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**STATEMENT BY U.S. REP. JIM MCGOVERN ON THE
NOBEL PEACE PRIZE TO LIU XIAOBO**

It is a great pleasure for me to be here and stand shoulder to shoulder with so many distinguished human rights defenders here today, and to congratulate Liu Xiaobo on being awarded the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize.

When the Norwegian Nobel Committee announced its decision on October 8th, it renewed its past proud history of awarding this prestigious award to outstanding individuals and groups who embody incredible courage and humanity in the face of severe suppression, courage to stand up for their fellow citizens, for truth, democracy and human rights --- despite the likely consequences.

The Nobel Committee in its announcement specifically cited that it awarded the Peace Prize to Mr. Liu because of "his long and non-violent struggle for fundamental human rights in China."

When the award ceremony takes place this Friday in Oslo, Norway, on December 10th, International Human Rights Day, Mr. Liu will be serving yet another day of the 11-year sentence he received last December for alleged 'subversion of State power.'

If the Chinese government had to explain what exactly is the alleged 'subversion,' it would of course be hard pressed. Mr. Liu's entire life has been dedicated to the peaceful reform of his country, a country that yearns for greater space for democracy and human rights. That is exactly why the People's Republic of China does not explain its blatant abuse of judicial power, or allow judicial review or meaningful court proceedings in the first place.

Instead, China immediately embarked on a massive international campaign to pressure the Nobel Committee not to award the Prize to Mr. Liu as the first Chinese recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, and pressed foreign governments not to attend the ceremonies in Oslo. We remember how China responded in a similar fashion when His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, won

the award, and when Uyghur human rights and democracy leader Rebiya Kadeer was nominated for the Peace Prize.

China's arm reaches far, and the PRC, unfortunately, has been able to exert pressure on a handful of countries. The United States, however, must be a beacon of hope. I call on President Obama – as a Peace Prize recipient himself – to send a high level delegation to Oslo as a very clear signal to world that the U.S. stands full-square for human rights and democracy, and that we stand with Liu Xiaobo and the Chinese human rights and democracy movement.

China also cracked down harshly on any attempts to celebrate Mr. Liu's achievements in his country, and has so far prevented Mr. Liu's wife, Liu Xia, from traveling to Oslo, as well as most of China's democracy activists and scholars who were invited by Mr. Liu's family.

The speeches in Oslo will no doubt highlight Mr. Liu's incredible courage and peaceful convictions. We will hear about his leadership as a writer, literary critic, professor and human rights activist; his role during the 1989 pro-democracy protest in Tiananmen Square, where he negotiated on behalf of student demonstrators, that he served as President of the Independent Chinese PEN Center since 2003, and the prominent leadership role he played in the drafting of one of the most important Chinese reform documents, Charter 08.

This Friday, Mr. Liu will take his rightful place among those human rights giants who were also imprisoned when they were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize – Germany's Carl von Ossietzky in 1935 and Burma's Aung San Suu Kyi in 1991.

But what Mr. Liu needs most is not the ornate medal, or even the cash prize which goes with the award, but our ongoing commitment to stand with him and the goals and aspirations he represents. That is our job as law makers, NGOs, the public, and the international community --- today, tomorrow, in Oslo, and most importantly, beyond December 10th.