



International Campaign for Tibet U.S. Presidential Election 2016 Candidate Questionnaire

International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) is a non-profit advocacy organization dedicated to promoting human rights and democratic freedoms in Tibet. Our work includes human rights monitoring and reporting, advocating for the rights of Tibetans in national and multinational fora, and pressing for an end to China's repressive policies in Tibet. Established in 1988, ICT now has more than 100,000 supporters globally, with its headquarters in Washington D.C. and offices in Amsterdam, Berlin, and Brussels.

As a service to our members and supporters, we have created this questionnaire for the U.S. presidential candidates; it addresses many of the issues we believe are most important to our members, and to the future of Tibet. Because ICT is a non-partisan, 501 (c) (3) organization, we do not endorse or oppose candidates for political office, nor take part in campaigns.

Responses will be made available to the public on our website.

QUESTIONS

1. Religious Freedom in Tibet

The State Department's 2014 International Religious Freedom Report section on Tibet states that Chinese authorities "severely restricted religious freedom and engaged in widespread interference in religious practices, especially in Tibetan Buddhist monasteries and nunneries." Chinese government interference in long-standing Buddhist practices include efforts to control the selection of reincarnate lamas, including plans to "identify" the reincarnation of the current 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, after he passes away. In public remarks delivered in Geneva during the summer of 2015, U.S. Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues Sarah Sewall remarked that "[t]he basic and universally recognized right of religious freedom demands that any decision on the next Dalai Lama must be reserved to the current Dalai Lama, Tibetan Buddhist leaders, and the Tibetan people."

- a.** If elected, will you publicly state that as a matter of the universally recognized right of religious freedom, the Chinese government should not interfere in the current Dalai Lama's reincarnation and that the decision must be made according to the current Dalai Lama's teachings, Tibetan Buddhist practices, and the will of the Tibetan people?

Yes _____ No _____

Comments:

b. If elected, what specific steps will you and your Administration take to promote religious freedom in Tibet?

Comments:

2. Access to Tibet

As the State Department notes in its most recent Tibet Negotiations Report (August 2015), “[p]ermission to travel to the TAR [Tibet Autonomous Region] is routinely denied; from May 2011 to May 2015, 35 trips to the TAR were denied out of 39 requests by U.S. Embassy and consular officials.” U.S. journalists and citizens also face severe restrictions in gaining access to Tibet. However, when traveling within the United States, Chinese diplomats, journalists, and citizens in the U.S. face no similar restrictions.

a. Do you support promoting access to Tibet for U.S. diplomats, journalists, and citizens, including Tibetan Americans, on a reciprocal basis, as we grant Chinese diplomats and others in the United States?

Yes _____ No _____

Comments:

b. If elected, what additional specific actions will you and your Administration take to ensure that U.S. diplomats, journalists, and citizens are reciprocated with unrestricted access to Tibet?

Comments:

3. Meeting with His Holiness the Dalai Lama

His Holiness the Dalai Lama has met in the White House with the last four U.S. Presidents – George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama– as a global spiritual leader and to discuss the plight of the Tibetan people.

Will you commit to meet with His Holiness the Dalai Lama in the White House to discuss religious freedom and other global issues, as well as issues facing Tibet and the Tibetan people?

Yes _____ No _____

Comments:

4. Sino-Tibetan Dialogue

For decades, His Holiness the Dalai Lama has advocated a Middle Way Approach that would provide genuine autonomy for Tibetans within the People's Republic of China. The Chinese government vilifies him and calls his approach a disguised quest for independence. After nine rounds of dialogue between representatives of the Dalai Lama and the Chinese government beginning in 2002, the dialogue stalled in 2010. Administrations of both Democratic and Republican parties have strongly endorsed the dialogue process as a path to a solution, and have recognized the sincerity of the Dalai Lama in supporting autonomy.

a. If elected, will you publicly express support and encourage a negotiated solution on Tibet?

Yes _____ No _____

Comments:

b. Will you maintain continuity with your predecessors' expressed support for the Dalai Lama's "Middle Way" approach?

Yes _____ No _____

Comments:

c. What steps will your Administration take to facilitate substantive negotiations that seek to address the legitimate grievances of the Tibetan people?

Comments:

5. The United States' relationship with China is perhaps the most complex and multi-faceted of any in the world. Human rights have been an important aspect of this relationship to ensure a peaceful rise of China on the global stage; but the realities of the rise of China as a global power have at times resulted in human rights playing a secondary role in the relationship. Many observers have noted that commitments made by presidential candidates that they will be tough on China, especially on human rights, tend to weaken after a candidate is elected.

a. If elected, how specifically will you integrate human rights into your overall China policy?

Comments:

b. What level of priority will you give to human rights in the U.S.-China relationship, including the rights of Tibetans and other non-Chinese people suffering under the policies of the Chinese government?

High _____ Moderate _____ Low _____

Comments:

6. If elected, would your Administration continue to support programs that assist sustainable development and cultural traditions on the Tibetan plateau as well as humanitarian assistance for Tibetan refugees?

Yes _____ No _____

Comments:

7. Tibet is known as the earth's Third Pole, the largest storehouse of fresh water outside the Arctic and Antarctic, and the source of most of Asia's major rivers, critical to hundreds of millions of people downstream. It is warming nearly three times as fast as the rest of the globe. The Tibetan people have been the stewards of their land for centuries and their expertise is vital to preserve Tibet's environment.

Will you promote the acknowledgement of Tibet's critical environmental significance at the international level and urge multilateral and multinational cooperation in ensuring the conservation of water resources and the fragile biodiversity of Tibet, through the direct involvement of the Tibetan people?

Yes _____ No _____

Comments: