

Michaud Votes to Promote Dialogue between Dalai Lama and China

Tuesday, April 08 2008

WASHINGTON, DC - Today, Congressman Mike Michaud voted for H.Res. 1077, a House Resolution which calls on the Government of the People's Republic of China to end its crackdown in Tibet and enter into a substantive dialogue with His Holiness the Dalai Lama to find a negotiated solution that respects the distinctive language, culture, religious identity, and fundamental freedoms of all Tibetans. Michaud issued the following statement today:

WASHINGTON, DC - Today, Congressman Mike Michaud voted for H.Res. 1077, a House Resolution which calls on the Government of the People's Republic of China to end its crackdown in Tibet and enter into a substantive dialogue with His Holiness the Dalai Lama to find a negotiated solution that respects the distinctive language, culture, religious identity, and fundamental freedoms of all Tibetans. Michaud issued the following statement today:

"Madame Speaker, I rise to urge my colleagues to support H.Res.1077 and to speak about the alarming human rights situation in Tibet and the People's Republic of China.

"In recent weeks, we have seen citizens of the world rising up against the Chinese government's crackdown in Tibet and requesting that the communist regime end human rights abuses. The crackdown by the Chinese government resulted in more than 100 deaths of Tibetans and the detention of thousands more. The Chinese government has also impeded the access of international journalists to Tibetan areas of China. It is time for this body to stand with these protests and act to protect Tibetans and Chinese citizens from further violence.

"Despite the upcoming 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, the government's human rights record remains poor. Tibetans are not the only victims of China's human rights abuses. We must not forget the persecution of Christians, Uyghur Muslims, Falun Gong, democracy advocates, AIDS victims, journalists, and lawyers in China. There have been numerous abuses in China tied to the upcoming Olympic Games, including media and internet censorship, sentences on charges of state subversion of government critics and forced evictions. Human rights advocates are being imprisoned for criticizing the government's human rights record.

"The Chinese government wants to use the 2008 Summer Olympic Games to showcase the progress their country has made. It is my hope that the Chinese government will take immediate and substantial strides to

resolve the situation in Tibet and to address domestic human rights issues in China. Until that time, the voices of this Congress and the world should continue to apply pressure on the Chinese government. The Summer Olympic Games offer the international community the opportunity to speak up against ongoing abuses in China.

"Human rights should be our first priority and our first requirement when we engage with countries. It is our duty to use our economic and diplomatic leverage to make sure that fundamental rights are protected in the world.

"I urge my colleagues in Congress to support H.Res.1077, which calls on the Government of the People's Republic of China to end its crackdown in Tibet and to engage in dialogue with the Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama's movement is not radical and it is not violent. It is time for the Chinese to end their brutal treatment of the Tibetan people. It is time for the Tibetan people to experience the inalienable freedoms and human rights that all free peoples should enjoy. Again, I urge my colleagues to support H. Res. 1077 and I yield back the balance of my time."