



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

The Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act, H.R.533 and S.138

The Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act, H.R.533 and S.138, is a bipartisan bill that supports the Dalai Lama's "Middle Way Approach" and pressures the Chinese government to resolve the issue of Tibet through peaceful dialogue with Tibetan leaders.

The bill was introduced by Reps. Jim McGovern, D-Mass., and Michael McCaul, R-Texas, and Sens. Jeff Merkley, D-Ore., and Todd Young, R-Ind.

The bill is known for short as the "Resolve Tibet Act." The House passed the legislation on Feb. 15, 2024.

READ: [Resolve Tibet Act »](#)

WHAT THE BILL DOES

The Resolve Tibet Act supports the Tibetan people in several ways.

Pushing for dialogue

The bill states that it is US policy that the dispute between Tibet and China must be resolved in accordance with international law, including the UN Charter, by peaceful means through dialogue without preconditions.

The Dalai Lama and the Tibetan leadership have put forward a [Middle Way Approach to resolve the conflict](#) by forgoing independence for Tibet in exchange for meaningful autonomy for the Tibetan people. Between 2002-10, the [Chinese government sat for 10 rounds of dialogue with the Dalai Lama's envoys](#). But since then, China has refused to negotiate in good faith.

The Resolve Tibet Act adds that the US should:

- Promote substantive dialogue without preconditions between the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama or his representatives or the democratically elected leaders of the Tibetan community. The US could

also explore activities to improve prospects for dialogue leading to a negotiated agreement on Tibet.

- Coordinate with other governments in multilateral efforts toward the goal of a negotiated agreement on Tibet.
- Encourage China’s government to address the aspirations of the Tibetan people regarding their distinct historical, cultural, religious and linguistic identity.

Fighting China’s disinformation

China often rejects the international community’s support for Tibet by labeling Tibet as an internal matter and claiming that Tibet has been part of China since ancient times.

However, the Resolve Tibet Act dismisses that claim as “historically inaccurate.” The legislation states that Tibetans “are a people with a distinct religious, cultural, linguistic and historical identity.”

- The bill says US public diplomacy efforts should “counter disinformation about Tibet” from the Chinese government and Communist Party, including “disinformation about the history of Tibet, the Tibetan people, and Tibetan institutions including that of the Dalai Lama.”
- The bill adds that the US special coordinator for Tibetan issues in the State Department should work to ensure that US government statements and documents counter disinformation about Tibet.
- In addition, the bill calls on the Chinese government to “cease its propagation of disinformation about the history of Tibet, the Tibetan people, and Tibetan institutions, including that of the Dalai Lama.”
- The Chinese government tries to claim a narrative that Tibet is only the Tibet Autonomous Region—an administrative region of China that spans less than half the Tibetan homeland—but the legislation makes clear that Tibet also includes Tibetan regions of Gansu, Qinghai, Sichuan and Yunnan provinces.

BACKGROUND

The Resolve Tibet Act is moving through Congress on a wave of growing US support for Tibet and at a crucial time for Tibetans.

Crisis in Tibet

- This year marks 65 years since China [forced the Dalai Lama to flee into exile](#) and seized full control of Tibet.

- After 65 years of Chinese occupation, [Tibet now ranks as the least-free country on Earth](#) alongside South Sudan and Syria, according to Freedom House.
- As the Resolve Tibet Act says, China's policies are "systematically suppressing the ability of the Tibetan people to preserve their religion, culture, language, history, way of life and environment."
- In the past 15 years, [nearly 160 Tibetans have self-immolated](#) in Tibet and China, lighting their own bodies on fire in a desperate attempt to draw the world's attention to their plight.
- China's state-run boarding schools have [separated over 1 million Tibetan children from their families, language, religion and culture](#). These schools teach almost exclusively in Chinese with a curriculum geared toward Chinese subjects. Horrific stories have emerged of students returning home on school breaks, and their [parents no longer being able to communicate with them](#).
- China has also reportedly [collected DNA from about 1 million people in the Tibet Autonomous Region](#), an area that spans less than half of Tibet.
- [Under Xi Jinping, China is pursuing a policy of "Sinification,"](#) which seeks to eliminate Tibet's unique culture and heritage by forcing Tibetans to assimilate as Chinese.
- The next step in China's plans is to interfere in the succession of the Dalai Lama, who will turn 89 in July and whom China has never allowed to return home to Tibet. When the time comes, [China has already made clear it plans to appoint its own future Dalai Lama](#), who will serve the Chinese Communist Party as a mouthpiece for Beijing.

Growing US support for Tibet

- For decades, the US Congress and administrations of both parties have showed consistent, bipartisan support for the Tibetan people. That support has only grown stronger in recent years.
- In 2018, the [US enacted the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act](#), a bipartisan piece of legislation that took aim at China's unfair policy of keeping US journalists, diplomats and ordinary citizens out of Tibet even though their Chinese counterparts can travel freely throughout the United States. Under this law, the [State Department has banned Chinese officials from entering the country](#) over their role in keeping Americans out of Tibet.
- Two years later, the [Tibetan Policy and Support Act became law](#), dramatically expanding US support for the Tibetan people. Among its many provisions, the legislation made it official US policy that only the

Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Buddhist community can decide on his succession—and that any attempt by Chinese officials to interfere in that process will result in sanctions.

- During his 2020 campaign, President Biden [pledged that his administration would “stand up for the people of Tibet,”](#) including by “work[ing] with our allies in pressing Beijing to return to direct dialogue with the representatives of the Tibetan people to achieve meaningful autonomy, respect for human rights, and the preservation of Tibet’s environment as well as its unique cultural, linguistic and religious traditions.”
- In 2021, Secretary of State Antony Blinken appointed Under Secretary of State Uzra Zeya as the [new US special coordinator for Tibetan issues](#).
- In 2022, the [Treasury Department sanctioned two Chinese officials](#) involved in “serious human rights abuse” in the Tibet Autonomous Region.
- Last year, [Blinken announced sanctions on Chinese officials](#) for their “forcible assimilation of more than one million Tibetan children in government-run boarding schools.”
- Blinken also said last year that he was concerned by “reports of the spread of mass DNA collection to Tibet.”
- The House Foreign Affairs Committee unanimously approved the Resolve Tibet Act on Nov. 29, 2023.

NEXT STEPS

Now that the House has passed the Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act, the focus will now shift to passing the legislation in the Senate and getting it signed into law.

