



CITY COUNCILMEMBER
RIGEL ROBINSON
 DISTRICT 7

CONSENT CALENDAR
 March 10, 2020

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Rigel Robinson, Mayor Jesse Arreguin,
 Councilmember Cheryl Davila, and Councilmember Ben Bartlett

Subject: Affirming the City of Berkeley's Support for the People of Tibet

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a resolution affirming support to the people of Tibet.

BACKGROUND

The City of Berkeley has a diverse population including many Tibetan Americans. A large part of this population is concerned about human rights and freedom in the United States and around the world. Tibetan Americans, including those residing in the City of Berkeley, have expressed concern at the Chinese Government's (1) travel restrictions against Tibetans and United States citizens; (2) restrictive regulations on religious affairs in Tibet; (3) censorship of Buddhist literature and information in Tibet; (4) demolition of Tibetan Buddhist sites; (5) imprisonment of Tibetan prisoners of conscience; and (6) declarations that "Decision-making power over the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama and over the end of survival of his lineage resides with the central government of China"

On March 10, 2020, Californians, including Tibetan Americans, residing in Berkeley and surrounding regions will gather to commemorate the 61st anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising against the Chinese invasion and occupation of Tibet.

The United States has a long history of support to the Tibetan people, including the passage of the Tibetan Policy Act of 2002 (subtitle B of title VI of Public Law 107-228; 22 U.S.C. 6901 note), signed into law on September 30, 2002, which encapsulates policy and programmatic initiatives and supports the aspirations of the Tibetan people to safeguard their distinct identity.

The City of Berkeley was pleased to welcome His Holiness the Dalai Lama, a true champion of world peace and religious harmony, when he visited the Tibetan Community Center in February 2014.

This resolution would establish March 10th, 2020 as "Tibet Day" in Berkeley, acknowledging the struggles and hardships for Tibetan residents of the City of Berkeley. It would also recognize and support current and historic Congressional initiatives on Tibet.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

None

CONTACT PERSON

Councilmember Rigel Robinson, (510) 981-7170

Attachments:

1: Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

AFFIRMING THE CITY OF BERKELEY'S SUPPORT FOR THE PEOPLE OF TIBET

WHEREAS, On March 10, 2020, Californians, including Tibetan Americans, residing in Berkeley and surrounding regions will gather to commemorate the 61st anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising against Chinese invasion and occupation of Tibet; and

WHEREAS, the City of Berkeley has a diverse population, including many Tibetan Americans, who are concerned about human rights and freedom in the United States and throughout the world; and

WHEREAS, the United States has a long history of support to the Tibetan people, including the passage of the Tibetan Policy Act of 2002 (subtitle B of title VI of Public Law 107-228; 22 U.S.C. 6901 note), signed into law on September 30, 2002, which encapsulates policy and programmatic initiatives and supports the aspirations of the Tibetan people to safeguard their distinct identity; and

WHEREAS, on October 17, 2007, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in recognition of his many enduring and outstanding contributions to peace, nonviolence, human rights, and religious understanding; and

WHEREAS, the City of Berkeley was pleased to welcome His Holiness the Dalai Lama, a true champion of world peace and religious harmony, when he visited the Tibetan Community Center in February 2014; and

WHEREAS, The State Department's 2017 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices said of the situation in Tibet: "The most significant human rights issues included: disappearances; torture by government authorities; arbitrary detentions, including political prisoners; and government curtailment of the freedoms of speech, religion, association, assembly, and movement"; and

WHEREAS, Tibetan Americans, including those residing in Berkeley City, have been expressing concern at the Chinese Government's:

- (1) travel restrictions against Tibetans and United States citizens;
- (2) restrictive regulations on religious affairs in Tibet;
- (3) censorship of Buddhist literature and information in Tibet;
- (4) demolition of Tibetan Buddhist sites;
- (5) imprisonment of Tibetan prisoners of conscience; and
- (6) declarations that "Decision-making power over the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama and over the end of survival of his lineage resides with the central government of China"; and

WHEREAS, Tibetan Americans residing in California have been facing discriminations at the hands of Chinese consulates while applying for visas to visit Tibet; and

WHEREAS, the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act signed into law on December 19, 2018 highlights China's attempts to isolate Tibet and seeks to promote access for United States diplomats and other officials, journalists, and other citizens, including Tibetan Americans, to Tibet; and

WHEREAS, since 2009, 166 Tibetans have self-immolated to protest against China's rule in Tibet and most Tibetans publicly call for the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet;

WHEREAS, the city of Berkeley has a long history of support for Tibet and the Tibetan people; and

WHEREAS, The Berkeley City Council affirms the determination of the Tibetan people in Tibet and outside, including the Tibetan Americans, to retain their heritage and protect it from destruction against overwhelming odds through non-violent and peaceful means.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that March 10, 2020, the 61st anniversary of the Tibetan national uprising, shall be officially recognized as "Tibet Day" and the Tibetan flag shall be raised at the City Hall.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Berkeley City Council supports the initiatives on Tibet in the United States Congress.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City of Berkeley stands in solidarity with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the Tibetan people and their just, peaceful and non-violent movement to remind the world of the occupation and ongoing suppression of human rights and freedom in Tibet and the continuous degradation of culture, religion, land and identity of the Tibetan people by China.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be sent to the President of the United States, elected federal representatives, the Governor of California, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva, Switzerland.