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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0512

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Dear Friends of Tibet,

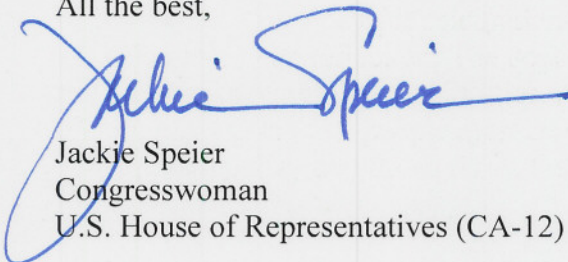
I regret that my schedule does not permit me to join you today to celebrate the 23rd Annual Tibet Day, in San Francisco. I will certainly miss sharing the music, arts, movies, and, of course, the great food, with you all. I am impressed with what a great success the event has become, and, it is no coincidence, as San Francisco has the third largest Tibetan population in the world, we have had the honor to host this event each year.

Today is certainly a day for celebration—celebration of a rich, vibrant culture, but it is also a day for deep reflection. The deplorable condition and treatment of the Tibetan people shocks our global sensibilities. Any government that subverts the civil, religious, and human rights of its people must be challenged. It is absolutely at the forefront of our U.S. foreign policy on human rights that we continue, with fierce determination, to promote a free Tibet.

I am committed to working with my colleagues in Congress to continue the efforts that call on the government of the People's Republic of China to make significant, sustained efforts to initiate an earnest diplomatic dialog with the Dalai Lama. Just yesterday, when asked about Tibet, the Dalai Lama stated, simply, "When China becomes more democratic, with freedom of speech, with rule of law and particularly with freedom of the press ... once China becomes an open, modern society, then the Tibet issue, I think within a few days, it can be solved." Indeed.

My thanks to the Tibetan Association of Northern California and the Bay Area Friends of Tibet, for their passionate dedication to ensuring that the democratic values that we hold dear are always carried forward.

All the best,



Jackie Speier
Congresswoman
U.S. House of Representatives (CA-12)