

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 29, 2014

Dear Mayor Gray and D.C. Council Members:

As you may know, June 4 will mark the 25th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre in which the Chinese government brutally employed military force to suppress peaceful pro-democracy demonstrators. While a quarter of a century has passed since that infamous event, egregious Chinese human rights violations are regrettably as much a reality in the present as they are a studied subject of the past. The case of the imprisoned Nobel Laureate, Dr. Liu Xiaobo, serves as a stark reminder to the world that China's human rights abuses are as bad, if not worse, today.

Dr. Liu, a Chinese scholar and democracy activist, was sentenced to 11 years in prison on December 25, 2009, on the grounds of "inciting subversion." This was not, however, Dr. Liu's first run-in with Chinese authorities; he was first detained following the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests and ultimately sentenced to two years in prison. He later served three years in a Chinese labor camp for daring to criticize China's one-party system. In 2008, Dr. Liu was a chief author of Charter 08, a political manifesto calling for nonviolent democratic reform as well as respect for the rule of law and human rights in China, and consequently was held incommunicado for six months by the Chinese government. He was not formally arrested until June 2009, and at his trial that December his lawyers were only given 14 minutes in which to argue his defense. His has been a lifelong struggle for basic human rights in China. Dr. Liu's tireless and courageous efforts were ultimately recognized by the prestigious Nobel Committee when in October 2010 he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize "in recognition of his long and non-violent struggle for fundamental human rights in China."

In response to his receipt of the award, the Chinese government placed his wife, Liu Xia, under house arrest, where she remains without charge. In fact a recent *Wall Street Journal* op-ed by Reverend Desmond Tutu, recipient of the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize, and Jared Genser, the international counsel to Liu Xiaobo reported the following about her plight, "Despite living in the middle of one of the busiest and most populous cities in the world, Liu Xia, a poet and a painter, is cut off and alone. Chinese security officials sit outside her front door and at the entrance to her apartment building... Under these conditions, her physical and mental health are rapidly declining. In January, Liu Xia, 51, suffered a heart attack and was taken to a hospital, only to be discharged the following day. She is reported to suffer from severe depression. Previously, Liu Xia had refused to seek medical help because she was afraid of further punishment. Her suffering is profound and inhumane. Liu Xia has no ability to challenge her illegal detention."

In light of these realities, we write to seek your partnership in bringing renewed international attention to Chinese human rights violations. Specifically we ask your cooperation in renaming the section of International Place which runs past the Chinese Embassy in D.C. after Dr. Liu Xiaobo. There is precedent for such an action: In the 1980s, the street in front of the Soviet Embassy in Washington was renamed 'Sakharov Plaza,' after anti-Soviet dissident Andrei Sakharov. By renaming the street in front of the Chinese Embassy after Dr. Liu, we would send

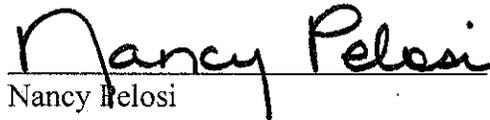
a clear and powerful message that the United States remains vigilant and resolute in its commitment to safeguard human rights around the globe. The timing is auspicious for such a move with the Tiananmen anniversary fast approaching. This modest effort would undoubtedly give hope to the Chinese people who continue to yearn for basic human rights and representative democracy and would remind their oppressors that they are in fact on the wrong side of history.

We appreciate your consideration of this request and stand ready to assist in whatever way may be useful.

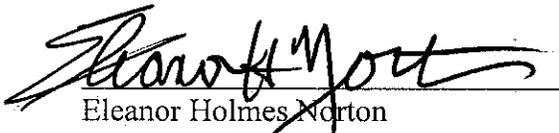
Sincerely,



Frank R. Wolf
Member of Congress



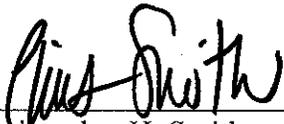
Nancy Pelosi
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



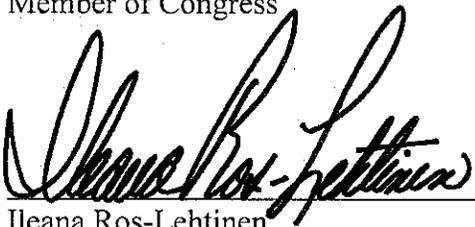
Elijah Cummings
Member of Congress



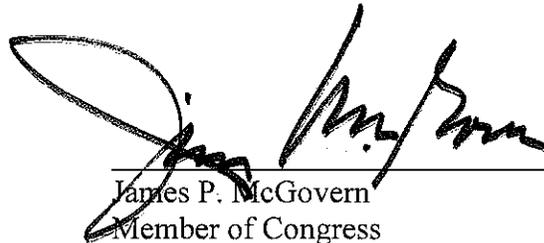
Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress



Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress



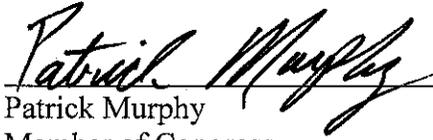
Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



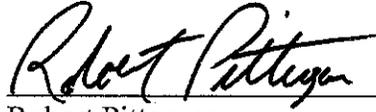
Kerry L Bentioglio
Member of Congress



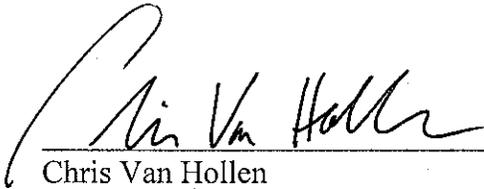
Patrick Murphy
Member of Congress



Randy Hultgren
Member of Congress



Robert Pittenger
Member of Congress



Chris Van Hollen
Member of Congress