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December 5, 2009

Friends of Tibet  
1310 Fillmore Street #401  
San Francisco CA 94115

Dear Friends of Tibet,

I am honored to have been invited to address Friends of Tibet. I regret that my schedule does not allow me to join you in person today to celebrate 24 years of the Annual Tibet Day in San Francisco.

I am so impressed with the sustained success of this important event! San Francisco has the third largest Tibetan population in the world, and I am proud to represent part of this wonderful, diverse city and region in the United States Congress.

This special day reminds us that there is much to celebrate in the rich, vibrant culture of the Tibetan people. However, it is also a day for reflection as we consider the deplorable treatment of the Tibetan people in their homeland. It is at the forefront of our U.S. foreign policy on human rights that we continue, with fierce determination, to promote a free Tibet.

I am committed to working with my colleagues in Congress to continue efforts that call on the government of the People's Republic of China to make significant and consistent efforts to initiate diplomatic dialog with the Dalai Lama. I had the great honor to meet His Holiness this fall and was humbled by his grace, self-deprecating humor and easy laugh. He emphasized the importance of "unclenching our fists" and encouraged us to never give up hope in the pursuit of peace. Though he has been exiled for fifty years and has seen his people brutalized and repressed, he spoke of compassion, forgiveness, charity and patience. With his radiant smile, he reminded us never to allow the actions of "a few mischievous people" to color our views of an entire ethnic or religious group. I will hold the messages from His Holiness dear as I go forward in my work in the United States Congress and as we mark International Human Rights Day.

Thank you to the Tibetan Association of Northern California and the Bay Area Friends of Tibet for your passionate dedication to ensuring that the democratic values we hold dear are always carried forward.

All the Best,



Jackie Speier  
Member of Congress