



March 10, 2013

San Francisco Team Tibet
c/o Friends of Tibet
1310 Fillmore Street, #401
San Francisco, California 94115

Dear Friends:

Today, on the 54th anniversary of the Tibetan Uprising of 1959, we gather both to honor the rich culture of the Tibetan people and to unite against ongoing human rights abuses that threaten that culture's continuing survival. The San Francisco Bay Area has one of the largest Tibetan populations outside Asia, and I am proud to represent our region's diversity in Congress. But we are reminded today that we also have an obligation to speak out about brutal repression abroad.

As you know, the Tibetan people are denied the right to practice their religion freely, to use their language, and to make decisions about their economic, environmental, and political future. They are denied the right to advocate for themselves in public, and those who do are threatened with imprisonment and execution. These policies ultimately constitute a calculated attack on the future of an entire ethnic group, and they have led to the deteriorating conditions we have witnessed over the past several years. That is why I have called for the government of the People's Republic of China to withdraw military forces from Tibet, release political prisoners, and allow peaceful protests to take place while opening a dialogue with Tibetan leaders in exile.

I had the honor of meeting the Dalai Lama in 2009, and I was humbled by his warmth, his grace, and his compassion. In spite of years of exile, he spoke of reconciliation. In spite of the continuing oppression directed against Tibetan people, their culture, their language, and their religion, he spoke of peace. His Holiness reminds us that we all have an unlimited capacity for charity and forgiveness, and that respectful coexistence remains within our grasp. All people ultimately share common aspirations, regardless of their political or ethnic affiliation. These are the values that we honor today, and that I will continue working to uphold in Congress.

Thank you all for coming together to support the cause of human dignity, pluralism, and democratic rights.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jackie Speier". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Jackie Speier
Member of Congress