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One Hundred and Eleventh Congress
Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission

October 4, 2010

Dear President Obama:

We understand that you will meet with Chinese President Hu Jintao during the G-20 Summit in Seoul, South Korea, which will take place on November 11 and 12. We write to ask that you urge President Hu to release two emblematic Chinese prisoners of conscience, Liu Xiaobo and Gao Zhisheng.

Liu Xiaobo is a renowned scholar and human rights advocate who helped draft Charter 08, which called for an improvement in the human rights situation and respect for rule of law. Dr. Liu was sentenced on December 25, 2009, to 11 years imprisonment on charges of "incitement to subvert state power and overthrow the socialist system" for his role in drafting and circulating Charter 08 and publishing "inciting articles." The Chinese government's conviction of Dr. Liu violates both the Chinese constitution and international law. Furthermore, Dr. Liu's trial failed to meet even the minimum standards of due process of law.

Dr. Liu's detention is symbolic of the Chinese government's repression of the peaceful freedom of expression of its citizens. The charge of subversion under Article 105 of the Criminal Law of the People's Republic of China is regularly used to silence political dissidents, such as Dr. Liu. We strongly believe that China must be discouraged from detaining individuals for exercising their fundamental right to freedom of expression.

Gao Zhisheng is a Chinese human rights lawyer known as "the conscience of China." The Chinese government has illegally detained Mr. Gao without charge or trial in unknown locations since February 2009. Experts believe that Mr. Gao was targeted as a result of his defense of religious minorities. After a sustained international outcry, Mr. Gao was released on March 31, 2010, but again disappeared on April 20 and has since been held *incommunicado*. Mr. Gao's wife and two young children are political asylees in the United States.

HANS HOGREFF
Democratic Staff Director

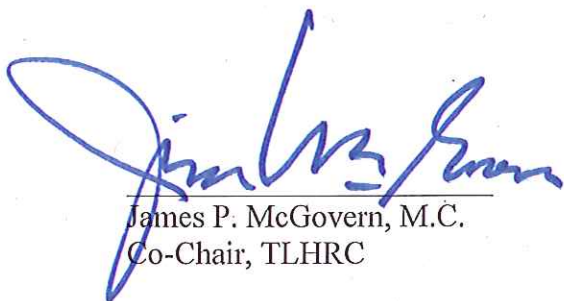
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Mr. Gao's case is the most egregious example of China's growing pressure on human rights lawyers. Increasingly, these lawyers in China are disbarred or otherwise prevented from practicing. But Mr. Gao's case marks the first time that the Chinese government has detained such a prominent individual for a sustained period of time. We strongly believe that the United States government and international community must not allow China to continue to cross this line. If lawyers are hauled away for the "crime" of defending their clients, then even the pretense of rule of law in China has failed.

We are pleased that U.S. officials have raised Dr. Liu's and Mr. Gao's cases both publicly and privately in the past. We hope that you will underscore these concerns by personally raising their cases with President Hu during the G-20 Summit and pressing for their release.

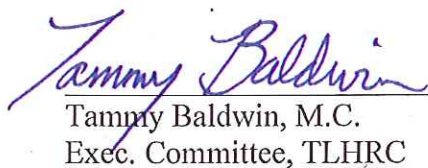
Sincerely,



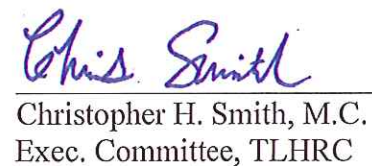
James P. McGovern, M.C.
Co-Chair, TLHRC



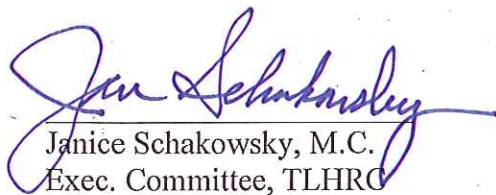
Frank R. Wolf, M.C.
Co-Chair, TLHRC



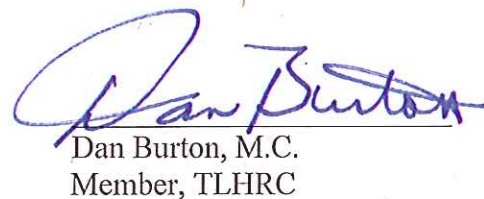
Tammy Baldwin, M.C.
Exec. Committee, TLHRC



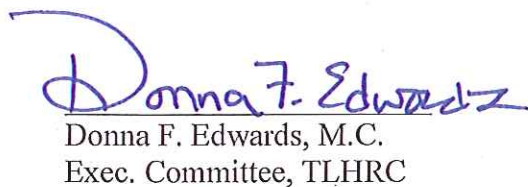
Christopher H. Smith, M.C.
Exec. Committee, TLHRC



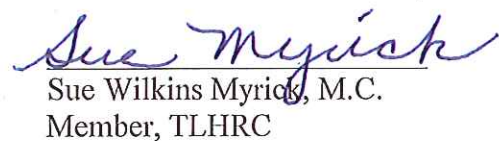
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Dan Burton, M.C.
Member, TLHRC



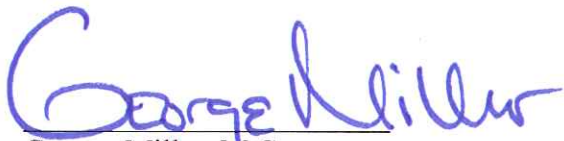
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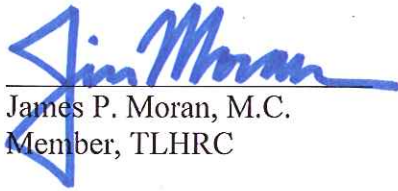
Daniel E. Lungren, M.C.
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Member, TLHRC



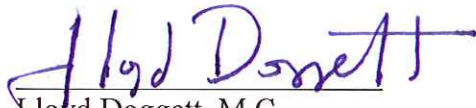
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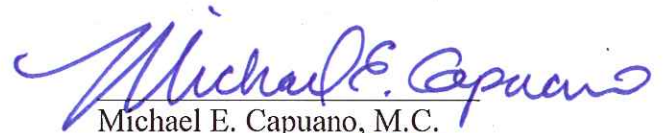
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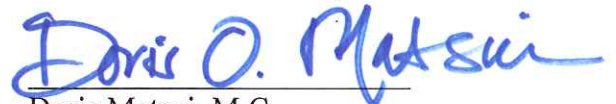
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David Wu, M.C.
Member, TLHRC



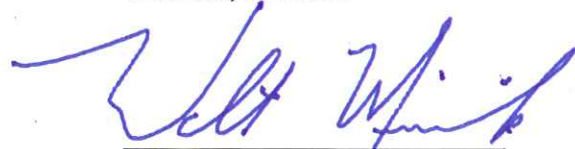
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Member, TLHRC



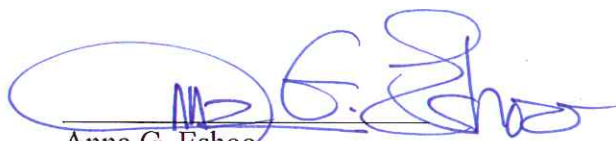
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Barney Frank
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