



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

Senate Foreign Relations Committee approves Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act

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The Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act passed another milestone today, Nov. 28, 2018, when it was unanimously approved by the United States Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

The Act, which the [House of Representatives passed in September](#), aims to end China's isolation of Tibet and the Tibetan people from the outside world by calling on the Chinese government to allow American journalists, diplomats and tourists into Tibet, just as their Chinese counterparts are able to travel in the US.

"The unanimous support expressed today by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC) once again reflects the widespread concern of the American people for the situation inside Tibet and for the lack of access for US citizens," said Matteo Mecacci, president of the International Campaign for Tibet. "We wish to thank in particular the main sponsor of the bill in the Senate, Sen. Rubio, and the Chairman and Ranking Member of the SFRC, Sen. Corker and Sen. Menendez, for their steadfast and principled stance in support of reciprocity in US-China relations."

The Act also highlights the discriminatory process that Tibetan-Americans have to go through at the Chinese Embassy and consulates when they apply for visas to visit Tibet on pilgrimage or to meet their relatives.

Currently, China heavily restricts Americans (as well as all foreigners) from entering Tibet—a historically independent country that China has occupied for nearly 70 years—even though Chinese citizens are free to travel throughout the US and other democratic countries.

Under the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act, the Secretary of State will have to send a report to Congress identifying the [Chinese officials responsible for these unfair policies. Those officials will then be denied visas](#) to enter the US until China's policies change.

In recent years, politicians from both parties have become increasingly outraged at China's unfair treatment of the US and have demanded that China's government reciprocate on issues of trade as well as freedom of access for American journalists, diplomats and citizens.

Over the past year, Tibetan-Americans and Tibet supporters throughout the US have been reaching out to their Members of Congress to ask them to raise the issue of access to Tibet and to support the bill.

The bill was introduced in the Senate [by Sens. Marco Rubio \(R-Fla.\) and Tammy Baldwin \(D-Wisc.\) and has 13 cosponsors as of Nov. 28, with Sens. Bernie Sanders \(I-Vt.\), Cory Gardner \(R-Colo.\), Susan Collins \(R-Maine\), Ed Markey \(D-Mass.\) and Elizabeth Warren \(D-Mass.\)](#) recently adding their names to the list.

The Senate is now expected to take up the bill.