

# TIBET LOBBY DAY

MARCH 23 & 24, 2020



Tibetan-Americans and friends of Tibet call on the US Congress to continue its leadership in supporting the aspirations for the Tibetan people to a better future, and are thankful for its decades-long commitment to providing programmatic and political support for Tibetans both in Tibet, and in exile. While Congress should oppose China's oppressive policies in Tibet and support the broader goal of a negotiated agreement on Tibet through dialogue between China and the Dalai Lama or his representatives, it can take concrete actions:

## THE ASKS

- 1. THE TIBETAN POLICY AND SUPPORT ACT OF 2019 (TPSA)** The Tibetan Policy & Support Act of 2019 (S.2539) is a comprehensive and pragmatic expression of Congressional support for the Tibetan people. Its stated purpose is to "modify and reauthorize the Tibetan Policy Act of 2002, and for other purposes."

Sponsor: *Marco Rubio* [R-FL] | Co-sponsors (15 current) : *Ben Cardin* [D-MD], *Lindsey Graham* [R-SC], *Dianne Feinstein* [D-CA], *Tom Cotton* [R-AR], *Ed Markey* [D-MA], *Mike Braun* [R-IN], *Marsha Blackburn* [R-TN], *Patrick Leahy* [D-VT], *Jeff Merkley* [D-OR], *Thom Tillis* [R-NC], *Tammy Baldwin* [D-WI], *Martha McSally* [R-AZ], *John Cornyn* [R-TX], *Elizabeth Warren* [D-MA], *Chris Coons* [D-DE]

### What the bill does:

- Makes it official US policy that the Dalai Lama's succession is a strictly religious issue that only he and his followers should decide on. The Chinese government plans to appoint its own next Dalai Lama. This Bill will help protect Tibetans' right to select their own spiritual leaders.
- Not permit China to open a new consulate in the US until a US consulate is allowed in Lhasa, Tibet's capital, implementing the diplomatic principle of reciprocity.
- Requires the secretary of state to address environmental and water security and issues in Tibet, which affect over a billion people in Asia;
- Acknowledges the Tibetan democratic governance system in exile and provides humanitarian assistance for Tibetans in Tibet and in exile.

*\*See accompanying Fact Sheet (TPSA & Situation in Tibet) for more details.*

### What you can do:

#### **SENATE: CO-SPONSOR THE TIBETAN POLICY AND SUPPORT ACT (TPSA)**

If you have already cosponsored TPSA, your office could ask Sen. Risch, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to put it on the agenda of their next business meeting.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF THE TIBETAN POLICY AND SUPPORT ACT.** The House of Representatives passed its version, H.R.4331, on January 28, 2020 with overwhelming majority.

- 2. ADVOCATE FOR TIBETAN PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE AND FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM OR TIBETANS:** The State Department 2019 Human Rights report released on March 11, 2020, says China's repression of free speech, religion, movement, association and assembly in Tibet and Xinjiang in 2019 "was more severe than in other areas of the country." The report says legal safeguards for detained or imprisoned Tibetans were inadequate in both design and implementation. Criminal suspects in the People's Republic of China have the right to hire a lawyer or other legal representation, but many Tibetan defendants, particularly those facing politically motivated charges, did not even have access to representation.

*\*See accompanying Fact Sheet (Political Prisoners) for more details.*

What can you do:

- I) **URGE FOR THE RESPECT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM FOR TIBETANS WHENEVER US POLICY ON CHINA IS DISCUSSED IN CONGRESS, AND PARTICULARLY DURING INTERACTIONS WITH CHINESE AUTHORITIES.**
- II) **RAISE THE RELEASE OF TIBETAN POLITICAL PRISONERS WITH CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, INCLUDING THE EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON, D.C.**

- 3. FUNDING FOR TIBET-RELATED PROGRAMS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE & FOREIGN OPERATIONS APPROPRIATIONS BILL.** The US Congress has been the vanguard of support for Tibetan issues for almost three decades. Through its annual appropriations process, Congress has provided support for economic development for Tibetan communities, humanitarian assistance for refugees, the Office of Special Coordinator for Tibetan issues at US Department of State, Tibetan language broadcasts of Voice of America & Radio Free Asia, scholarships for Tibetan students. These small but indispensable investments help empower Tibetans both in exile and inside Tibet to pursue the preservation and promotion of their distinct religious and cultural heritage during these difficult times.

*\*See accompanying Fact Sheet (Congress and Tibet) for more details.*

What can you do:

**SUPPORT FUNDING OF TIBET-RELATED PROGRAMS IN THE FOREIGN OPERATIONS APPROPRIATIONS BILL FOR 2021 AT SAME LEVEL INDICATED IN 2020.**