

As on this fine day, your beautiful heart so begins to rise . . .
 For arms and legs we all need, but we can live without. . . .
 But, it's only with our hearts . . . that we can do so not so live no doubt!
 As this Roc, will not so be stopped!
 For Rocco, you have mountains to so climb . . . but to the very top!
 Rock On Rocco . . . On How You So Roc!
 As you have Souls To Heal, and To Inspire . . . as you reach for the top!
 As your fine heart of a comet, can not so be stopped!
 For from that Gotham City, comes your most Gotham Heart . . .
 As you grew up in the shadow of liberty, as Rocco . . . as you have her heart!
 Setting, all others . . . so very far apart . . .
 For you will win! And you will rise, but to the top! For there are Angel's put upon this earth . . .
 All in our Lord's eyes, who so come first . . . so Roc . . .
 To Reach Us, To Beseech Us . . . To Teach Us . . . all in their fine worth!
 For all of Staten Island, is so smiling on this very day . . .
 To have such a fine Son as you, all in what you so gave!
 So tried and true, and in your most heroic hue! You make us all so very proud!
 Such men, and women such, as you . . . who in the towers once ran up to the top!
 Yet, knowing this might be their last hours . . . as still, they would not be stopped!
 There are Angels up in Heaven now Rocco . . . watching over you!
 And if I ever have a son, I but hope and pray . . . that he could be but just like you the fine one!
 The kind who's gold lies within his soul . . . as shone, to everyone . . . all in your most heroic hue!
 For in the game of life, there is but only one way to win that battle! Win, That fight so true!
 Of good versus evil, no less . . . to win that day, that night . . .
 When, Courage Comes To Crest!

RECOGNIZING BRANDEN
 STACKENWAT

HON. STEPHANIE HERSETH SANDLIN

OF SOUTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 29, 2009

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Madam Speaker, on October 30, 2009, I will be proud to host two of my constituents, Branden Stackenwalt and his father, Dave Stackenwalt, for a visit to the U.S. Capitol.

Branden is proud to be a combat engineer with the U.S. Army, serving with the 569th Mobility Augmentation Company, 4th Engineer Battalion. On September 21, 2009, the vehicle Branden was traveling in ran over a roadside bomb in southern Afghanistan. One member of the vehicle's four-man crew was killed and the other three, including Branden, were critically injured. In the blast, Branden suffered severe fractures to vertebrae in his back, both legs, elbow and heels.

Thanks to his enduring spirit and courageous determination—as well as the excellent medical care he received from our Nation's Army doctors—Branden is vastly improved today and on the road to recovery. He was first flown to Germany, and then to the Walter Reed Army Medical Center where he has received care since September 27.

Since the incident, Branden has undergone multiple surgeries to repair his legs. Although he still faces an arduous road to full recovery, he has made significant progress, all the while maintaining a positive attitude. I am quite certain that Branden's personal strength of spirit, along with the loving care of his family, has been instrumental in the progress he has made.

During his recovery, I have had the privilege to get to know both Branden and his family. His parents, Dave and Kim, are wonderful people who love their son very much. Branden also has a younger sister, Savannah, in South Dakota who I know is eager to see him again soon.

Branden is now able to get around well in a wheelchair, and I have learned that he will soon be transferred to the Minneapolis VA facility to continue his recovery. I am pleased that he was able to visit us at the Capitol.

Madam Speaker, it is with great pride and respect for one of South Dakota's brave young soldiers that I rise today in recognition of Branden Stackenwalt and his service to our country. I am so very proud to represent him, his family, and all South Dakotans who serve in our Nation's Armed Forces. I thank Branden and all those who serve for their courage and fortitude in the face of danger.

CHINESE HUMAN RIGHTS ATTORNEYS TESTIFY BEFORE THE TOM LANTOS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 29, 2009

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of my colleagues to the following testimonies of two Chinese human rights lawyers who appeared at a hearing today of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission.

WRITTEN TESTIMONY SUBMITTED TO THE TOM LANTOS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ON THE RULE OF LAW IN CHINA BY MR. JIANG TIANYONG

Dear members of U.S. Congress, ladies and gentlemen:

How are you? My name is Jiang Tianyong and I come from mainland China. I am an attorney and most of the cases I take on involve religious belief, and are usually referred to as "sensitive cases." I am also a Christian and as such a person, I need to worship God in gatherings with my brothers and sisters in Christ. I am going to discuss three things, and I hope I can give you an idea of the actual status of the rule of law and religious belief in China.

The first one is an event I would like to share: On the afternoon of Mother's Day of May 13, 2007, I was praying and singing hymns of God with my brothers and sisters in Christ gathering. It was in a private large room in Beijing. Suddenly, several dozen people broke into the room. Only about a dozen of them were wearing uniforms and the rest were in plain clothes. One of them forced us to stop our activities and to remain still where we were. We were not allowed to leave the place. The intruders claimed that they were law enforcement officers from the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Religious Administration. They said that our gathering was an illegal one and abolished it imme-

diately! They sealed our donation box and took videos and photos of many of us. They also recorded the identification information of every one of us. After that, they conducted a long interrogation. It was after 1 AM that I left the site. Between that day and July 2009, I had no place where I could meet with my fellow Christians in a gathering. This is my experience in China as a Christian.

The second event occurred on April 16, 2009. Attorney Li Fangping and I became the defense counsels for the living Buddha from Burongna Convent in Tibet that day. The living Buddha is the abbot of Burongna Convent and Ya-tseg Convent in the Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Ganzi of Sichuan province. He was charged with weapons possession and functionary embezzlement. However, after a detailed investigation, we found the living Buddha was actually charged for some other reasons. After the March 14 Incident in 2008, people in the Tibetan prefecture were organized by the government to engage in a "Campaign of Education in Patriotism." Monks and nuns were forced to study in the convents and were kept there for a long time. What, then, was the content of their education? They were commanded to criticize the Dalai Lama and to call him a jackal and to break away from him. Every one of them was commanded to trample on the portrait of Dalai Lama and spit on the portrait before he or she was allowed to pass the test. Given such a situation, over 200 nuns from Burongna and Ya-tseg Convents could no longer endure this, and they finally broke out of the convents on May 14, 2008 and went to protest in the streets, demanding religious freedom. As the living Buddha was the leader of these two convents, he was arrested. His case was tried on April 21, 2009 and both of the attorneys and the living Buddha denied the charges. There is still no result from the case, but we worry about the fate of the living Buddha.

The third piece of evidence I would like to share is that starting from 2008, I began to defend Falun Gong practitioners in nearly 20 Falun Gong cases. I have found that the crackdown on Falun Gong is indeed a serious human rights disaster. My clients were arrested simply because of the practice. They were tried simply because they gave practice books to others. Some of them were sentenced to imprisonment just because they distributed materials that expose the facts of persecution. They often face torture and there are special funds, special locations, special people and special tools in torturing Falun Gong practitioners. When Huang Cheng from Jinzhou, Liaoning province was tried in court, everybody could see the scars on his body; Chen Xinye from Shenyang, Liaoning province suffered a bone fracture in the beatings; they poured mustard water into the nostril of Li Zhigang from Harbin, Heilongjiang province; Zhou Huimin from Chengdu, Sichuan province was beaten to death.

When it comes to Falun Gong cases, the law is often trampled and it is hard to safeguard the defendant's right to defense. Sun Feng from Tangshan, Hebei province was deprived of his right to meet with his attorney; Ge Hefei from Handan of Hebei province was sentenced while his attorney was forbidden to intervene. In Falun Gong cases, attorneys are forbidden to defend their clients on the proper application of law or the nature of the incident. They are forbidden talk about the Constitution or human rights. They are only allowed to say whether the defendants did something or did not do something.

I and other human rights attorneys in China are suffering an increasing level of harassment, suppression, and persecution [by the government], because we serve as defense