

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. _____

Commemorating the 90th birthday of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama on July 6, 2025, as “A Day of Compassion” and expressing support for the human rights and distinct religious, cultural, linguistic, and historical identity of the Tibetan people.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Mr. YOUNG, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. CURTIS, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. RICKETTS, Mr. CRAPO, and Mr. SULLIVAN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on

RESOLUTION

Commemorating the 90th birthday of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama on July 6, 2025, as “A Day of Compassion” and expressing support for the human rights and distinct religious, cultural, linguistic, and historical identity of the Tibetan people.

Whereas July 6, 2025, marks the 90th birthday of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama;

Whereas the 14th Dalai Lama was born in northeastern Tibet in 1935, was enthroned as the 14th incarnation in 1940, and was called upon to assume temporal leadership of Tibet in 1950 in response to a tumultuous time as the

newly established People's Republic of China sent its military to seize control of Tibet;

Whereas the leader of the People's Republic of China, Mao Zedong, assured the Dalai Lama that “the Tibetan people have the right of exercising national regional autonomy” under Chinese rule and conveyed to the Dalai Lama that Tibet's distinct religious and cultural traditions would be respected, as reflected in the Seventeen Point Agreement of 1951;

Whereas the Government of the People's Republic of China, led by the Chinese Communist Party, steadily eroded the Tibetan autonomy to which it committed in the Seventeen Point Agreement through repressive political and military actions, leading to tension, resistance, and ultimately the Dalai Lama's exile in 1959;

Whereas, in March 1959, the Dalai Lama fled Tibet after Chinese Communist forces began shelling Lhasa and has since been residing in India, along with tens of thousands of Tibetan refugees;

Whereas, for more than 7 decades, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama has significantly advanced greater understanding, tolerance, harmony, and respect among the religious faiths of the world;

Whereas the Dalai Lama has led the effort to preserve the rich and distinct cultural, religious, historical, and linguistic heritage of the people of Tibet while working to safeguard other endangered cultures throughout the world;

Whereas the Dalai Lama has been gravely concerned by the degraded state of the environment of Tibet and the unchecked exploitation of the natural resources of Tibet, in-

cluding fresh water, because they have implications not only for Tibetans, but also for the whole of Asia;

Whereas, beginning in 1979, the Dalai Lama has visited various parts of the United States and subsequently gained the admiration of all levels of society in the United States;

Whereas the people of the United States have consistently expressed their appreciation for the culture and religion of Tibetan Buddhists, including through their support of its preservation, and political and diplomatic support for the Dalai Lama in his capacity as a spiritual leader;

Whereas there is strong bipartisan support from successive Congresses and Administrations for the Dalai Lama's vision for Tibet and the world and for a negotiated resolution that leads to meaningful autonomy for Tibetans that ensures they are able to freely practice their religion, culture, and language;

Whereas, on October 17, 2007, Congress awarded the Congressional Gold Medal to the Dalai Lama, finding in the Fourteenth Dalai Lama Congressional Gold Medal Act (Public Law 109–287; 120 Stat. 1231) that he is recognized around the world as “a leading figure of moral and religious authority” and is “the unrivaled spiritual and cultural leader of the Tibetan people”;

Whereas, wherever followers of Tibetan Buddhism reside, including Tibet, the United States, Bhutan, India, Mongolia, Nepal, the Russian Federation, and other countries around the world, those followers look to the Dalai Lama for religious leadership and spiritual guidance;

Whereas the Universal Declaration of Human Rights holds that “[e]veryone has the right to freedom of thought,

conscience and religion,” including the freedom to change religion or belief and to practice it in private or public;

Whereas at least 159 Tibetans in Tibet are known to have self-immolated, with statements or records left by many of them calling for freedom for Tibet and the return of the Dalai Lama;

Whereas, in 1991, section 355 of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1992 and 1993 (Public Law 102–138; 105 Stat. 713) expressed the sense of Congress that Tibet “is an occupied country under the established principles of international law” and that “Tibet’s true representatives are the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government in exile as recognized by the Tibetan people”;

Whereas, in 1961, with the support of the United States, United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1723 called for “the cessation of practices which deprive the Tibetan people of their fundamental human rights and freedoms, including their right to self-determination”;

Whereas the Government of the People’s Republic of China has interfered in the identification and installation of reincarnated leaders of Tibetan Buddhism as part of its efforts to maintain control over Tibet, including, in 1995, arbitrarily detaining the then-recently identified 11th Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, then a 6-year-old boy, and installing China’s own candidate, Gyaltzen Norbu, as Panchen Lama;

Whereas, in 2011, the 14th Dalai Lama declared that the responsibility for identifying a future 15th Dalai Lama will “primarily rest” with officials of Gaden Phodrang, the Dalai Lama’s office, and that “apart from the reincarnation recognized through such legitimate methods, no rec-

ognition or acceptance should be given to a candidate chosen for political ends by anyone, including those in the People’s Republic of China”;

Whereas, in 2011, the 14th Dalai Lama initiated a historic devolution of power to the Central Tibetan Administration, in which he formally renounced his political role, transferring full democratic governance to an elected Tibetan leadership, thereby ensuring a democratic and secular political system for Tibet;

Whereas, on December 21, 2020, the Tibetan Policy and Support Act of 2020 (subtitle E of title III of division K of Public Law 116–260; 134 Stat. 3119) was passed, strengthening the landmark Tibetan Policy Act of 2002 (22 U.S.C. 6901 note), including by—

(1) addressing the issue of water security and environmental destruction in Tibet;

(2) providing humanitarian assistance and support for Tibetans in Tibet and in exile;

(3) stipulating that the objectives of the United States Special Coordinator for Tibet include promoting “substantive dialogue without preconditions, between the Government of the People’s Republic of China and the Dalai Lama, his or her representatives, or democratically elected leaders of the Tibetan community”;

(4) stating that it is the policy of the United States that “decisions regarding the selection, education, and veneration of Tibetan Buddhist religious leaders are exclusively spiritual matters that should be made by the appropriate religious authorities within the Tibetan Buddhist tradition and in the context of the will of practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism” and that the wishes of the 14th Dalai Lama “should play a key role” in the selec-

tion, education, and veneration of a future 15th Dalai Lama; and

(5) stating that it is the policy of the United States to hold accountable, including through the imposition of sanctions, any officials of the People’s Republic of China or the Chinese Communist Party who directly interfere with the identification and installation of a future Dalai Lama;

Whereas, on July 12, 2024, the Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act (Public Law 118–70; 138 Stat. 1488) was signed into law, with the Act affirming that it is the policy of the United States that the Tibet issue must be resolved in accordance with international law by peaceful means, through dialogue without preconditions, and that the People’s Republic of China should cease propagating disinformation about Tibet’s history, and stating that it is the sense of Congress that the People’s Republic of China’s claims that Tibet has been part of the People’s Republic of China since “ancient times” are “historically inaccurate”;

Whereas the Central Tibetan Administration, the institution that represents and reflects to the greatest extent the aspirations of the Tibetan diaspora around the world, has officially decided to celebrate the 14th Dalai Lama’s 90th birth year as the “Year of Compassion”; and

Whereas the 14th Dalai Lama has highlighted the oneness of humanity and has dedicated his life to the promotion of compassion and human values and is considered a leader of compassion by the international community: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

1 (1) recognizes July 6, 2025, as a “Day of Com-
2 passion”;

3 (2) congratulates His Holiness the 14th Dalai
4 Lama on his 90th birthday and affirms its recogni-
5 tion of his outstanding contributions to peace, non-
6 violence, human rights, and mutual respect within
7 and across faiths;

8 (3) affirms the Tibetan people’s human rights
9 and fundamental freedoms, including their right to
10 exercise regional autonomy and to protect the dis-
11 tinct religious, cultural, linguistic, and historical
12 identity of the Tibetan people;

13 (4) reiterates, as outlined in the Tibetan Policy
14 and Support Act of 2020 (subtitle E of title III of
15 division K of Public Law 116–260), that the identi-
16 fication and installation of Tibetan Buddhist reli-
17 gious leaders, including a future 15th Dalai Lama,
18 is a matter that should be determined by the present
19 14th Dalai Lama and within the Tibetan Buddhist
20 faith community, in accordance with the inalienable
21 right to religious freedom;

22 (5) reiterates that any attempt by the Govern-
23 ment of the People’s Republic of China or any other
24 government to recognize a successor or reincarnation
25 of the 14th Dalai Lama and any future Dalai

1 Lamas not selected by the Tibetan people would rep-
2 resent a clear abuse of the right to religious freedom
3 of Tibetan Buddhists and the Tibetan people; and
4 (6) requests that a copy of this resolution be
5 presented to His Holiness the Dalai Lama as an ex-
6 pression of its esteem and respect.