



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

House passes resolution calling for enactment of new Tibet legislation

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The House of Representatives passed a resolution today urging "the swift enactment" of the Tibetan Policy and Support Act, a comprehensive bill [upgrading US policy on Tibet](#), particularly on issues related to the succession or reincarnation of the Dalai Lama, water security and environmental concerns.

The House [passed the TPSA](#) in January this year. The Senate is currently in the process of considering the bipartisan bill.

House Resolution 697, titled "Recognizing the significance of the genuine autonomy of Tibet and the Tibetan people and the work His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama has done to promote global peace, harmony, and understanding," passed by voice vote on the floor of the House this afternoon, Nov. 18, 2020.

In addition to encouraging the enactment of the TPSA, the resolution promotes autonomy for the people of Tibet and offers them support over a number of issues they face under the repressive rule of the Chinese government.

The resolution promotes access to Tibet and calls on the secretary of state to allocate additional resources to other US missions in China to improve monitoring in Tibet in light of the closure of the US consulate in Chengdu, located close to the Tibetan border.

The resolution also calls for continuing the many years of "bipartisan and bicameral engagement" between the United States, including members of Congress, and His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama and Tibetan leaders.

Reps. Ted Yoho, R-Fla., Michael McCaul, R-Texas, Jim McGovern, D-Mass., and Chris Smith, R-NJ, [introduced the bipartisan resolution](#) in late 2019.

What the resolution does

The resolution addresses several issues confronting the people of Tibet, a historically independent country that China annexed [more than 60 years ago](#) and continues to [rule with an iron fist](#).

The resolution:

1. Affirms the cultural and religious significance of the goal of genuine autonomy for Tibetans, as well as the deep bond between the American and Tibetan people.
2. Supports the efforts by the [Dalai Lama](#) and Tibetan leadership to [achieve genuine autonomy through negotiations](#) with the People's Republic of China without preconditions.

3. Praises the Dalai Lama's commitment to global peace, [nonviolence](#), human rights and [environmental protection and sustainability](#).
4. Urges swift enactment of the TPSA. Rejecting China's claim that it will decide on the selection of a new Dalai Lama, the TPSA makes it official US policy that only the Dalai Lama and the [Tibetan Buddhist community](#) can determine his succession. If any Chinese officials try to name their own Dalai Lama in the future, they will face sanctions under the bill.

The TPSA also dramatically upgrades [US support](#) for Tibetans' culture, religion, [language](#) and environment.

5. Stresses the urgency of addressing the climate crisis—including on the [Tibetan plateau](#)—and working toward environmental and economic justice and equality.
6. Encourages American journalists, diplomats, officials and ordinary citizens to seek the [same level of access to Tibet](#) that Chinese citizens have to the United States. Recently, the State Department [implemented the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act](#), which for the first time denied entry to the United States by the Chinese officials responsible for keeping Americans out of Tibet.
7. Calls on the secretary of state to minimize the impact that the [closure of the US consulate in Chengdu](#) might have on the State Department's ability to report on and support Tibetan communities. One possible solution, the resolution says, is to allocate additional resources to other US missions in China.
8. Asserts that it would be beneficial to continue years of bipartisan, bicameral engagement with Tibetan leaders, including engagement between members of Congress and the Dalai Lama.

[Read the text of the resolution.](#)

Support from representatives

During today's vote on the House floor, Yoho criticized the Chinese government for violating Tibetans' religious freedom.

"Just as they've done with Islam and Christianity, the [Chinese Communist Party] is trying to stamp out Tibetan Buddhism and the Tibetan way of life, even though Tibet is guaranteed autonomy under China's constitution," Yoho said. Despite that, "the Dalai Lama has stood as a leader in the promotion of human rights and of religious harmony and the preservation of Tibetan culture and religion."

"The Dalai Lama's contribution to peace and nonviolence has been revered by the international community and for decades by the US Congress," Yoho said. "Congress has remained committed to strengthening the relationship between the US and the Tibetan people."

Rep. Eliot Engel, D-NY, added that "Congress has consistently demonstrated bipartisan, bicameral support for the Tibetan community."

House Resolution 697 is a "strong measure that encourages the continuation of close engagement between the United States and Tibet," Engel said. The resolution also "affirms and supports the Dalai Lama's teachings and commitments to global peace, nonviolence, human rights and environmental protection," he added.

Rep. Scott Perry, R-Pa., said Chinese President Xi Jinping “will fail spectacularly in his effort to quash the hopes of millions of Tibetans.”

“One of the reasons he will fail is because the United States is with the people of Tibet,” Perry said. “Our Tibetan friends have long since recognized the significance of the genuine autonomy of Tibet, and today I’m proud to join them.”

International Campaign for Tibet

Matteo Mecacci, president of the International Campaign for Tibet, praised today's passage of the resolution.

"This has truly been an important year in US support for the people of Tibet," Mecacci said. "From the House passage of the Tibetan Policy and Support Act in January, to the State Department's implementation of the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act this past summer, to today's vote on House Resolution 697, the leaders of this country have made it clear to China that Tibet will remain a priority agenda item in 2021 and beyond."

Mecacci added that several months ago, ICT launched its [Tibet 2020 campaign](#) to tell the candidates for office why Tibet matters this election year. The campaign led to thousands of ICT supporters sending petitions to the Democratic and Republican national committees, which helped keep the focus on Tibet during an election year.

Mecacci noted that on Thursday, Nov. 19, ICT will host the recently appointed special coordinator for Tibetan issues, Robert A. Destro, for a live discussion with Tibetan American youth and ICT supporters.

The Tibet Talk with Destro will stream live at 1 pm EST/10 am PST on [ICT's website](#) and [Facebook page](#).



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