



# TIBET LOBBY DAY

June 2025 | Washington, DC

## US Congress and Tibet



1987: The Dalai Lama speaks at the Congressional Human Rights Caucus



2024: Members of a US Congressional Delegation with His Holiness after presenting him with a copy of The Resolve Tibet Act

The US Congress has been the international vanguard of support for Tibet for almost three decades. In 1987 Congress became the first parliamentary body to welcome His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Congress has recognized the situation in Tibet as a humanitarian crisis and strategic concern that can and must be resolved.

Congressional statutory mandates and programmatic investment in Tibet also serves a critical facet of an overall regional strategy to confront China's political and military expansion across the region. Tibetans have stood on the frontlines of resisting CCP for decades. Existing Tibet-related laws must be fully implemented, and funding maintained or risk undermining long-standing, effective investment.

Fundamentally, the Tibet crisis is the more than 60-year occupation of Tibet under the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) regime, and inability of Tibetans to determine their own political future, practice their religion freely, or have a say in their economic development.

### **MOST RECENT ACTION**

**The Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act (H.R.533/S.138), signed into law by President Biden on July 12, 2024.** Congress approved the law with overwhelming bipartisan support, continuing the long tradition of United States' unified support for the Tibetan people. The law takes concrete action to resolve China's decades-long illegal occupation of Tibet by clarifying that the U.S. position is that the Tibet-China dispute remains unresolved and must be according to international law. It also faults China for refusing to resume negotiations. It also refutes China's persistent claim that Tibet has been part of China since "ancient times" as inaccurate. Finally, it mandates that the State Department take active action to combat Chinese government disinformation regarding Tibet.

## WHAT IS THE DALAI LAMA SEEKING?

The Dalai Lama and Tibetan leadership are seeking genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people within the People's Republic of China through a Middle Way approach that embraces dialogue and respect for all people.

## WHAT IS THE US GOVERNMENT'S POSITION?

Congress has identified China's repressive policies towards Tibet as a serious problem that must be confronted and resolved according to international law. Administrations of both parties, and Congress, have long supported the Dalai Lama's call for meaningful negotiation to end the oppression of Tibet and has repeatedly urged Chinese authorities to respect the fundamental human rights and religious freedoms of the Tibetan people.

US official policy with respect to Tibet has been codified in multiple laws which support the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan people's quest for human rights and dignity.

Congress also has passed numerous resolutions supporting the Dalai Lama's initiatives, condemning human rights abuses against Tibetans, seeking the release of Tibetan political prisoners, supporting dialogue toward a negotiated agreement, and seeks to end China's enforced isolation of Tibet. Congress has consistently provided funding through the annual appropriations process to support economic development, cultural preservation, health, and education programs in Tibet and for Tibetans in exile.

**Examples include:** Economic development for Tibetan communities; humanitarian assistance for refugees; promoting Democracy and Religious Freedom; establishing the Office of the Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues within the State Department; National Endowment for Democracy Tibet programs; Tibetan language broadcasts of Voice of America/Radio Free Asia; scholarships for Tibetan students from the Indian subcontinent; exchange programs for Tibetan scholars from Tibet.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

1. **Co-sponsor H.Res.515/S.Res.283** the bicameral, bipartisan resolution introduced by Senators Jeff Merkley (D-OR) and Todd Young (R-IN) in the Senate and led by Representatives Michael McCaul (R-TX) and Jim McGovern in the House. **This resolution honors the Dalai Lama's July 6th, 90th birthday.**
2. **Preserve funding for Tibet-Related Programs** in the 2026 Department of State & Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill.
3. Raise the critical situation in Tibet, and in particular urge for China to release Tibetan political prisoners by contacting the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission to adopt a victim as a prisoner of conscience through the ***Defending Freedoms Project***.

4. Co-sponsor the **Tibetan Global Security, Freedom, and Self-Determination Act of 2025**, expected to be introduced by Representative Joe Wilson (R-SC), which will increase accountability on the Chinese Communist Party for its egregious crimes against the Tibetan People.

*Please contact the International Campaign for Tibet for details: [www.savetibet.org](http://www.savetibet.org).*

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Congressional support dates to 1987, when the Congressional Human Rights Caucus provided the Dalai Lama with the opportunity to present his Five Point Peace Plan for Tibet.

In 2002, the Congress passed the Tibetan Policy Act of 2002 institutionalizing US policy with respect to Tibet and provides the framework for Tibet-related programs and initiatives.

In 2007, Congress awarded the Dalai Lama the Congressional Gold Medal in recognition of, among other things, his promotion of democracy and freedom for the Tibetan people, and his contributions to global religious understanding, human rights, and ecology.

On December 22, 2020, the Tibetan Policy and Support Act of 2020 was signed into law. It expresses its sense that the identification and installation of Tibetan Buddhist religious leaders, including a future 15th Dalai Lama, can be determined solely within the Tibetan Buddhist faith community, in accordance with the inalienable right to religious freedom.

