

COMMENDING THE PACIFICA
INSTITUTE FOR ITS WORK

HON. SUZAN K. DELBENE

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 10, 2016

Ms. DELBENE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the Pacifica Institute in Bellevue for their work to generate interfaith dialogue and promote cross-cultural ties. Pacifica Institute has built up ties of mutual understanding and strengthened communities throughout the state of Washington.

Pacifica Institute has continually engaged the community in activities to foster shared experiences. Their efforts have helped remove barriers, building confidence and trust to create a peaceful society through newfound relationships.

Through their vision of promoting social justice through shared networks, Pacifica Institute has provided our district with the opportunity to foster mutual appreciation in a respectful environment.

I'm pleased to join Pacifica Institute in their annual Ramadan Interfaith Friendship Iftar in Redmond this weekend. I am looking forward to coming together with members of our community to celebrate various religious backgrounds.

As President John F. Kennedy said, "If we cannot end now our differences, at least we can help make the world safe for diversity." Pacifica Institute works to do just that. Its commitment to educating communities serves as a positive voice bringing people together to combat prejudice and intolerance.

TIBET AND THE VISIT OF HIS HO-
LINESS THE DALAI LAMA TO
WASHINGTON, D.C.

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 10, 2016

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, His Holiness the Dalai Lama will be in Washington, DC next week. As the spiritual leader of Tibetans, the Dalai Lama is an energetic and unflinching ambassador for human rights and the rights of the Tibetan people. Sadly, his visit reminds us again about the dire situation of the Tibetan people inside China.

The Tibetan people have a right to practice their religion, preserve their culture, and speak their language. They have a right to do so without restriction or interference. The Chinese government does not agree. To them, the Tibetans are a people to be pacified. Their faith and culture are problems to be solved, not a heritage to be preserved, honored, and protected. To them, the Dalai Lama is an agitator and revolutionary, not a world-renowned and respected voice for peace and harmony.

The recent State Department Human Rights Report offered a withering criticism of the Chinese government's oversight of Tibetan and Tibetan areas of China. It said the "government engaged in severe repression of Tibet's religious, cultural and religious heritage by, among other means, strictly curtailing the civil rights of China's ethnic Tibetan population, including the rights to the freedom of speech,

religion, association, assembly, and movement."

I am the Chair of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China. Our reporting on Tibet draws similar conclusions about China's rough oversight of Tibetans. Over the past several years, the Chinese government has constructed more obstacles to efforts by Tibetans to preserve their culture and religion.

Sadly, we know that Tibetans have used self-immolations as a protest against the religious and political oversight of the Chinese government.

It is difficult to fathom the despair and desperation felt by Tibetans who take this last act of defiance. The Chinese government has blamed the Dalai Lama and "foreign forces" for self-immolations instead of looking at how their own policies created such deep grievances.

The Chinese government also expanded its efforts last year to transform Tibetan Buddhism into a state-managed institution. They sought to undermine the devotion of the Tibetan people to the Dalai Lama and control the process of selecting Buddhist leaders.

One Chinese government official admitted that control over the selection of Tibetan Buddhist leaders, including the next Dalai Lama, was "an important political matter" and a critical part of the Chinese government's "sovereignty over Tibet."

The Chinese government wants a Tibetan Buddhism that is attractive to tourists, but which allows the Communist Party to completely manage its affairs.

The UN Special Rapporteur on Religion said recently criticized China's efforts to control Tibetan Buddhism and the process of selecting leaders. He said "the Chinese government is destroying the autonomy of religious communities . . . creating schisms, and pitting people against each other in order to exercise control."

This is exactly what the Chinese government has done to other religious groups, including Catholics, Protestants, Muslims, and Falun Gong. When the faithful don't fall in line, they are jailed, harassed and bribed until they do.

Religious freedom is an essential part of dealing with the grievances of the Tibetan people, but China's answer is always the same—control, manage, and repress. It is counterproductive and it violates China's international obligations.

The China Commission has a prisoner database that contains records on 643 known Tibetan political and religious prisoners. 43 percent of those detained are monks, nuns, and religious teachers. Almost all were imprisoned since 2008.

Substantive dialogue between the Dalai Lama's representatives and the Chinese government and Communist Party have not occurred in the past five years. This is the longest break since the dialogue started in 2002.

A government "White Paper" on Tibet, published this April, states that China will "only talk with private representatives of the Dalai Lama" to discuss "the future of the Dalai Lama" and how he can "gain the forgiveness of the central government and the Chinese people."

Instead of asking for the Dalai Lama's forgiveness for the decades of brutal repression, the Chinese government asks for his. This is the state of affairs in Xi Jinping's China.

This is unfortunate and counterproductive. If China's goal is to build a "harmonious society" in Tibet, it cannot be done without the Dalai Lama.

He is the spiritual leader of the Tibetan people. His views are widely shared by those in Tibetan society, he can be a constructive partner for China in addressing continuing tensions, and deep-seated grievance, in Tibetan areas.

In our dealings with Chinese government and officials, Members of Congress and the Administration should affirm the peaceful desires of the Tibetan people for greater autonomy and freedoms within China.

We should stress that China's policies are counterproductive, they are brutal, and they hurt China's international prestige.

We also need to speak with a unified voice to end the repression of the Tibetan people. U.S. leadership on this issue is critical, because our allies in Europe and Asia can be bullied by Chinese threats of economic boycotts.

U.S. officials must demonstrate that Tibet matters, human rights matter, and religious freedom matters to U.S.-China relations and China's future stability and prosperity.

RECOGNIZING DELEGATES AT THE
CONGRESS FOR FUTURE MED-
ICAL LEADERS

HON. KEN BUCK

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 10, 2016

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize five high school students from the fourth district of Colorado, who were selected to represent the state of Colorado as delegates at the Congress for Future Medical Leaders. The students are Carter Goodard of Frederick Senior High School, Alexandria Rivera of Sky View Academy, Victoria Rubio of Silver Creek High School, Anna Schulhoff of Legend High School, and Megan Weigand of Erie High School.

The Congress of Future Medical Leaders is an honors program that recognizes exceptional high school students who are pursuing careers as a physician or in medical research.

These students are the future leaders of the medical field and our country. Through their studies, they have embodied the meaning of hard work and perseverance to achieve their goals, and will better the health of future generations.

Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to recognize these five students for their hard work and service to their community. I wish them luck in their future endeavors.

RHODE ISLAND VETERANS OF
FOREIGN WARS 97TH ANNUAL
STATE CONVENTION

HON. DAVID N. CICILLINE

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 10, 2016

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the men and women of the Rhode Island Veterans of Foreign Wars, which is holding its 97th Annual State Convention this Saturday.