Mr. President, I

thank Senator CARDIN and Senator

WICKER for their efforts today coming

down to the floor to raise this important

human rights issue.

As you say, if we didn’t see the facts,

we would believe this was fiction, what

is going on in Russia today. But I think

these efforts are particularly important

given what is happening today in

Russia.

We have seen historic demonstrations

on the streets of Moscow over the

last several months. Ordinary Russian

citizens, fed up with nearly a decade of

corruption, have courageously taken to

the streets to demand their voices be

heard. The fraudulent Duma elections

and the cynical and manipulative decision

by Prime Minister Putin to return

to the Presidency have reawakened

civil society throughout Russia.

As a leading Russian social activist

Alexei Navalny wrote from his jail cell

following the peaceful December demonstrations:

We all have the only weapon we need and

the most powerful. That is the sense of selfrespect.

Today, as we call for justice for

human rights abuses in Russia, we also

stand with those brave Russian citizens

who have risked so much in calling for

their rights to be respected, just as

Sergei Magnitsky did.

As we have seen throughout this last

year of upheaval around the globe, the

rising voice of a public driven to peaceful

protest can be deafening. Prime

Minister Putin and his regime would be

wise to listen to the people of Russia.

I also want to echo what Senators

WICKER and CARDIN have said about the

importance of passing the Sergei

Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability

Act. There are now 28 Senate cosponsors.

I am one of those cosponsors and

am proud to be, and I want to associate

myself with what Senators have said

on the floor of the Senate today.

The case of Mr. Magnitsky is a tragic

one. He was falsely imprisoned, beaten,

denied medical care, and ultimately

killed, as you all have so eloquently

explained. And to this day, no one has

been held accountable for his tragic

and unnecessary killing. We stand here

today to press for accountability in Mr.

Magnitsky’s death. However, I think it

is important for us to reiterate that

this is more than simply a question of

one man’s tragic case.

The State Department’s human

rights report for this year described

numerous violations, as Senator

CARDIN said so well: attacks on journalists,

physical abuse of citizens,

harsh prison conditions, politically motivated

imprisonments, and other government

harassments and violence.

The European Court of Human

Rights has issued more than 210 judgments,

holding Russia responsible for

grave human rights violations, including

abductions, killings, and torture in

Chechnya and throughout the northern

Caucasus.

There are many more cases like

Magnitsky, which is why the bill is so

important. It seeks to ensure that no

human rights abusers, in Russia or

elsewhere in the world, are granted the

privilege of traveling to this country or

utilizing our American financial system.

As chair of the Subcommittee on European

Affairs, I was pleased to preside

over a hearing on the Magnitsky bill

and on the state of human rights in

Russia. I thank Chairman KERRY for

helping to make that hearing possible.

During the hearing we had a very

constructive conversation with State

Department officials, and we heard

unanimous support for the legislation

from an impressive panel of human

rights activists and Russian experts.

We have also received letters that I ask

unanimous consent to have printed in

the RECORD from leading human rights

and civil society leaders in Russia calling

on the Senate to pass the

Magnitsky bill.

There being no objection, the material

was ordered to be printed in the

RECORD, as follows:

Around the world,

governments are also taking up this

important call. The European Parliament,

Canada, and The Netherlands

are considering similar pieces of legislation.

This summer, the U.S. State

Department barred dozens of Russian

officials from traveling to the United

States over their involvement in the

death of Magnitsky.

I want to commend the administration,

and particularly Secretary Clinton

for her strong words condemning

the recent fraudulent elections in Russia.

But despite all these efforts, there

is more we can do to support human

rights in civil society, freedom of expression

in Russia.

Passing the Magnitsky bill this year

is one of them. In the midst of an election

year, at a time of difficult partisanship,

I believe this is one effort—

as we have seen so well from Senator

CARDIN and Senator WICKER today—

this is one effort on which both sides of

the aisle can agree. We stand today unambiguously

in support of the rule of

law, democracy, and respect for human

rights in Russia. I hope our colleagues

in the Congress and at the State Department

will work constructively in

the months ahead to pass this critical

legislation.

Before I yield the floor, I also think

it is important to call attention to the

particularly egregious act that Russia

committed in recent days before the

United Nations, when they vetoed the

Security Council resolution aimed at

halting the ongoing violence in Syria.

Today, more than 25,000 people have

fled Syria; more than 7,000 innocent

Syrians have died at the hands of

President Assad. Despite Syria’s growing

isolation, Russia continues to harbor

and arm the Syrian regime. This is

unacceptable. I think our passage of

the Magnitsky bill will send a very

strong sign to Russia that not only in

the Magnitsky case and other human

abuses in-country are they going to be

held accountable, but their actions

internationally will also make them

accountable to the international community.

Again, I say thank you to Senators

CARDIN and WICKER for their leadership

on this issue. I am pleased and honored

to be able to join them in making this

fight.

Act.

I will tell my friend from New Hampshire

that the number is now up to 30,

we learned on the floor today from

Senator CARDIN, so we have 30 Senators

involved. We ought to have a majority

of Senators before the end of this day,

if people would just take the time to

look. I join her in congratulating the

Foreign Relations Committee on bringing

further light to this issue. I thank

the State Department, as she said. I

will simply conclude my portion by

saying recent events make it even

more important that the Foreign Relations

Committee and that this Senate

take up and pass this legislation. I urge

all my colleagues to consider joining us

on this legislation.

Will the Senator yield for a question?

One of the things

the Senator talked about so eloquently,

as we talked about the ability

of our financial systems to impact

what is happening in Russia—one of

the things we heard about at the hearing

on the Magnitsky bill was from the

head of the American Chamber in Russia

who talked about what the impact

of this kind of case is on American

companies trying to do business and

the concern it raises about issues of

corruption and the ability to operate

freely in Russia. Does my colleague not

agree that we can also urge those companies

that are operating in Russia to

speak out when cases such as this happen

and they have concerns about what

it does to their business in the country?