May 7, 2019

The Honorable Mike Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo,

We write today to express our deep concern about the well-being of the Tibetan people under Chinese rule and to call on you to promptly implement key legislation that Congress has passed to guide United States policy on Tibet.

Recently, Tibet was closed off to all foreigners, as Tibetans all over the world marked the 60th anniversary of the Tibetan Uprising, the forced exile of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and the exodus of tens of thousands of refugees who have been unable to return to their homeland.

Today, the repression in Tibet continues unabated. In its latest Freedom in the World report, Freedom House ranked Tibet as among the least free places in the world, in the company of Syria, North Korea and South Sudan. Tibetan Buddhists are denied their religious freedom, as all religious affairs are under the oppressive control of the Chinese Communist Party.

It is therefore now more urgent than ever that the State Department fully implement current law on Tibet.

The Tibetan Policy Act (TPA) of 2002 calls for the appointment of a Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues at the State Department to facilitate coordination of U.S. policy toward Tibet. This position, previously designated at the level of Under Secretary of State, has remained vacant since the beginning of the current administration. We urge you to appoint a Special Coordinator of appropriate rank as soon as possible.

The TPA also calls on the President and Secretary to “encourage the Government of the People’s Republic of China to enter into a dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives”
"leading to a negotiated agreement on Tibet." We call on you and the President to publicly raise this issue and address the lack of respect for human rights in Tibet during all your meetings with senior Chinese government officials.

In 2018, the Congress passed the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act (RATA), which responds to the lack of access to Tibet for American citizens by reinforcing the principle of reciprocity as a central aspect of U.S.-China relations. RATA requires the State Department to report to Congress on the level of access that U.S. diplomats, journalists and American citizens are granted to Tibetan areas of China, and to provide a list of the Chinese officials who formulate or execute policies to restrict access to Tibet, who then become ineligible to receive a visa or be admitted to the United States. Robust implementation of RATA would send a strong signal both to Beijing and to the international community that the Chinese government’s discriminatory practices regarding access to Tibetan areas should not and will not be tolerated.

We look forward to working with you on this very important moral issue of our time, which greatly concerns Members of Congress and the American people.

Sincerely,

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress

Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress

Ted S. Yoho, D.V.M.
Member of Congress

Nita M. Lowey
Member of Congress

Steve Chabot
Member of Congress

Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

Dan Crenshaw
Member of Congress
Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress

Donald S. Beyer, Jr.  
Member of Congress

Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress

Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress

Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress

Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress

Denver Lee Riggelman III  
Member of Congress

Scott Perry  
Member of Congress

John Ratcliffe  
Member of Congress

Chellie Pingree  
Member of Congress

John Garamendi  
Member of Congress

Alan S. Lowenthal  
Member of Congress
Peter Welch  
Member of Congress

Pramila Jayapal  
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Steve Cohen  
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Ben McAdams  
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Susan Wild  
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Betty McCollum  
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Peter A. DeFazio  
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Veronica Escobar  
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John A. Yarmuth  
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Thomas R. Suozzi  
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Tom Malinowski  
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