



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act

- Requires the State Department to ban Chinese officials responsible for restricting American access to Tibet.

Following unanimous passage by both the House and the Senate, President Donald Trump signed the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act into law on December 19, 2018. The legislation calls for American diplomats, journalists, and regular citizens to have equal access to the Tibet Autonomous Region and other Tibetan areas as their Chinese counterparts enjoy in the US.

The Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act is based on the diplomatic principle of reciprocity, which calls on countries to give equal rights to one another's citizens. **When it comes to Tibet, China does not reciprocate.**

Chinese citizens travel freely throughout the US. In contrast, Chinese authorities severely restrict Americans' ability to access Tibet. US citizens—including government officials, reporters and tourists—are routinely rejected. The few who do get in are forced to stay on strictly controlled official tours, designed to keep the true situation of the Tibetan people hidden.

The situation is worst of all for Tibetan-Americans, who are almost always denied the right to visit their ancestral land, whether for pilgrimage or even to meet their family members.

RATA requires the Secretary of State to assess Americans' level of access to Tibet within 90 days of its enactment and to send a report to Congress every year thereafter identifying the Chinese officials responsible for keeping Americans out of Tibet. **The Secretary will then ban those officials from receiving visas to enter the US.** On July 7, 2020, the State Department announced for the first time that Chinese Communist Party and government officials responsible for keeping Americans out of Tibet will be denied entry to the US.

- Out of 34 provincial-level entities in the PRC, none have equivalent restrictions on access.
- Out of 10 requests to enter Tibet made by the State Department in 2019, five were denied by Chinese authorities.
- Few journalists are allowed to report from Tibet, and a 2017 report found that 80% of those who did reported encountering serious attempts to hamper their work.
- ICT research found that fewer than 40% of Tibetan American respondents were able to obtain a PRC visa to visit their homeland.

Recommendation

Call on other governments to demand equal access and to advance similar legislation.