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US Members of Congress Introduce Resolutions to Commemorate Tibet's 1959 Uprising as "Tibetan Rights Day"

Today, Senators Leahy (D), Feinstein (D), and Cruz (R) and Representatives McGovern (D) and Hultgren (R), introduced companion resolutions to commemorate the 1959 Tibetan Uprising as "Tibetan Rights Day" on March 10, and to support the human rights and religious freedom of the Tibetan people in both the Senate and the House of Representatives.

The resolutions recall that on March 10, 1959 the people of Lhasa rose to protect the residence of the Dalai Lama, fearing for his life, and that an estimated 87,000 were later killed during the ensuing violent crackdown orchestrated by the Chinese Communist Party. Furthermore, the resolutions recalls that March 10, 2018 is also the tenth anniversary of the 2008 protests that started in Lhasa and then spread across the Tibetan plateau, which were brutally suppressed by Chinese authorities. At least 152 Tibetans have self-immolated inside the PRC in protest against Chinese rule since then.

The resolutions stigmatize the PRC's interference in the religious freedom of the Tibetan people, specifically noting the enforced disappearance of the 11th Panchen Lama and the installation of their own candidate in his place. The resolution also cites the 14th Dalai Lama's statement on the identification of a 15th Dalai Lama, saying, "no recognition or acceptance should be given to a candidate chosen for political ends" by PRC authorities.

"We stand by the Tibetan people, who have long been our unwavering friends," Senator Leahy said in a statement issued in support of the resolutions, calling Communist Party claims that they have the authority to select a future 15th Dalai Lama "absurd." "We can foster closer, cooperative relations with China, but until China works with Tibetan leaders to pursue a new way forward, their reputation in the community of nations, and their ability to act as a global power, will remain deeply tarnished," he concludes.

The resolutions recognize March 10, 2018 as "Tibetan Rights Day," and oppose the efforts of the PRC to identify and install reincarnate Tibetan Buddhist leaders. They call on the Secretary of State to fully implement the Tibetan Policy Act in cooperation with like-minded states where appropriate, urge the US Ambassador to China to meet with the Panchen Lama, and call for further efforts to open a consulate in Lhasa.

The resolutions were introduced at the end of a week that marked the first visit to Washington, DC of Dhondup Wangchen, a former political prisoner who spent six years in jail for filming the documentary film '[Leaving Fear Behind](#).' Dhondup testified at a Congressional Executive Commission on China hearing on February 14 and met with State Department officials and Congressional leaders.

The full text of the Senate version of the [resolution can be found here](#).