



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

ICT welcomes Senate introduction of Assuring the Future of Tibet Act

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The International Campaign for Tibet welcomes the introduction of the [Assuring the Future of Tibet Act \(AFTA\)](#) in the US Senate, bringing important bipartisan legislation to both chambers of Congress and building momentum to secure enduring US support for the Tibetan people, their democratic institutions and democratically elected leadership.

Introduced by [Senators Jeff Merkley \(D-OR\) and Jim Risch \(R-ID\)](#), and co-sponsored by Senators Tim Kaine (D-VA) Todd Young (R-IN), Jacky Rosen (D-NV), and Rick Scott (R-FL), the legislation is the Senate companion to the bill (H.R. 8982) introduced in May 22, 2026 in the House of Representatives by Reps. Jim McGovern (D-MA) and Michael McCaul (R-TX).

The Assuring the Future of Tibet Act recognizes a fundamental principle: Tibet's future cannot be decided without the Tibetan people themselves. AFTA will make it US policy to maintain direct engagement with the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), the democratically elected representatives of the Tibetan people inside Tibet and in the global diaspora.

"Human rights and basic dignity for the people of Tibet cannot be ignored. Our bipartisan bill sends a clear message that the United States will stand with Tibet in its fight for these fundamental freedoms and the promise of tomorrow," said Merkley. "As long as the People's Republic of China continues to ignore the rights of Tibet under international law, America will not abandon the Tibetan people."

"The Chinese Communist Party has sought to erase Tibetan culture, religion, and language, among other grievous actions. What Beijing has done to Tibet, they want to do elsewhere to anyone who defies the CCP," said Risch. "This bill supports the Tibetan people, key partners in pushing back against China's authoritarianism, and counters China's malign influence at the United Nations."

"I thank Senators Merkley and Risch for introducing this vital bill and Senators Kaine, Young, Rosen, and Scott for serving as its original co-sponsors. The International Campaign for Tibet looks forward to working with Congress towards its swift passage," said ICT President Tencho Gyatso.

"At a time when China is accelerating its campaign to erase Tibetan identity, this bill sends a powerful message – that America's support for the Tibetan people, their democratic institutions, and the Tibetan people's right to determine their own future is unwavering," she added.

The group of original co-sponsors of the Senate bill underscores the broad and bipartisan support for Tibet within the United States Congress. This support has been pivotal in advancing and passing major legislation on Tibet over the past decade, including the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act, the Tibetan Policy and Support Act, and the Resolve Tibet Act.

The introduction of companion legislation in the Senate marks another important step in that record and demonstrates enduring bipartisan and bicameral support for ensuring that US policy toward Tibet remains strong and prepared for the future, including by elevating and strengthening the democratic institutions of the Tibetan people.

"For decades, His Holiness the Dalai Lama has worked to build democratic institutions that give Tibetans a voice and preserve their aspirations for freedom and dignity. The Central Tibetan Administration is the democratic expression of that vision. By deepening the US government's relationship with the CTA, this legislation helps ensure that Tibetans and their democratically elected leaders have the decisive voice in Tibet's future," Gyatso said.

Assuring Tibet's future

Originally introduced by Reps. Jim McGovern (D-MA) and Michael McCaul (R-TX) in the House of Representatives, AFTA will:

- Make it US policy to maintain engagement with the Tibetan people directly and through their democratically elected leadership and religious and cultural leaders;
- Support the Tibetan people's free exercise of their fundamental and universal human rights under international law, including the right to self-determination;
- Affirm commitment to a resolution of the dispute between Tibet and China as a matter of strategic interest to the United States;
- State that that the Central Tibetan Administration represents continuity of governance of the Tibetan people as established by the Dalai Lama;
- Direct the US government to advocate for the Central Tibetan Administration to be given observer status within the United Nations system and in relevant international bodies and groupings; and
- Direct the US government to grant officials of the Central Tibetan Administration with appropriate senior levels of engagement and diplomatic courtesies by the US government, possibly to include the extension of diplomatic security and privileges and immunities.

The full text of the legislation can be [found here](#).



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