



Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader

April 5, 2017

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Northwest
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear Mr. President:

In advance of your meeting with President Xi of China, you have suggested that the U.S. and China “push their bilateral relations to new historic heights.” I agree that this is important to our national and economic security. Part of the U.S.-China relationship must include fair trade and open markets. But human rights are also integral to a fair trading relationship in countries like China that exploit prison labor, engage in other unfair labor practices, and stifle free speech and dissent.

Respect for human rights in China has always had strong bipartisan support in the Congress.

Since Tiananmen Square, attention has focused on China’s dismal human rights record. Under President Xi, it has worsened. China persecutes the faithful, removing 1,200 crosses from churches and other buildings, in some cases destroying places of worship entirely, and arresting those who resist. It suppresses activists who support democratic reform in Hong Kong, imprisons human rights lawyers, and perpetrates disappearances and torture.

President Xi’s government works to control and eliminate the Tibetan culture and religion, including through the gross mistreatment of nuns and monks and even the demolition of the Larung Gar monastery. The Dalai Lama is revered for his spirituality across the world, which has led the Chinese government to fear him and imprison those who express respect for him.

The violations of human rights in China and Tibet challenge the conscience of the world. If we are to be true to our values, we cannot ignore that challenge nor forget the long list of those imprisoned for their religious and political beliefs, including Nobel Peace Prize winner Liu Xiabo.

I believe, Mr. President, that if we do not speak out clearly for human rights in China because of commercial interests, we lose all moral authority to speak out for human rights anyplace in the world. I am writing respectfully to request that you raise the issue of China’s severe repression to President Xi during his visit. Thank you for your attention to this important matter of conscience.

Sincerely,


NANCY PELOSI
Democratic Leader