

115TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 1872

AN ACT

To promote access for United States diplomats and other officials, journalists, and other citizens to Tibetan areas of the People's Republic of China, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Reciprocal Access to
3 Tibet Act of 2018”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 Congress finds the following:

6 (1) The Government of the People’s Republic of
7 China does not grant United States diplomats and
8 other officials, journalists, and other citizens access
9 to China on a basis that is reciprocal to the access
10 that the Government of the United States grants
11 Chinese diplomats and other officials, journalists,
12 and citizens.

13 (2) The Government of China imposes greater
14 restrictions on travel to Tibetan areas than to other
15 areas of China.

16 (3) Officials of China have stated that Tibet is
17 open to foreign visitors.

18 (4) The Government of China is promoting
19 tourism in Tibetan areas, and at the Sixth Tibet
20 Work Forum in August 2015, Premier Li Keqiang
21 called for Tibet to build “major world tourism des-
22 tinations”.

23 (5) The Government of China requires for-
24 eigners to obtain permission from the Tibet Foreign
25 and Overseas Affairs Office or from the Tibet Tour-
26 ism Bureau to enter the Tibet Autonomous Region,

1 a restriction that is not imposed on travel to any
2 other provincial-level jurisdiction in China.

3 (6) The Department of State reports that—

4 (A) officials of the Government of the
5 United States submitted 39 requests for diplo-
6 matic access to the Tibet Autonomous Region
7 between May 2011 and July 2015, but only
8 four were granted; and

9 (B) when such requests are granted, diplo-
10 matic personnel are closely supervised and given
11 few opportunities to meet local residents not ap-
12 proved by authorities.

13 (7) The Government of China delayed United
14 States consular access for more than 48 hours after
15 an October 28, 2013, bus crash in the Tibet Autono-
16 mous Region, in which three citizens of the United
17 States died and more than a dozen others, all from
18 Walnut, California, were injured, undermining the
19 ability of the Government of the United States to
20 provide consular services to the victims and their
21 families, and failing to meet China's obligations
22 under the Convention on Consular Relations, done
23 at Vienna April 24, 1963 (21 UST 77).

24 (8) Following a 2015 earthquake that trapped
25 dozens of citizens of the United States in the Tibet

1 Autonomous Region, the United States Consulate
2 General in Chengdu faced significant challenges in
3 providing emergency consular assistance due to a
4 lack of consular access.

5 (9) The Country Reports on Human Rights
6 Practices for 2015 of the Department of State stat-
7 ed “With the exception of a few highly controlled
8 trips, the Chinese government also denied multiple
9 requests by foreign diplomats for permission to visit
10 the TAR.”.

11 (10) Tibetan-Americans, attempting to visit
12 their homeland, report having to undergo a discrimi-
13 natory visa application process, different from what
14 is typically required, at the Chinese embassy and
15 consulates in the United States, and often find their
16 requests to travel denied.

17 (11) The Country Reports on Human Rights
18 Practices for 2016 of the Department of State stat-
19 ed “The few visits to the TAR by diplomats and
20 journalists that were allowed were tightly controlled
21 by local authorities.”.

22 (12) A September 2016 article in the Wash-
23 ington Post reported that “The Tibet Autonomous
24 Region . . . is harder to visit as a journalist than
25 North Korea.”.

1 (13) The Government of China has failed to re-
2 spond positively to requests from the Government of
3 the United States to open a consulate in Lhasa,
4 Tibet Autonomous Region.

5 (14) The Foreign Correspondents Club of
6 China reports that—

7 (A) 2008 rules prevent foreign reporters
8 from visiting the Tibet Autonomous Region
9 without prior permission from the Government
10 of such Region;

11 (B) such permission has only rarely been
12 granted; and

13 (C) although the 2008 rules allow journal-
14 ists to travel freely in other parts of China, Ti-
15 betan areas outside such Region remain “effec-
16 tively off-limits to foreign reporters”.

17 (15) The Department of State reports that in
18 addition to having to obtain permission to enter the
19 Tibet Autonomous Region, foreign tourists—

20 (A) must be accompanied at all times by a
21 government-designated tour guide;

22 (B) are rarely granted permission to enter
23 the region by road;

1 (C) are largely barred from visiting around
2 the March anniversary of a 1959 Tibetan upris-
3 ing; and

4 (D) are banned from visiting the area
5 where Larung Gar, the world's largest center
6 for the study of Tibetan Buddhism, and the site
7 of a large-scale campaign to expel students and
8 demolish living quarters, is located.

9 (16) Foreign visitors also face restrictions in
10 their ability to travel freely in Tibetan areas outside
11 the Tibet Autonomous Region.

12 (17) The Government of the United States gen-
13 erally allows journalists and other citizens of China
14 to travel freely within the United States. The Gov-
15 ernment of the United States requires diplomats
16 from China to notify the Department of State of
17 their travel plans, and in certain situations, the Gov-
18 ernment of the United States requires such dip-
19 lomats to obtain approval from the Department of
20 State before travel. However, where approval is re-
21 quired, it is almost always granted expeditiously.

22 (18) The United States regularly grants visas
23 to Chinese diplomats and other officials, scholars,
24 and others who travel to the United States to dis-
25 cuss, promote, and display the perspective of the

1 Government of China on the situation in Tibetan
2 areas, even as the Government of China restricts the
3 ability of citizens of the United States to travel to
4 Tibetan areas to gain their own perspective.

5 (19) Chinese diplomats based in the United
6 States generally avail themselves of the freedom to
7 travel to United States cities and lobby city councils,
8 mayors, and governors to refrain from passing reso-
9 lutions, issuing proclamations, or making statements
10 of concern on Tibet.

11 (20) The Government of China characterizes
12 statements made by officials of the United States
13 about the situation in Tibetan areas as inappro-
14 priate interference in the internal affairs of China.

15 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

16 In this Act:

17 (1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-
18 TEES.—The term “appropriate congressional com-
19 mittees” means—

20 (A) the Committee on Foreign Relations
21 and the Committee on the Judiciary of the Sen-
22 ate; and

23 (B) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and
24 the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of
25 Representatives.

(2) TIBETAN AREAS.—The term “Tibetan areas” includes—

(A) the Tibet Autonomous Region; and

(B) the areas that the Chinese Government designates as Tibetan Autonomous, as follows:

(i) Kanlho (Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, and Pari (Tianzhu) Tibetan Autonomous County located in Gansu Province.

(ii) Golog (Guoluo) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Malho (Huangnan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Tsojang (Haibei) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Tsolho (Hainan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Tsonub (Haixi) Mongolian and Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, and Yulshul (Yushu) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, located in Qinghai Province.

(iii) Garze (Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Ngawa (Aba) Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, and Muli (Mili) Tibetan Autonomous County, located in Sichuan Province.

1 (iv) Dechen (Diqing) Tibetan Autono-
2 mous Prefecture, located in Yunnan Prov-
3 ince.

4 **SEC. 4. ANNUAL REPORT ON ACCESS TO TIBETAN AREAS.**

5 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the
6 date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter
7 for the following five years, the Secretary of State shall
8 submit to the appropriate congressional committees, and
9 make available to the public on the website of the Depart-
10 ment of State, a report that includes an assessment of
11 the level of access Chinese authorities granted diplomats
12 and other officials, journalists, and tourists from the
13 United States to Tibetan areas, including—

14 (1) a comparison with the level of access grant-
15 ed to other areas of China;

16 (2) a comparison between the levels of access
17 granted to Tibetan and non-Tibetan areas in rel-
18 evant provinces;

19 (3) a comparison of the level of access in the
20 reporting year and the previous reporting year; and

21 (4) a description of the required permits and
22 other measures that impede the freedom to travel in
23 Tibetan areas.

24 (b) CONSOLIDATION.—After the issuance of the first
25 report required by subsection (a), the Secretary of State

1 is authorized to incorporate subsequent reports required
2 by subsection (a) into other publicly available, annual re-
3 ports produced by the Department of State, provided they
4 are submitted to the appropriate congressional committees
5 in a manner specifying that they are being submitted in
6 fulfillment of the requirements of this Act.

7 **SEC. 5. INADMISSIBILITY OF CERTAIN ALIENS.**

8 (a) INELIGIBILITY FOR VISAS.—No individual whom
9 the Secretary of State has determined to be substantially
10 involved in the formulation or execution of policies related
11 to access for foreigners to Tibetan areas may be eligible
12 to receive a visa to enter the United States or be admitted
13 to the United States if the Secretary of State determines
14 that—

15 (1)(A) the requirement for specific official per-
16 mission for foreigners to enter the Tibetan Autono-
17 mous Region remains in effect; or

18 (B) such requirement has been replaced by
19 a regulation that has a similar effect and re-
20 quires foreign travelers to gain a level of per-
21 mission to enter the Tibet Autonomous Region
22 that is not required for travel to other provinces
23 in China; and

24 (2) restrictions on travel by diplomats and
25 other officials, journalists, and citizens of the United

1 States to areas designated as “Tibetan Autono-
2 mous” in the provinces of Sichuan, Qinghai,
3 Yunnan, and Gansu of China are greater than any
4 restrictions on travel by such officials and citizens to
5 areas in such provinces that are not so designated.

6 (b) CURRENT VISAS REVOKED.—The Secretary of
7 State shall revoke, in accordance with section 221(i) of
8 the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1201(i)),
9 the visa or other documentation to enter or be present in
10 the United States issued for an alien who would be ineli-
11 gible to receive such a visa or documentation under sub-
12 section (a).

13 (c) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than one year
14 after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually
15 thereafter for the following five years, the Secretary of
16 State shall provide to the appropriate congressional com-
17 mittees a report identifying the individuals who have had
18 visas denied or revoked pursuant to this section during
19 the preceding year and, to the extent practicable, a list
20 of Chinese officials who were substantially involved in the
21 formulation or execution of policies to restrict access of
22 United States diplomats and other officials, journalists,
23 and citizens of the United States to Tibetan areas. The
24 report required by this subsection shall be submitted in
25 unclassified form, but may include a classified annex.

1 (d) WAIVER FOR NATIONAL INTEREST.—

2 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State may
3 waive the application of subsection (a) or (b) in the
4 case of an alien if the Secretary determines that
5 such a waiver—

6 (A) is necessary to permit the United
7 States to comply with the Agreement Regarding
8 the Headquarters of the United Nations, signed
9 at Lake Success June 26, 1947, and entered
10 into force November 21, 1947 (TIAS 1676), or
11 any other applicable international obligation of
12 the United States; or

13 (B) is in the national interest of the
14 United States.

15 (2) NOTIFICATION.—Upon granting a waiver
16 under paragraph (1), the Secretary of State shall
17 submit to the appropriate congressional committees
18 a document detailing the evidence and justification
19 for the necessity of such waiver, including, if such
20 waiver is granted pursuant to paragraph (1)(B),
21 how such waiver relates to the national interest of
22 the United States.

23 **SEC. 6. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

24 It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of
25 State, when granting diplomats and other officials from

1 China access to parts of the United States, including con-
2 sular access, should take into account the extent to which
3 the Government of China grants diplomats and other offi-
4 cials from the United States access to parts of China, in-
5 cluding the level of access afforded to such diplomats and
6 other officials to Tibetan areas.

Passed the House of Representatives September 25,
2018.

Attest:

Clerk.

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