

As on this fine day, your beautiful heart so begins to rise . . .
 For arms and legs we all need, but we can live without. . . .
 But, it's only with our hearts . . . that we can do so not so live no doubt!
 As this Roc, will not so be stopped!
 For Rocco, you have mountains to so climb . . . but to the very top!
 Rock On Rocco . . . On How You So Roc!
 As you have Souls To Heal, and To Inspire . . . as you reach for the top!
 As your fine heart of a comet, can not so be stopped!
 For from that Gotham City, comes your most Gotham Heart . . .
 As you grew up in the shadow of liberty, as Rocco . . . as you have her heart!
 Setting, all others . . . so very far apart . . .
 For you will win! And you will rise, but to the top! For there are Angel's put upon this earth . . .
 All in our Lord's eyes, who so come first . . . so Roc . . .
 To Reach Us, To Beseech Us . . . To Teach Us . . . all in their fine worth!
 For all of Staten Island, is so smiling on this very day . . .
 To have such a fine Son as you, all in what you so gave!
 So tried and true, and in your most heroic hue! You make us all so very proud!
 Such men, and women such, as you . . . who in the towers once ran up to the top!
 Yet, knowing this might be their last hours . . . as still, they would not be stopped!
 There are Angels up in Heaven now Rocco . . . watching over you!
 And if I ever have a son, I but hope and pray . . . that he could be but just like you the fine one!
 The kind who's gold lies within his soul . . . as shone, to everyone . . . all in your most heroic hue!
 For in the game of life, there is but only one way to win that battle! Win, That fight so true!
 Of good versus evil, no less . . . to win that day, that night . . .
 When, Courage Comes To Crest!

RECOGNIZING BRANDEN
 STACKENWAT

HON. STEPHANIE HERSETH SANDLIN

OF SOUTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 29, 2009

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Madam Speaker, on October 30, 2009, I will be proud to host two of my constituents, Branden Stackenwalt and his father, Dave Stackenwalt, for a visit to the U.S. Capitol.

Branden is proud to be a combat engineer with the U.S. Army, serving with the 569th Mobility Augmentation Company, 4th Engineer Battalion. On September 21, 2009, the vehicle Branden was traveling in ran over a roadside bomb in southern Afghanistan. One member of the vehicle's four-man crew was killed and the other three, including Branden, were critically injured. In the blast, Branden suffered severe fractures to vertebrae in his back, both legs, elbow and heels.

Thanks to his enduring spirit and courageous determination—as well as the excellent medical care he received from our Nation's Army doctors—Branden is vastly improved today and on the road to recovery. He was first flown to Germany, and then to the Walter Reed Army Medical Center where he has received care since September 27.

Since the incident, Branden has undergone multiple surgeries to repair his legs. Although he still faces an arduous road to full recovery, he has made significant progress, all the while maintaining a positive attitude. I am quite certain that Branden's personal strength of spirit, along with the loving care of his family, has been instrumental in the progress he has made.

During his recovery, I have had the privilege to get to know both Branden and his family. His parents, Dave and Kim, are wonderful people who love their son very much. Branden also has a younger sister, Savannah, in South Dakota who I know is eager to see him again soon.

Branden is now able to get around well in a wheelchair, and I have learned that he will soon be transferred to the Minneapolis VA facility to continue his recovery. I am pleased that he was able to visit us at the Capitol.

Madam Speaker, it is with great pride and respect for one of South Dakota's brave young soldiers that I rise today in recognition of Branden Stackenwalt and his service to our country. I am so very proud to represent him, his family, and all South Dakotans who serve in our Nation's Armed Forces. I thank Branden and all those who serve for their courage and fortitude in the face of danger.

CHINESE HUMAN RIGHTS ATTORNEYS TESTIFY BEFORE THE TOM LANTOS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 29, 2009

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of my colleagues to the following testimonies of two Chinese human rights lawyers who appeared at a hearing today of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission.

WRITTEN TESTIMONY SUBMITTED TO THE TOM LANTOS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ON THE RULE OF LAW IN CHINA BY MR. JIANG TIANYONG

Dear members of U.S. Congress, ladies and gentlemen:

How are you? My name is Jiang Tianyong and I come from mainland China. I am an attorney and most of the cases I take on involve religious belief, and are usually referred to as "sensitive cases." I am also a Christian and as such a person, I need to worship God in gatherings with my brothers and sisters in Christ. I am going to discuss three things, and I hope I can give you an idea of the actual status of the rule of law and religious belief in China.

The first one is an event I would like to share: On the afternoon of Mother's Day of May 13, 2007, I was praying and singing hymns of God with my brothers and sisters in Christ gathering. It was in a private large room in Beijing. Suddenly, several dozen people broke into the room. Only about a dozen of them were wearing uniforms and the rest were in plain clothes. One of them forced us to stop our activities and to remain still where we were. We were not allowed to leave the place. The intruders claimed that they were law enforcement officers from the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Religious Administration. They said that our gathering was an illegal one and abolished it immediately!

They sealed our donation box and took videos and photos of many of us. They also recorded the identification information of every one of us. After that, they conducted a long interrogation. It was after 1 AM that I left the site. Between that day and July 2009, I had no place where I could meet with my fellow Christians in a gathering. This is my experience in China as a Christian.

The second event occurred on April 16, 2009. Attorney Li Fangping and I became the defense counsels for the living Buddha from Burongna Convent in Tibet that day. The living Buddha is the abbot of Burongna Convent and Ya-tseg Convent in the Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Ganzi of Sichuan province. He was charged with weapons possession and functionary embezzlement. However, after a detailed investigation, we found the living Buddha was actually charged for some other reasons. After the March 14 Incident in 2008, people in the Tibetan prefecture were organized by the government to engage in a "Campaign of Education in Patriotism." Monks and nuns were forced to study in the convents and were kept there for a long time. What, then, was the content of their education? They were commanded to criticize the Dalai Lama and to call him a jackal and to break away from him. Every one of them was commanded to trample on the portrait of Dalai Lama and spit on the portrait before he or she was allowed to pass the test. Given such a situation, over 200 nuns from Burongna and Ya-tseg Convents could no longer endure this, and they finally broke out of the convents on May 14, 2008 and went to protest in the streets, demanding religious freedom. As the living Buddha was the leader of these two convents, he was arrested. His case was tried on April 21, 2009 and both of the attorneys and the living Buddha denied the charges. There is still no result from the case, but we worry about the fate of the living Buddha.

The third piece of evidence I would like to share is that starting from 2008, I began to defend Falun Gong practitioners in nearly 20 Falun Gong cases. I have found that the crackdown on Falun Gong is indeed a serious human rights disaster. My clients were arrested simply because of the practice. They were tried simply because they gave practice books to others. Some of them were sentenced to imprisonment just because they distributed materials that expose the facts of persecution. They often face torture and there are special funds, special locations, special people and special tools in torturing Falun Gong practitioners. When Huang Cheng from Jinzhou, Liaoning province was tried in court, everybody could see the scars on his body; Chen Xinye from Shenyang, Liaoning province suffered a bone fracture in the beatings; they poured mustard water into the nostril of Li Zhigang from Harbin, Heilongjiang province; Zhou Huimin from Chengdu, Sichuan province was beaten to death.

When it comes to Falun Gong cases, the law is often trampled and it is hard to safeguard the defendant's right to defense. Sun Feng from Tangshan, Hebei province was deprived of his right to meet with his attorney; Ge Hefei from Handan of Hebei province was sentenced while his attorney was forbidden to intervene. In Falun Gong cases, attorneys are forbidden to defend their clients on the proper application of law or the nature of the incident. They are forbidden talk about the Constitution or human rights. They are only allowed to say whether the defendants did something or did not do something.

I and other human rights attorneys in China are suffering an increasing level of harassment, suppression, and persecution [by the government], because we serve as defense

counsels in cases of safeguarding the freedom of religious belief.

Respectively in 2006 and 2008, the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Justice intentionally fabricated complications in the annual inspection and registration of my attorney's license. On July 9, 2009, the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Justice announced that my attorney's license was revoked. We [human rights legal defenders] are often stalked, harassed and threatened by the secret police from Domestic Defense Protection Squad. On special occasions or when foreign leaders visit China, we are often forbidden to leave our residences. For example, when President Obama visits China next month, I will be forced to stay at home. My family members are also often harassed and people from the Bureau of Justice often come to talk with us and forbid me to get involved in some cases. Because our landlords can't endure the pressure from the secret police, they refuse to renew our leases, and therefore we often are forced to move out.

Because we handle cases involving religious belief, Li Heping, Li Xiongbing, Wang Yajun, Tang Jitian, Liu Wei, Wen Haibo, Xie Yiming, Wei Liangyue, Zhang Xingshui, other attorneys and I have still not passed the so-called "annual inspection." Therefore, there is no way we can continue to work as attorneys at this time.

However, legal professionals, including attorneys, members of house churches and other religious believers, have not abandoned their rights in face of the crackdown. The civil society in China is growing and will become more mature. I think all of you present here today should keep your confidence in this. We also need the attention and support from all of you present here today, and the U.S. government.

I propose the following:

1. We recommend that you pay more attention and give more support to the non-governmental forces in China, such as the US State Department's International Visitor Leadership Program, so that more human rights attorneys can participate in the program;

2. We recommend President Obama and other government officials meet with human rights defenders and attend gatherings of house churches during their visit to China;

3. We recommend President Obama can talk with President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao and restore the freedom of Liu Xiaobo, Chen Guangcheng, Hu Jia, Guo Feixiong and Guo Quan. We also hope that with President Obama's visit, we will be able to know the whereabouts of Attorney Gao Zhisheng;

4. We recommend officials in the U.S. Embassy in China make contact with human rights defenders and dissidents more often and more widely, and invite them to attend some activities held at the embassy.

Thank you!

A TESTIMONY ON THE CURRENT STATUS OF CHINA'S LAW ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

(By Mr. Zhang Kai)

As a human rights attorney in China, I am hereby making this statement concerning the current status of its law on religious freedom as well as some suggestions based on cases related to house churches affairs and their human rights advocacy in recent years.

Over the past few years, a large number of Chinese people have been seeking faith and have become Christians. However, they are often unable to enact their everyday religious spiritual life under the law. Christian churches in China consist not only of the officially recognized TSPM churches, but also house churches organized by the believers themselves. The development of house churches was a result of the Christian belief

that Christ, rather than the government, should be the leader of the church. Because of the theological differences between the TSPM and the house churches, many Christians prefer to have religious gatherings with their relatives and families at their own homes.

However, members of these house churches are often interrupted, harassed and pressured by the government during religious services while meeting in their homes, with some believers administratively detained, reeducated through labor, and even criminally punished.

I. ILLEGAL INTERVENTION IN CHRISTIAN BELIEF MAINLY INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING ASPECTS

1. Banning house churches on grounds of being "cults."

In 2000, the Ministry of Public Security issued The Ministry of Public Security Circular Concerning a Few Questions About Identifying and Banning Cult Organizations. In this regulation, the following are confirmed: there are seven types of cult organizations clearly defined in the documents by the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council, and there are seven types of cult organizations identified and confirmed by the Ministry of Public Security, totaling fourteen types of cults. However, of these fourteen cults, eleven are related to Christianity—including the Shouters, the Disciple Union, and the Total Scope Church. Since this regulation runs directly counter to the basic principle of the modern rule of law concerning the separation of the government and religion, it has further led to the direct crackdown on a large number of house churches composed of bona fide Christians, tried or labeled as cults, in the course of law enforcement.

In accordance with Item 1 of Article 27 of the Security Administration Punishment Act currently in effect, anyone would be subject to administrative detention or fines (I) for organizing, abetting, intimidating, seducing and defrauding, or instigating other people into practicing cults or superstitious activities or for using cults or superstitious activities to disrupt security and order, and to harm the health of other people; (II) for conducting activities under the pretext of religion or Qigong, to disrupt security and order or harm the health of other people. This article has led to the confiscation and damages of the large amounts of church assets as well as the detention or reeducation through labor of believers.

2. Punishment on grounds of conducting cross-regional preaching.

In some local regulations, believers are prohibited from cross-regional preaching. However, one of the characteristics of Christianity, as a religion, is that Christians preach wherever they go and spread the Gospel to every corner of the world. In the Provisional Regulations on the Management of Religious Activities in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, it is clearly set forth: "Professional religious people shall not conduct cross-region, prefecture, city or county preaching without approval from the religious affairs bureaus of the government." In one place in Xinjiang, a believer, who went to another church, had barely read one sentence from the Bible when he/she was removed from the position in the church by the Religious Affairs Bureau. In some places, violators of this law are directly given administrative detention and even reeducation through labor.

3. Banning on grounds that they are not registered.

At present, the regulations on religious affairs require that the establishment, change, or cancellation of religious organizations be

registered in accordance with Regulations on Management of Registration of Social Organizations. However, house churches are unable to register independently. As a result, they are banned by local governments or the Public Security as illegal congregations or on grounds that they were not registered.

4. Intervening at will in the religious activities of believers.

According to the surveys conducted in some cities in southern Xinjiang this year, the government religious affairs departments (i.e., Ethnic and Religious Affairs Commissions) of Wensu, Baicheng, and the Aksu area, appointed or removed at will clergymen at the house churches and restricted the normal religious activities such as "breaking of bread" and baptism, without going through democratic elections by believers. Even the programs celebrating Christmas by believers must all be reviewed and approved by the religious affairs departments. Some religious venues were illegally shut down without following any legal procedures.

5. Suspected intention of insulting Christians.

In 2008, the People's Government of Wensu Town even issued a plaque of "Peaceful Mosque" to the Christian Church in Wensu. This action, by blurring the Christian and Muslim faiths, caused a widespread revulsion toward Christians, and may provoke the conflict among peoples of different religions in the future.

6. Large numbers of facts show that administrative penalty rulings are not issued and that fines were imposed without legal and official tickets.

For example, Li Enfu, a citizen in the Wushi area who has believed in Christianity ever since he was a child, had been appraised as an "Excellent Self-employed Individual" several times, even though he is handicapped. Yet, just because he had participated in religious activities, Li Enfu was fined repeatedly. In 2002, this citizen was fined 4,000 yuan and actually paid 2,000 yuan, just because he took a Christian calendar from the Wensu church and this calendar was an official publication of the government. In 2006, he was fined 8,500 yuan for attending a Christian gathering held at his own home. And in March 2009, Huang Ming and Li Enfu were fined a total of 3,000 yuan for holding the gathering and leading the prayers.

7. Punishing Uyghur ethnic minorities in Xinjiang for believing in Christianity.

In the Xinjiang region, it is especially difficult for the Uyghur people who believe in Christianity. They basically operate underground. In southern Xinjiang, there are about one hundred Uyghur Christians. They can only hold completely secret gatherings in groups of two or three people. Last year, their leader, Wusiman, was reeducated through labor, and co-leader Alimujiang was criminally punished.

II. COMMENTS ON THE INEFFECTIVENESS OF LEGAL RELIEF CONCERNING CHRISTIAN BELIEF

When lawyers involved in these kinds of cases provide legal services for believers, they often experience tremendous obstruction. For example, the courts refuse to take the cases; when they do take cases, they don't hold hearings; and when they hold hearings, they do not give rulings.

It is extremely difficult to file relevant cases with the courts, which do not go through any standard legal proceedings. According to Chinese law, if a case cannot be established, there should be a ruling that the case is not established. And based on that ruling, the party concerned has the right to appeal. However, very often, these courts neither process the filing of these cases, nor give any rulings. This year, in the Hanzhong

region in Shanxi, we instituted the relevant administrative proceedings, and the court just refused to take the case. Such phenomena are quite widespread. Although some cases were filed and the litigation fees were paid, the courts kept postponing the hearings. Four years ago, when I started administrative proceedings in the Hanyin area in Shaanxi, I was told by the local political and judicial commission that there wouldn't be any court hearings. Even now there still hasn't been any court hearing.

III. BASED ON THE ABOVE FACTS, WE ARE MAKING THE FOLLOWING SUGGESTIONS

As the aforementioned facts mainly include the harm directly brought upon house churches by the judiciary or law enforcement, we hope that the international community can give more attention so as to increase surveillance and reduce such harm. We hope that the U.S. government will carry out more specific implementations in the following areas:

1. Urge and help the Chinese government to draw up the Religious Freedom Law, which should be consistent with universal values.
2. Have more American officials or those at the U.S. embassy in China attend worship services in house churches in China.
3. Have American government officials or staff at the U.S. Embassy in China periodically communicate with human rights lawyers to learn about their situations.

H.R. 3585, THE SOLAR TECHNOLOGY ROADMAP ACT

HON. DANIEL B. MAFFEI

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 29, 2009

Mr. MAFFEI. Madam Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak on H.R. 3585, the Solar Technology Roadmap Act. By establishing a road mapping process for solar research, development, and demonstration, the bill provides essential aid for the solar industry. I offer my enthusiastic support.

Solar technology presents one of our most promising renewable energy sources. In fact, in my own district, the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF), is conducting innovative research pertaining to solar energy and putting it to use. Several of the buildings on campus have solar panels that provide electricity for the school. The 40-kilowatt photovoltaic array on the roof of Walters Hall, made possible by state incentives, has the ability to generate electricity even on overcast days.

Thin film PV technology and molecular PV technology are of particular importance as they are the future of photovoltaic technology. By using this second generation of solar technology, we will be able to significantly lower costs while increasing conversion efficiencies.

I also specifically encourage demonstration projects in the 1 to 2 megawatt range. Increasing the energy productivity on these technologies, I believe, will have the greatest impact on the solar industry.

I congratulate Representative Giffords on her innovative legislation and look forward to seeing its effect on our renewable energy future.

HONORING THE LIFE OF BILLY HINDS SMITH

HON. KAY GRANGER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 29, 2009

Ms. GRANGER. Madam Speaker, Bill's family asked me to say a few words about my memories of him as I first knew him and as so many of you knew him as you worked with him.

If I were talking about someone else, I would say something like "those of you who knew him in his professional position" or something like that, but that would be such a wrong idea of what Bill Smith was and why we all have such wonderful memories of him.

He was Bill Smith—Principal, Superintendent, friend, cohort, buddy.

I've often wondered if when people are experiencing the "best of times" if they knew it was the best of times.

I didn't know those early years at Richland High School would be some of the best years of my life, the best years of many of our lives, but I knew it was great fun and great excitement and Bill Smith made it so.

His own creativity brought out the creativity of the rest of us.

Whether you were on the ball field

On the stage

In the science club

Or the yearbook staff

He made it important to be a winner and enjoy the role you played.

His own sense of what was important and what was trivial infected us all and has stayed with me for years.

The trivial was treated by him as amusing. He just got a kick out of people and events.

He was a great storyteller and did some very good impersonations, but he didn't have a mean or petty bone in his body.

He loved what he did and he loved that school. The newness of a school can be exciting in and of itself, but the establishment of traditions, the development of an identity, those stay with a faculty, graduates, and a community forever.

He just had so much joy in it all. He was unabashedly proud and loyal to the school—and encouraging of all of us who were a part of it.

The whole community was in such a period of growth, and Bill was such a part of that so that the school and the community couldn't be separated.

It was as if the future were all in front of us, and he had found himself leading the band.

Paula Good said it so well after we talked and shared some memories. She said, "You know, I often felt he was a little bit surprised to find himself in his position."

I agree. And that added so much to the energy and enthusiasm he had.

He was never about his position or title.

And that is what helped him look at it so as to enjoy and soak up every day.

He approached life with such humor and such humanness.

He was funny and fun-loving and wouldn't take himself too seriously or let any of us around him.

He was so positive about everything. The smile never left his face, and the humor was always right on the surface.

I made so many mistakes in those years as a young teacher.

I finally decided to ask permission and seek some advice, but in the beginning, I just came up with an idea and did it!

And when it didn't work out exactly as I had planned, he would walk down to my room, he would put his hands behind his back, sort of lean back, grin and say, "Well, Ms. Granger, what have we been up to now?"

The time that remains vivid in my mind was a day when the school was closed but the yearbook staff was trying to meet a deadline.

They all trooped to the school to meet me but we had never checked to see if the school was unlocked, just assumed it would be.

It wasn't, but one of the kids said, "No problem, Ms. Granger, I can let us in."

He did and we were hard at work, when I walked Mr. Smith, the principal!

Same stance, same words, except he was accompanied by some of the city's finest—in blue uniforms.

A neighbor had reported a break in of the school. They had called Bill and all came to see who had come into the school from the roof.

Ooooh. Not good . . .

From Bill . . .

Same grin. Same question, and some advice he gave to me more than once: "Try it once. If it doesn't work, don't do it again."

That was the way he managed.

He never doused the enthusiasm. Never stopped the flow of energy. Always encouraging and believing anything was possible

With his teachers

With the students

With the community.

There are so many memories of that time and all are good ones.

And every picture in my mind has him smiling and finishing with his chuckle, and he is probably still thinking: "Ms. Granger, what are you up to now?"

TRIBUTE TO RALPH KLAASEN

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 29, 2009

Mr. CALVERT. Madam Speaker, San Clemente, California has been fortunate to have dynamic and dedicated community leaders who willingly and unselfishly give their time and talent and make their communities a better place to live and work. I rise today to recognize and honor one of those individuals: Mr. Ralph Klaasen. On Friday, October 16, 2009, Ralph passed away. He will be deeply missed.

Ralph, a San Clemente resident since 1946, was a strong advocate for the south Orange County senior community for decades, serving as president of South County Senior Services and helping raise funds to build two San Clemente senior centers.

Ralph Klaasen, along with Rex Tyner, co-chaired a successful campaign to build the current senior center at 242 Avenida Del Mar in 1982 and then another campaign to build its larger successor, the Dorothy Visser Senior Center, now under construction at 121 Avenida Victoria.

Ralph also helped rally support to build Casa de Seniors, an affordable senior-housing complex. Through his work with South County Senior Services, he helped establish and administer other senior centers and programs from Dana Point to Laguna Hills.