



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

House China Task Force urges passing Tibet support bill

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A House of Representatives task force on China says Congress should finishing passing a bill that will expand US support for Tibetans and resist the Chinese government's plans to select a new Dalai Lama.

In a report last week, the China Task Force chronicles some of China's outrageous human rights violations in Tibet, as well as its efforts to censor support for Tibet in the United States.

Among its many recommendations for the US government, the task force encourages passing the Tibetan Policy and Support Act, which the House overwhelmingly passed in January.

The bill is now awaiting passage by the Senate.

Dramatic upgrade

The TPSA will dramatically upgrade US support for the people of Tibet, a historically independent country that China annexed more than 60 years ago and continues to rule with an iron fist. Rejecting China's plans to appoint its own Dalai Lama, the bill makes it official US policy that only the Tibetan Buddhist leader and his followers can decide on his succession.

If any Chinese officials try to interfere in that process, they will face sanctions under the TPSA.

The TPSA will also:

- Prevent China from opening a new consulate in the US until China allows a US consulate in Tibet's capital of Lhasa.
- Address water security and climate change in Tibet, whose rivers provide water to more than 1 billion people in Asia.
- Provide humanitarian assistance for Tibetans in Tibet and in exile.
- Push China to negotiate with the Dalai Lama and Tibetan leaders without preconditions.

Bipartisan support

In its report, the China Task Force notes that the TPSA is a bipartisan bill. Reps. Jim McGovern, D-Mass., and Chris Smith, R-N.J., introduced the bill in the House last year, while Sens. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., and Ben Cardin, D-Md., introduced it in the Senate. For decades, both Republicans and Democrats have offered consistent support for Tibetans.

Last month, Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden released a strong statement laying out the steps he would take to "stand up for the people of Tibet."

The Republicans' 2020 election platform also references Tibet, stating, "[C]ultural genocide continues in Tibet and Xinjiang." Xinjiang, which Uyghurs know as East Turkestan, is a region neighboring Tibet where the

Chinese government—led by former Tibet Autonomous Region party secretary Chen Quanguo—has detained more than 1 million ethnic Muslims in mass internment camps.

Last week, the House Foreign Affairs Committee approved a resolution on Tibet stating that “it would be beneficial to continue years of bipartisan and bicameral engagement with the leaders of the Tibetan people,” including the Dalai Lama.

China’s repression in Tibet and the US

The task force report voices alarm that China’s oppression of Tibetans—as well as Uyghurs, Hong Kongers and others—increased over the past year.

- The report says “people of faith in Tibet and throughout [China] are having religious scripture rewritten according to ‘Xi Jinping Thought,’” a rigid system of propaganda based on China’s authoritarian president.
- The Chinese Communist Party has “destroyed the way of life of Tibetan Buddhists,” the report says. This is in part because the party “cannot tolerate allegiance to a higher power.”
- But China’s repression of Tibetans is not limited to Tibet. As the report notes, federal agents last month arrested a New York City police officer accused of spying on the local Tibetan community for the Chinese government. And in 2008, Chinese agents traveled to San Francisco “to coordinate pro-CCP street action and suppress pro-Tibet protests” ahead of the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the report says.
- China’s economic power also helps it censor criticism in the United States over its record on Tibet. Facing pressure from the Chinese government, Marriott Hotels in 2018 fired a US employee for accidentally “liking” a pro-Tibet tweet.

Hope for the future

Despite these disturbing developments, the report offers hope that momentum is building for increased international action against China’s oppression. One main example it cites is the EU-China leaders summit last month.

“An event originally expected to advance an investment agreement with [China] instead featured European leaders urging transparency concerning COVID-19, reasserting the need for economic fairness, and reinforcing fundamental human rights with specific attention paid to Xinjiang, Tibet, and Hong Kong,” the report says.

The report adds that the administration “should fully implement recent bipartisan sanctions laws to respond to CCP human rights violations, including the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act.”

RATA, which became law in 2018, imposes travel sanctions on Chinese officials responsible for blocking Americans’ access to Tibet. In July, the State Department announced that it had banned Chinese officials from entering the US under RATA.



International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) | 1825 Jefferson Place NW | Washington, DC 20036 | United States of America
Phone: (202) 785-1515 | Fax: (202) 785-4343 | info@savetibet.org

ICT Europe
Funenpark 1D | 1018 AK
Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Phone: +31 (0)20 3308265
Fax: +31 (0)20 3308266

icteurope@savetibet.nl
ICT Deutschland e.V.
Schönhauser Allee 163 | 10435
Berlin, Germany

Phone: +49 (0)30 27879086
Fax: +49 (0)30 27879087
info@savetibet.de

ICT Brussels

11, rue de la lumière | 1060
Brussels, Belgium

Phone: +32 (0)2 609 44 10
Fax: +32 (0)2 609 44 32

info@save-tibet.eu