

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, New Jersey
Co-Chair



JAMES P. MCGOVERN, Massachusetts
Co-Chair

One Hundred and Sixteenth Congress
Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission

April 24, 2020

The Honorable Carrie Lam
The Chief Executive
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China
Office of the Chief Executive
Hong Kong

Dear Chief Executive Lam:

We write as co-chairs of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission of the United States House of Representatives to express grave concern over events unfolding over the past week – namely, the arrests of 15 individuals including Martin Lee, Margaret Ng, Jimmy Lai, Albert Ho, Yueng Sum, Lee Cheuk-yan, Leung Kwok-hung, and the apparent endorsement by your government to Beijing's interference in the internal affairs of Hong Kong.

We respectfully request that your government drop the charges against the arrested individuals, consistent with your government's obligation to safeguard the rights and freedoms of Hong Kong residents, including the right of peaceful assembly. These rights are further enshrined in a binding international treaty, the Sino-British Joint Declaration, which guarantees freedom of speech and assembly.

Furthermore, we ask that you clarify how your government concluded that the Liaison Office of the Peoples' Republic of China (PRC) is not subject to Article 22 of the Basic Law after initially claiming otherwise. Given that the U.S.-Hong Kong relationship is sustained by Hong Kong's continued "high-degree of autonomy," the Liaison Office's new status appears to collapse the critical foundation of the "One Country, Two Systems" framework with potentially significant repercussions with respect to the status of Hong Kong and the freedoms of the people of Hong Kong.

As principal sponsors of the bipartisan Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act in the House of Representatives, we are committed to the continued flourishing of Hong Kong and all the commercial, cultural, and people-to-people ties which bind the people of Hong Kong and the United States.

We therefore urge you, your government, and your supporters to take this chance to lessen tensions with the Hong Kong people, stand strongly for their guaranteed democratic freedoms, and resolutely work to preserve Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy. We recognize, at this time, these are considerable requests, but we believe that a free, autonomous, and prosperous Hong Kong is an important, long-term interest of the People's Republic of China, the U.S., and the international community.

Sincerely,



CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
Co-Chair
Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission



JAMES P. MCGOVERN
Co-Chair
Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission