

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 5362

To direct the Secretary of State to advocate for the inclusion and recognition of the Central Tibetan Administration, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

AUGUST 7, 2026

Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Mr. RISCH, Mr. KAINE, Mr. YOUNG, Ms. ROSEN, and Mr. SCOTT of Florida) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of State to advocate for the inclusion and recognition of the Central Tibetan Administration, 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,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Assuring the Future
5 of Tibet Act of 2026”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) The relationship between the United States
9 Government and Tibet began in 1908, when United

1 States diplomat William Rockhill met the 13th Dalai
2 Lama.

3 (2) The relationship deepened over the twen-
4 tieth century, including President Franklin Delano
5 Roosevelt's 1942 outreach to the 14th Dalai Lama,
6 the Dalai Lama's first visit to Capitol Hill in 1979
7 and presentation of his Five Point Peace Plan to
8 Congress in 1987, and the first meeting between a
9 sitting United States President and the Dalai Lama
10 in 1991.

11 (3) The Dalai Lama in 1950 assumed the role
12 of head of state of Tibet. Following his flight into
13 exile in 1959, he continued to serve as the formal
14 head of the Tibetan government-in-exile, later known
15 as the Central Tibetan Administration, and in 2011
16 transferred his political authority to that govern-
17 ment, whose executive and legislative officials are
18 chosen by democratic election and which vests execu-
19 tive power in the Sikyong, the chief executive, pursu-
20 ant to an amendment to the Tibetan Charter adopt-
21 ed by the Tibetan parliament-in-exile.

22 (4) It has been the long-standing policy of the
23 United States to promote the internationally recog-
24 nized human rights and distinct religious, cultural,
25 linguistic, and historical identity of the Tibetan peo-

1 ple, as acknowledged and codified by the Tibetan
 2 Policy and Support Act of 2020 (subtitle E of title
 3 III of division FF of Public Law 116–260; 22
 4 U.S.C. 6901 note).

5 (5) The Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-
 6 China Dispute Act (Public Law 118–70) character-
 7 izes the dispute between Tibet and the People’s Re-
 8 public of China as unresolved, states the sense of
 9 Congress that “claims made by the People’s Repub-
 10 lic of China that Tibet has been a part of China
 11 since ancient times are historically inaccurate,” and
 12 states that it is United States policy to resolve the
 13 dispute “in accordance with international law, in-
 14 cluding the United Nations Charter, by peaceful
 15 means, through dialogue without preconditions”.

16 (6) Article 1 of the International Covenant on
 17 Civil and Political Rights, which the United States
 18 ratified in 1992, states, “All peoples have the right
 19 of self-determination. By virtue of that right they
 20 freely determine their political status and freely pur-
 21 sue their economic, social and cultural develop-
 22 ment.”.

23 (7) The People’s Republic of China’s Law on
 24 Promoting Ethnic Unity and Progress approved by
 25 the National People’s Congress in March 2026 con-

1 tradiets previous statutory and constitutional guar-
 2 antees of meaningful autonomy for Tibetans and
 3 other non-Han Chinese populations by statutorily
 4 mandating that education be conducted in Man-
 5 darin, mandating that written Chinese be given
 6 prominence over alternative scripts in public set-
 7 tings, and legally prioritizing national identity over
 8 distinct ethnic identity.

9 (8) The Government of the People’s Republic of
 10 China has provided no verifiable evidence that the
 11 Tibetan people were consulted on, much less ap-
 12 proved, the diminution of their right to autonomy
 13 under the People’s Republic of China’s Law on Pro-
 14 moting Ethnic Unity and Progress.

15 **SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

16 It is the sense of Congress that—

17 (1) the Government of the People’s Republic of
 18 China has reneged on its legal commitment under
 19 the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China,
 20 the Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law, and relevant
 21 international law to provide a high degree of re-
 22 gional autonomy to the Tibetan people, including the
 23 right to use and develop their own spoken and writ-
 24 ten languages, through the enactment in 2026 of the
 25 People’s Republic of China’s Law on Promoting

1 Ethnic Unity and Progress, which instead facilitates
2 the assimilation of Tibetans and erosion of the right
3 of the Tibetan people to exercise their religious, cul-
4 tural, and language rights;

5 (2) the People's Republic of China has denied
6 the Tibetan people the ability to exercise their right
7 to self-determination as provided by international
8 law;

9 (3) the United States has expressed support for
10 the Dalai Lama's vision of a negotiated agreement
11 through dialogue without preconditions between the
12 Government of the People's Republic of China and
13 the Dalai Lama or his representatives or democrat-
14 ically elected leaders of the Tibetan community as
15 one means of allowing the Tibetan people to exercise
16 their right to self-determination;

17 (4) the Government of the People's Republic of
18 China has not demonstrated sincerity or seriousness
19 in its approach to engaging in meaningful dialogue
20 with the Dalai Lama or his representatives or to
21 reach a negotiated resolution that includes the aspi-
22 rations of the Tibetan people;

23 (5) the Gaden Phodrang Trust serves as the le-
24 gitimate and sole authority to identify and recognize
25 Dalai Lamas; and

1 (6) the Central Tibetan Administration is the
2 legitimate representative of the Tibetan people.

3 **SEC. 4. STATEMENT OF POLICY.**

4 It is the policy of the United States—

5 (1) to affirm the commitment of the United
6 States to a resolution of the dispute between Tibet
7 and the People’s Republic of China as a matter of
8 strategic interest to the United States;

9 (2) to encourage the Government of the Peo-
10 ple’s Republic of China to address the aspirations of
11 the Tibetan people with regard to their distinct his-
12 torical, cultural, religious, and linguistic identity;

13 (3) to support the Tibetan people’s free exercise
14 of their internationally recognized human rights, in-
15 cluding the right to self-determination;

16 (4) that the Central Tibetan Administration
17 represents continuity of governance of the Tibetan
18 people as established by the Dalai Lama; and

19 (5) to support the Central Tibetan Administra-
20 tion in its effort to carry out the responsibilities for
21 which it has been empowered by the Dalai Lama
22 and legitimized by the Tibetan people through their
23 exercise of a genuine democratic process.

24 **SEC. 5. ADVOCACY.**

25 In order to carry out the policy under section 4—

1 (1) the President should direct the United
2 States Permanent Representative to the United Na-
3 tions to use the voice, vote, and influence of the
4 United States at the United Nations to advocate for
5 the Central Tibetan Administration’s observer status
6 within the United Nations General Assembly and
7 relevant agencies of the United Nations; and

8 (2) the Secretary of State should—

9 (A) advocate for the inclusion of the Cen-
10 tral Tibetan Administration in relevant inter-
11 national bodies and groupings;

12 (B) organize like-minded partners to sup-
13 port greater international recognition of the
14 Central Tibetan Administration within bodies of
15 the United Nations and other multilateral fora;
16 and

17 (C) ensure the Central Tibetan Adminis-
18 tration has equal access and opportunity to par-
19 ticipate across the United Nations system, in-
20 cluding in specialized and technical bodies of
21 strategic importance, funds, entities, and other
22 bodies as appropriate.

1 **SEC. 6. HIGH-LEVEL ENGAGEMENT AND DIPLOMATIC PRO-**
2 **TOCOL.**

3 In order to carry out the policy under section 4, the
4 Secretary of State or their designee shall—

5 (1) lead interagency efforts to directly engage
6 at the most senior levels with Central Tibetan Ad-
7 ministration officials, including the Sikyong and the
8 designated representatives of the Sikyong;

9 (2) take steps to ensure the Sikyong of the
10 Central Tibetan Administration is extended appro-
11 priate diplomatic courtesies, including the provision
12 of appropriate security details during visits to the
13 United States;

14 (3) consider the applicability of diplomatic
15 privileges and immunities to officials of the Central
16 Tibetan Administration; and

17 (4) urge partners and allies of the United
18 States to engage with and support the Central Ti-
19 betan Administration at senior levels.

20 **SEC. 7. REPORT.**

21 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the
22 date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter
23 for ten years, the Secretary of State shall submit to the
24 Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate and the
25 Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representa-

1 tives a report that describes the steps taken to implement
2 section 5 and section 6.

3 (b) CONSOLIDATION.—After the issuance of the first
4 report required under subsection (a), the Secretary of
5 State is authorized to incorporate subsequent reports
6 under such subsection into other publicly available annual
7 reports produced by the Department of State, provided
8 they are submitted to the Committee on Foreign Relations
9 of the Senate and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of
10 the House of Representatives in a manner specifying that
11 they are being submitted in fulfillment of the requirements
12 of this Act.

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