



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

High-level Congressional delegation meets Dalai Lama, vows unwavering support for Tibet

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“The Chinese Communist Party continues to threaten the freedom of the Tibetan people, and they have even attempted to insert themselves into the succession of the Dalai Lama, but we will not let that happen.”

These were the words of House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Michael McCaul (R-TX) after an audience with the Dalai Lama earlier today in Dharamsala, India.

Michael McCaul was the Republican lead on H.R.533, the Resolve Tibet Act, which recently passed Congress. He was joined on the journey by members from both sides of the aisle, including Resolve Tibet Act author Representative Jim McGovern (D-MA) and Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi (D-CA).

The delegation also met with Sikyong Penpa Tsering and members of his cabinet and were received by Speaker Sonam Tenphel and members of the Tibetan parliament in exile. Later they were honored at a public reception in gratitude for America’s consistent support for the Tibetan people, who have lived under Chinese occupation for decades.

“The Tibetan children living here and in diaspora communities around the world and the Tibetan children living under the repression of the PRC, they are Tibet’s future, and they give me such great hope. But the other thing that gives me hope is seeing that democracy is alive and well here in Dharamshala and in the broader Tibetan community. The Central Tibetan Administration is a model of governance for people who face oppression and displacement. It is a symbol for those living in China, a symbol of what a different future could look like,” said Rep. McGovern, who has previously visited Dharamsala and joined a delegation that traveled to Tibet in 2015.

Speaker Emerita Pelosi, who led the 2015 delegation, said about the Dalai Lama, “With his message of knowledge and tradition and compassion and purity of soul and love, he will live a long time, and his legacy will live forever. But to you, President of China, you’ll be gone, and nobody will give you credit for anything.”

Tencho Gyatso, president of the International Campaign for Tibet, was in Dharamsala and accompanied the delegation. “China’s misplaced hope is that the Tibet issue will fade away. In reality, the Dalai Lama’s message of compassion and the resilience of the Tibetan people are a source of inspiration. This high-level delegation making the lengthy journey to Dharamsala to meet with the Dalai Lama and elected Tibetan leaders shows that the United States will never forget Tibet,” she said.

“As the Dalai Lama says, in the long run it is truth that prevails. Far from succeeding in crushing the Tibet movement, Beijing’s oppression of the Tibetan people can only postpone the day when human

rights and democratic freedoms blossom in Tibet. I echo the delegation's challenge: Xi Jinping, reach out to the Tibetans and resume negotiations – today," she added.

Message for Beijing

The United States has repeatedly called for dialogue between the Chinese government and representatives of the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration. This latest delegation sent that message to Beijing loud and clear.

In a statement, House Foreign Affairs Committee Ranking Member Gregory Meeks (D-NY) called on Beijing to resume dialogue, saying, "We all are here to call on the government of Beijing to immediately stop its countless abuses of Tibetan human rights. It's time for Beijing to re-engage in dialogue without preconditions with His Holiness and His Representative to reach a negotiated resolution that leads to meaningful autonomy for the Tibetan people."

"I am here as the ranking member of the House Foreign Affairs committee. I am here with a bipartisan delegation to let you all know that in the U.S. Congress, we are together, and we are paying attention, and our support for the Tibetan people is unwavering," he added.

The Resolve Tibet Act states that it is US policy that the dispute between Tibet and China remains unresolved in accordance with international law, and it encourages China to engage in substantive dialogue without preconditions leading to a negotiated settlement on Tibet.

"When I look around at this audience, I see my brothers and sisters, my spiritual brothers and sisters. We share ancestry spiritually. So, know, brothers and sisters, that you have one of your own brothers in the United States Congress fighting for your rights, for your freedom, and for your future. We're in this together. And as His Holiness said, we will win because it is about compassion," said Rep. Ami Bera (D-CA), an Indian-American member of Congress.

Significant delegation

Composed of seven members, including a committee chairman and a former speaker of the House, this delegation visit comes amid a recent strengthening of Congressional support for Tibet.

Congress passed the Resolve Tibet Act last week following a string of committee and floor votes in which the bill received overwhelming bipartisan support – including multiple unanimous votes. President Biden is expected to sign it in the coming days.

"As the Dalai Lama said, through faith comes hope. Through hope comes courage. Through courage comes the peace of inner strength to know that one day Tibet will no longer be in exile," said Rep. Mariannette Miller-Meeks (R-IA).

Speaking about their meeting with the Dalai Lama, Rep. Nicole Malliotakis (R-NY) said, "I shared with him that when he fled Tibet in 1959, my mother also fled to escape communism in 1959, but in her homeland of Cuba. And so we share many similarities, and I have a lot of compassion and empathy for the people who are here today, who want to return to their homelands, who want to visit and have their children and grandchildren, who have never visited Tibet."

In recent years Congress also passed the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act and the Tibetan Policy and Support Act. Together with the Resolve Tibet Act, this trio of bills upgraded American policy and provide new tools for combatting Chinese repression in Tibet and disinformation abroad.

Rep. McCaul noted that Beijing had attempted – and failed – to stop them from going to Dharamsala to meet with the Dalai Lama and the CTA. “Just this week, our delegation received a letter from the CCP warning us not to come here. They repeated their false claim that Tibet has been a part of China since the 13th century. But we did not let the CCP intimidate us, for we are here today,” he said.

Meeting with Sikyong Penpa Tsering

Before meeting with the Dalai Lama, the delegation visited the Central Tibetan Administration complex and met Sikyong Penpa Tsering, the democratically elected Tibetan leader. They also visited the Tibetan parliament and met with members of parliament.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering later hosted a dinner reception for the delegation at the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts, which included Tibetan cultural performances by its artists.

“Since it is a very rare occasion for us, all of us from the Central Tibetan Administration, whether it is from the Justice Commissioner, the Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Ministers, the independent bodies, all the public here, the students from our schools, have gathered here to thank the delegates, led by Michael McCaul, for their tenacity and commitment to move the Tibet Resolve Act in the U.S. Congress,” said Sikyong Penpa Tsering.

Delegation members

The members of Congress who participated in this delegation were:

- Rep. Michael McCaul (R-TX), Chairman, House Foreign Affairs Committee
- Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), Speaker Emerita
- Rep. Mariannette Miller-Meeks (R-IA), House Veterans Affairs Committee
- Rep. Gregory Meeks (D-NY), Ranking Member, House Foreign Affairs Committee
- Rep. Nicole Malliotakis (R-NY), House Ways and Means Committee
- Rep. Jim McGovern (D-MA), Ranking Member, House Committee on Rules
- Rep. Ami Bera (D-CA), House Foreign Affairs Committee



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