meet and learn from them, and they from us. I hope that day comes soon so we can tell all the Cuban people that we remember the sacrifice of Orlando Zapata Tamayo.

Insert for the Record, "Activists: Cuba Dissident Dies After Hunger Strike," Washington Post, February 23, 2010