

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 24

Commending China's Charter 08 movement and related efforts for upholding the universality of human rights and advancing democratic reforms in China.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 28, 2009

Mr. CASEY (for himself and Mr. BROWNBACK) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

RESOLUTION

Commending China's Charter 08 movement and related efforts for upholding the universality of human rights and advancing democratic reforms in China.

Whereas the People's Republic of China adopted in 1971 the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and has signed or ratified numerous international covenants and conventions protecting human rights, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, done at New York December 16, 1966, and entered into force March 23, 1976, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, done at New York December 16, 1966, and entered into force January 3, 1976, and the International Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or

Punishment, done at New York, December 10, 1984, and entered into force June 26, 1987, among others;

Whereas the Constitution of the People's Republic of China "protects and guarantees human rights" by providing citizens with equality under the law, freedom of speech, press, assembly, association, procession, and demonstration, the right to own and inherit private property, freedom of religion, equality for women, and numerous other rights consistent with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights conventions and covenants;

Whereas, since 1991, the Governments of the United States and China have held 13 Human Rights Dialogues, the most recent of which took place in May 2008 in Beijing;

Whereas, in January 1977, more than 200 citizens of Czechoslovakia, representing different professions, faiths, and beliefs, formed a "loose, informal, and open association of people . . . united by the will to strive individually and collectively for respect for human and civil rights" and issued a document called Charter 77, which called on their government to protect basic civic and human rights as enshrined under national laws;

Whereas, inspired by the Charter 77 movement, on December 10, 2008, an informal group of more than 300 citizens of China from a wide array of backgrounds, professions, faiths, and beliefs issued a public statement entitled "Charter 08", a 19-point plan calling for greater rights and political reform in China, increased liberties, democracy, religious freedom, and rule of law;

Whereas authorities in China have detained several affiliates of that Charter 08 effort, including Liu Xiaobo, who remains in custody;

Whereas the Department of State has called on the Government of China to release Liu Xiaobo and cease harassment of all Chinese citizens who peacefully express their desire for internationally recognized fundamental freedoms; and

Whereas thousands of individuals have added their names to the Charter 08 petition, and the document has been referenced in over 300,000 websites and blogs: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) notes the numerous commitments the China
3 has made to the international community as a signa-
4 tory to the United Nations Universal Declaration of
5 Human Rights and other international conventions;

6 (2) commends the citizens of China who have
7 signed onto Charter 08 and are upholding principles
8 consistent with China's international commitments
9 on human rights and its own constitution;

10 (3) calls on the Government of China to release
11 all people detained because of their involvement or
12 affiliation with the Charter 08 effort, including Liu
13 Xiaobo, in addition to all prisoners of conscience de-
14 tained in violation of the domestic law and inter-
15 national commitments of China; and

1 (4) calls on President Barack Obama and Sec-
2 retary of State Hillary Clinton to engage with the
3 Government of China on human rights issues at
4 every reasonable opportunity and using all diplo-
5 matic means available, including the U.S.-China
6 Human Rights Dialogue, and resist pressure to re-
7 place this dialogue with a weaker alternative.

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