

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

December 20, 2012

The Honorable Barack Obama  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama,

We write to strongly urge you to make Tibet one of your top priorities for U.S. advocacy, especially given the desperate protests occurring in Tibet this past year. It is critical that the U.S. take a leading role and engage actively with partner nations on measures that could bring near-term improvements in the human rights situation in Tibet. As you consider candidates to be the next Secretary of State, we urge you to nominate someone who will champion this issue.

It has long been U.S. policy to promote dialogue without preconditions to advance a solution on Tibet and to press for respect for human rights and the preservation of Tibetan religion, language and cultural heritage.

Regrettably, the policies of the Chinese government towards the Tibetan people have only increased in their level of repression, their intrusion into all Tibetan institutions, most particularly religious and educational, and their denigration of Tibetan culture. These repressive conditions have led to the self-immolations and protests by Tibetans. As incidents of self-immolation increased in frequency, so have reports of mass gatherings of Tibetans to mourn and express solidarity with those who have undertaken these often mortal acts of protest. Continued crackdowns by Beijing threaten to escalate the situation.

It is in this context that we welcome the strong November 2<sup>nd</sup> statement on Tibet by U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay. She cited “continuing allegations of violence against Tibetans seeking to exercise their fundamental human rights of freedom of expression, association and religion,” and pointed to “reports of detentions and disappearances, of excessive use of force against peaceful demonstrators, and curbs on the cultural rights of Tibetans.”

We believe Commissioner Pillay’s statement requires stronger efforts on the part of the United States and the international community to press China to respect human rights in Tibet. It should serve as a clarion call for a new level of collaborative and coordinated pressure and engagement with the Chinese government on the Tibetan issue, including but not limited to allowing access by independent and impartial monitors to assess conditions on the ground, including the 12 outstanding requests for official visits by U.N. special rapporteurs; adoption by the Chinese government of policies recommended by U.N. special rapporteurs, such as suspension and review of Chinese policies and incentives that promote the settlement of mainland Chinese into Tibet; the suspension of non-voluntary resettlement of Tibetan nomadic

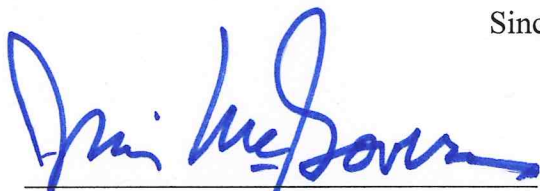
herders; an independent inquiry into alleged excessive use of force against peaceful demonstrators of 2008, and allegations of torture and ill-treatment against those arrested and detained; lifting restrictions on media access to the region; respect for Tibetans' rights to peaceful assembly, expression and religious practice, and the release of anyone detained for exercising those rights; and renewed engagement in dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives without preconditions.

The Chinese government appears to believe that by sealing off Tibet, international interest and concern will diminish. It will not. We were therefore pleased to see the recent statements by Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues Under Secretary Maria Otero and by Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Michael Posner expressing U.S. concern over the increasing frequency of self-immolations by Tibetans and rejection of the continuing violence by Chinese authorities in Tibetan areas. But much more must be done.

We urge you, Mr. President, to take a leading role in support of Commissioner Pillay's statement and actively engage partner nations on measures that could bring near-term improvements in the human rights situation in Tibet and serve to de-escalate rising tensions brought about by hard-line and destructive Chinese policies and actions. In addition, continued attention must be paid to promoting dialogue between Chinese officials and Tibetan leaders in order to achieve a negotiated solution to the problems afflicting Tibet and the Tibetan people.

We have the moral obligation to speak out for the Tibetan people and confront China about these abuses, to convey the aspirations for change that are being expressed so desperately by the Tibetan people directly to those who have the responsibility to heed Tibetans' demands for change, respect and basic dignity. We ask that you make this a top priority and lead the way.

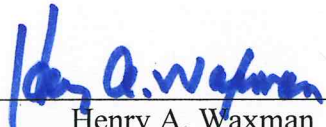
Sincerely,



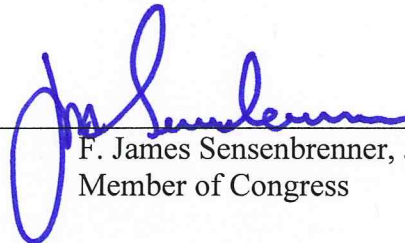
James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress



Frank R. Wolf  
Member of Congress



Henry A. Waxman  
Member of Congress



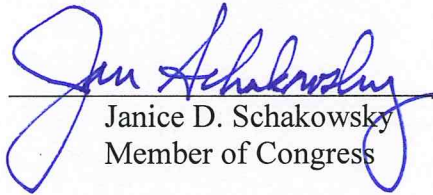
F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr.  
Member of Congress

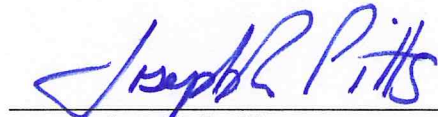


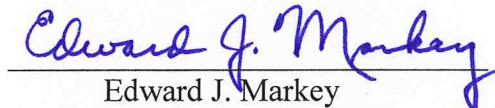
John Lewis  
Member of Congress




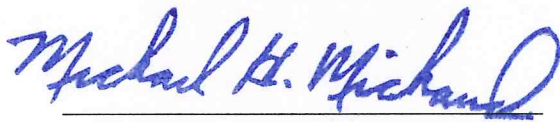
Michael R. Turner  
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Janice D. Schakowsky  
Member of Congress

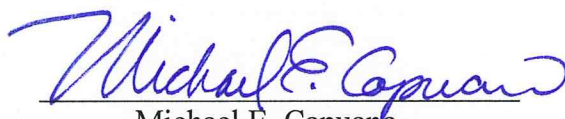
  
Joseph R. Pitts  
Member of Congress

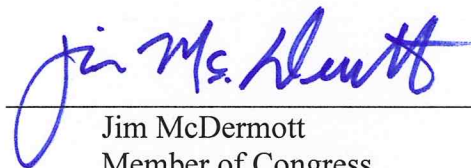
  
Edward J. Markey  
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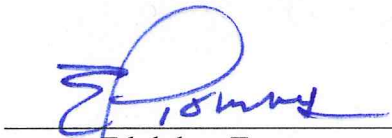
  
Dana Rohrabacher  
Member of Congress

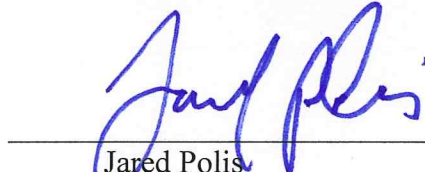
  
Michael H. Michaud  
Member of Congress


  
Steve Chabot  
Member of Congress

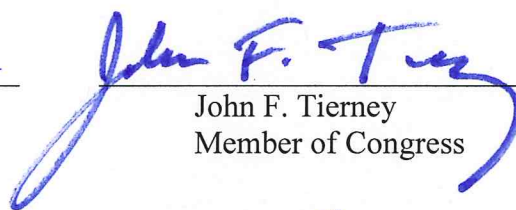
  
Michael E. Capuano  
Member of Congress

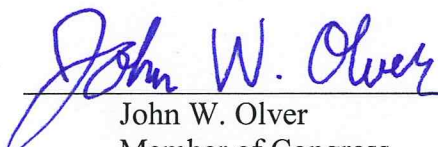
  
Jim McDermott  
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Edolphus Towns  
Member of Congress

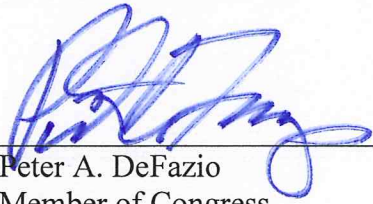
  
Jared Polis  
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Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress

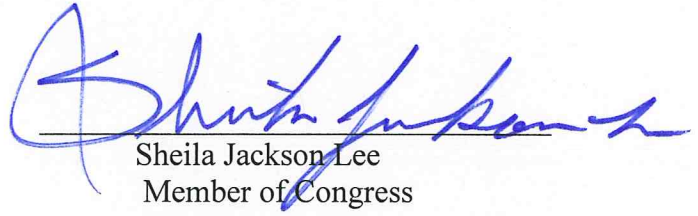
  
John F. Tierney  
Member of Congress

  
John W. Olver  
Member of Congress

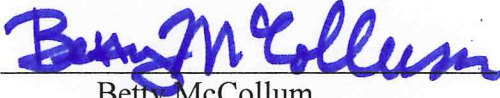
  
Keith Ellison  
Member of Congress



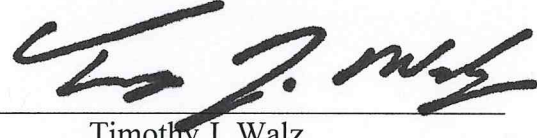
Peter A. DeFazio  
Member of Congress



Sheila Jackson Lee  
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum  
Member of Congress



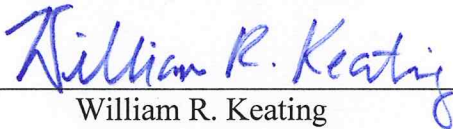
Timothy J. Walz  
Member of Congress



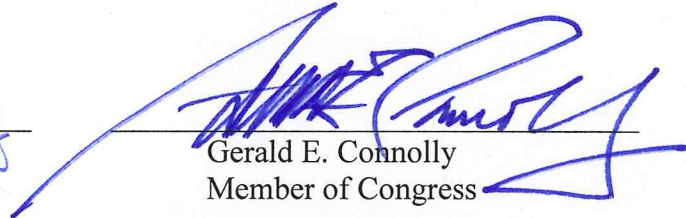
John Garamendi  
Member of Congress



Sam Farr  
Member of Congress



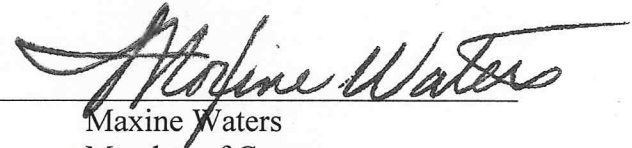
William R. Keating  
Member of Congress



Gerald E. Connolly  
Member of Congress



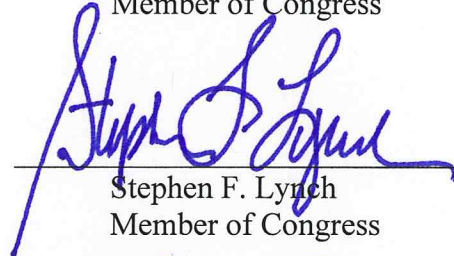
Eleanor Holmes Norton  
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Maxine Waters  
Member of Congress



Collin C. Peterson  
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch  
Member of Congress



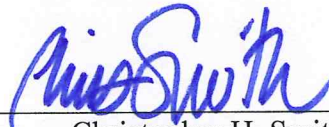
André Carson  
Member of Congress



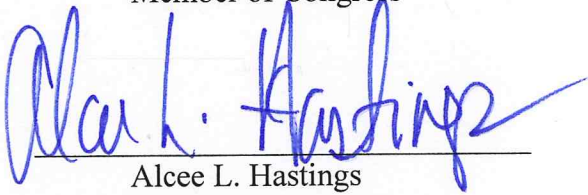
Lois Capps  
Member of Congress



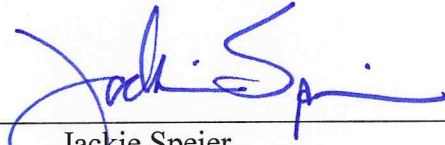
Richard E. Neal  
Member of Congress



Christopher H. Smith  
Member of Congress



Alcee L. Hastings  
Member of Congress



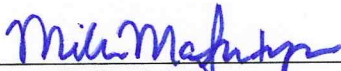
Jackie Speier  
Member of Congress



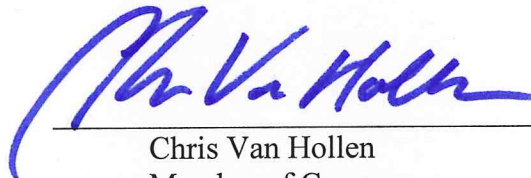
Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress



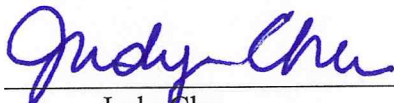
Rush Holt  
Member of Congress



Mike McIntyre  
Member of Congress



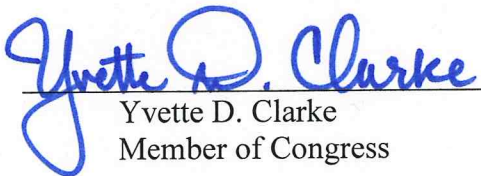
Chris Van Hollen  
Member of Congress



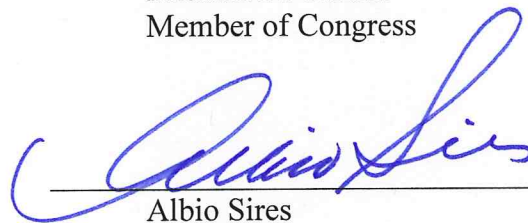
Judy Chu  
Member of Congress



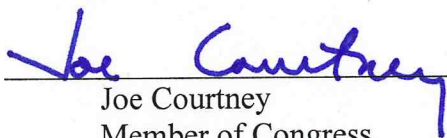
Michael M. Honda  
Member of Congress



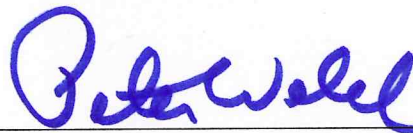
Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress



Albio Sires  
Member of Congress



Joe Courtney  
Member of Congress



Peter Welch  
Member of Congress



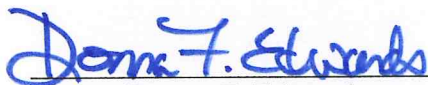
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Adam Smith  
Member of Congress



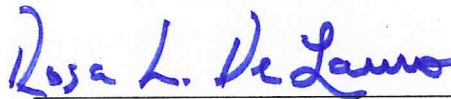
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Leonard Lance  
Member of Congress



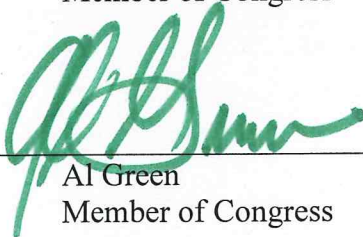
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Donna F. Edwards  
Member of Congress



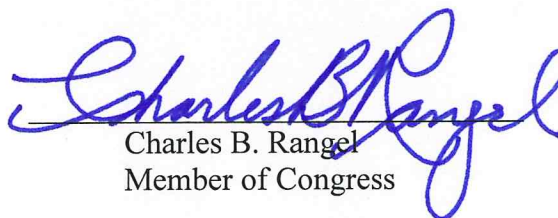
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Rosa L. DeLauro  
Member of Congress



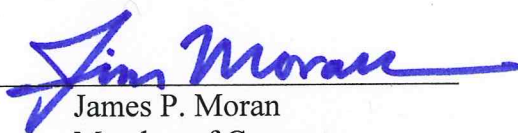
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Al Green  
Member of Congress



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Charles B. Rangel  
Member of Congress



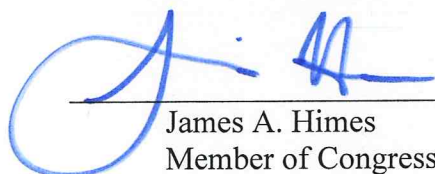
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James P. Moran  
Member of Congress



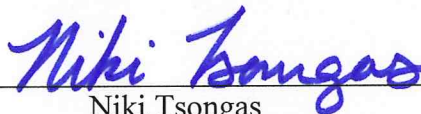
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David N. Cicilline  
Member of Congress



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James A. Himes  
Member of Congress



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Niki Tsongas  
Member of Congress