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One Hundred and Twelfth Congress

Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission

November 17, 2011

The Honorable Gary Locke
Ambassador
Embassy of the United States
C/o U.S. State Department
Beijing
China

Dear Ambassador Locke:

You have undoubtedly seen news reports of the recent wave of self-immolations of Tibetan Buddhist monks and nuns since March of this year in desperation at the abuses suffered by her people. Just last week a second nun did the same. According to the International Campaign for Tibet, she apparently called for religious freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama before setting herself aflame.

Recently the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission on which we serve held a hearing during which we heard from Dr. Lobsang Sangay with the Central Tibetan Administration and His Eminence Kyabje Kirti Rinpoche with Kirti Monasteries. Their testimony was moving and deeply disturbing. They spoke of the abuses suffered by the Tibetan people which in recent months have driven these peace-loving people to desperate forms of protest.

In light of these realities, we urge you, in your capacity as U.S. ambassador, to visit Tibet. Speak with the Tibetan people and faith leaders. Press for a fact-finding mission into the Kirti monastery which has featured prominently in the recent wave of self-immolations. Raise the Chinese government's repressive policies in Tibet with senior party officials and publicly use your platform as Ambassador to make it clear to the Tibetan people that they have a friend in the United States of America.

You are uniquely positioned to reflect American values and priorities to the Chinese people and the Government of China. In that light, it is important for you as the lead representative of the United States in China to publically declare that the Chinese government must respect the peaceful religious, political, civic, and cultural expressions of the Tibetan people. For the United States, this is both morally imperative and politically prudent.

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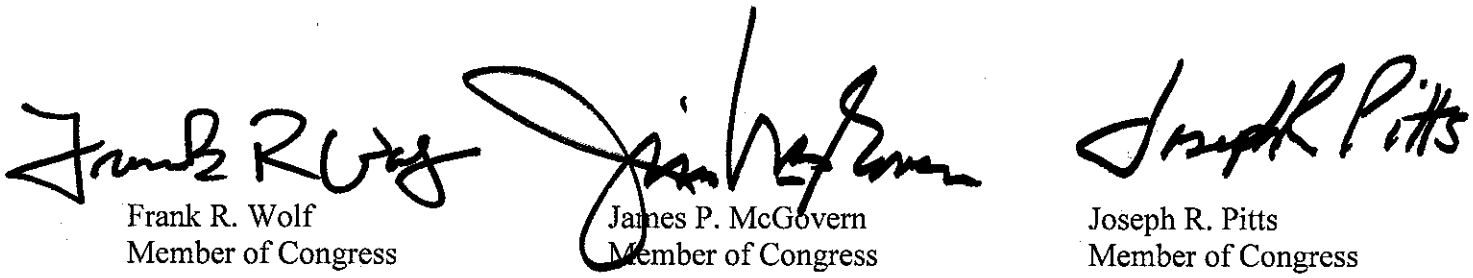
JANICE KAGUYUTAN
Democratic Staff Director

We wish you continued success as Ambassador to China and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



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