



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

China competition bill passed by House provides Tibet support

<https://savetibet.org/china-competition-bill-passed-by-house-provides-tibet-support>

Feb. 9, 2022

A bill passed by the House last week to boost US competitiveness with China will also expand US support for Tibetans facing repression at the hands of the Chinese government.

The America COMPETES Act reaffirms US policy rejecting [China's interference in the selection of Tibetan Buddhist leaders](#), elevates the role of the [special coordinator for Tibetan issues](#) in the State Department creates a Tibet desk at the US Embassy in Beijing and more.

"This bill shows once again that members of Congress see Tibet as a vital part of US foreign relations and the urgent need to combat the Chinese government's persecution of the Tibetan people," Franz Matzner, government relations director of the International Campaign for Tibet. "Tibet is a core interest of the United States, so it's crucial that the Tibet provisions of the bill remain intact as the House and Senate work to finalize any comprehensive legislation."

Support for Tibet

The passage of the America COMPETES Act follows the [Senate's approval of similar legislation, the US Innovation and Competition Act](#), in June 2021.

Both competition bills increase US support for Tibet, including by:

- **Elevating the status of the special coordinator for Tibetan issues.** This position has been part of the State Department since 1997 and was traditionally filled by someone at the undersecretary of state level. However, toward the end of the Trump administration, then-Secretary of State Mike Pompeo appointed a lower-level official to the job. (The [Biden administration's special coordinator, Uzra Zeya](#), is the undersecretary for civilian security, democracy and human rights.)

Under the America COMPETES Act and the US Innovation and Competition Act, the president must appoint a special coordinator with the advice and consent of the Senate, or the individual should already hold the rank of undersecretary or above.

- **Opposing China's interference in the Dalai Lama's succession.** In a gross violation of international religious freedom, the Chinese government has made clear it plans to appoint its own successor to the [Dalai Lama](#), the 86-year-old spiritual leader whom China forced into exile in 1959. China's appointee would serve as a puppet for the government in Beijing.

The two competition bills, however, reaffirm US policy regarding the Dalai Lama's succession or reincarnation, as well as the [religious freedom of Tibetan Buddhists](#). In the [Tibetan Policy and Support Act](#), which became law in December 2020, the US established a policy that only

the Dalai Lama and the [Tibetan Buddhist community](#) can decide what happens with his succession. If any Chinese officials try to interfere in that process, they will face US sanctions. The competition bills also encourage the secretary of state to engage US allies and partners to further the US' policy on this issue.

- **Requiring a Tibet unit in the political section of the US Embassy in Beijing.** This requirement comes as recognition of the need for US diplomatic representation relating to Tibet. In light of the July 2020 [closure of the US consulate in Chengdu](#), a major gateway to Tibet, the competition bills strengthen US interests in the region. The Tibetan Policy and Support Act also includes provisions for the secretary of state to seek to establish a US consulate in Lhasa, Tibet's capital, and prevents China from opening a new consulate in the US until that happens.

The Chinese government has long denied [access to Tibet](#) for American officials, even though Chinese officials have largely been free to travel throughout the United States. In 2018, the US enacted the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act, which pushes for equal access to Tibet for American officials, journalists and ordinary citizens. The competition bills will further these efforts to increase the US' ability to provide diplomatic support in Tibet.

Other provisions

The America COMPETES Act includes several other provisions that impact Tibet, including:

- Providing Tibetan language training for staff at the US Embassy in Beijing.
- Mandating a report that will evaluate the contribution of corporate entities to China's human rights abuses and repression of religious and ethnic groups like Uyghurs and Tibetans.
- Providing funding to combat propaganda and invest in independent media and technology to combat censorship. There will also be annual reporting on the Chinese government's efforts to censor or punish speech in other countries, including related to the oppression of Tibetans.
- Allocating funds to provide people in the People's Republic of China with Mandarin, Cantonese, Uyghur and Tibetan language news services.
- Establishing the Liu Xiaobo Fund for Study of the Chinese Language to fund study of Mandarin and Cantonese Chinese, Tibetan, Uyghur, Mongolian and other languages.
- Reiterating the US' commitment to promoting the values of democracy and human rights, including through efforts to end China's repression of political dissidents, Uyghurs, Tibetan Buddhists, Christians and other groups.



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 linière | 1060
Brussels, Belgium
Phone: +32 (0)2 609 44 10
Fax: +32 (0)2 609 44 32
info@savetibet.eu