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One Hundred and Eleventh Congress
Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission

October 6, 2009

The President

The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

By Fax and Mail

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing regarding your upcoming visit to the People's Republic of China and the opportunities that the administration will have in the coming months to help shape a long-sought resolution on the issue of Tibet. Tibet remains an important priority for Congress. Through policy and programs Congress has remained committed to the preservation of the unique Tibetan identity and the protection of the rights and freedoms of the Tibetan people.

We have taken an interest in your administration's approach on the Tibet issue, notably the visit of Senior Advisor Valerie Jarrett and Under Secretary of State Maria Otero to confer with His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala, India. We were pleased to hear that Ms. Jarrett reiterated your "commitment to support the Tibetan people in protecting their distinct religious, linguistic, and cultural heritage and securing respect for their human rights and civil liberties" and your commendation of the Dalai Lama's consistency in seeking genuine autonomy for Tibetans within the People's Republic of China. Ms. Jarrett's statement is an important reiteration of long-standing U.S. policy on Tibet as articulated by Congress and implemented by administrations of both parties. These remarks must be accompanied by a policy framework that makes clear to the Chinese leadership the United States government's expectations for, and definition of, meaningful results on the Tibet issue.

While we would have preferred your conferring with the Dalai Lama prior to your trip to China in November, we understand that you plan to meet with His Holiness after your return. This approach has raised expectations that Tibet will be an issue of great importance on your summit agenda with President Hu, and we ask that Tibet be a substantive part of the agenda. In the context of the overall U.S.-China relationship, it is

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critically important that our government stand firm on long-standing interests, and to work actively to address areas of difference whose resolution has been identified as beneficial to the overall relationship. We hope you will see the summit as a strategic opportunity to shift the ground under the Tibet issue, and create conditions that can lead to substantive progress on improvements in the human rights situation in Tibet and on a negotiated resolution that addresses the legitimate grievances of the Tibetan people.

We look forward to meeting with His Holiness the Dalai Lama when he comes to Capitol Hill October 6-7 to meet old friends and explore new opportunities. We hope to hear his views on the chances for progress following the visit by your advisers and his expectations for the November summit and beyond.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



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Co-Chairman, TLHRC



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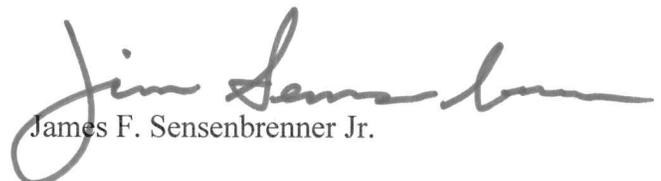
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