

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 9, 2008

President George W. Bush
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington DC

Dear President Bush:

We are writing to express our concerns about the Chinese government's continued human rights violations and urge you not to attend the opening ceremonies at the Olympic Games in Beijing this summer. The Chinese government's unwillingness to acknowledge or address their record of human rights violations is in direct conflict to the spirit of the Olympic Games, and the United States cannot just accede to the Chinese government with our attendance.

The recent developments in Tibet, in which Buddhist monks and other ethnic Tibetans were violently punished and in some cases killed for participating in protests, are disturbing and should be unacceptable to anyone who believes in basic human freedoms. Furthermore, these developments also seem to confirm that the Chinese government, which has long disrespected the rights of its citizens, has failed to sufficiently improve its conduct when confronted with citizens who happen to voice a difference in opinion. We believe that your attendance at the opening ceremonies, rightly or not, would send the implicit message to the world that the United State condones the intolerance that has been demonstrated by these actions of the Chinese government.

The Chinese government was awarded the Games on the understanding that it would work to significantly improve its human rights record. Clearly, it has not. In fact, its actions are completely contradictory to the Olympic spirit. We would like to highlight two specific points in the Olympic Charter's *Fundamental Principles of Olympism*:

- "The goal of Olympism is to place sport at the service of the harmonious development of man, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity."
- "Any form of discrimination with regard to a country or a person on grounds of race, religion, politics, gender or otherwise is incompatible with belonging to the Olympic Movement."

The Chinese government blatantly violates both of these points. Some have made the argument that your attendance at the opening ceremonies is more about support for the Games themselves than for the host country. To the contrary, it would show tremendous

support and respect for the Games and the spirit they embody to take a stand against a host nation that flagrantly disrespects that spirit.

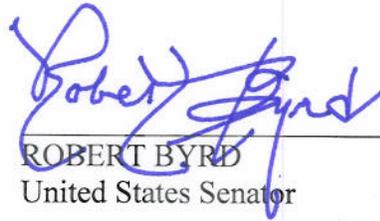
We remind you that the recent developments in Tibet are only the latest chapter in a long history of Chinese human rights concerns. Even in the midst of the latest atrocities against Tibetans, we should not forget the Chinese government's continued unwillingness to use all of its unique leverage with the Sudanese regime to assist the international effort to bring an end to the genocide in Darfur. This issue remains of serious concern to us and many others who have not seen the improvements in Darfur that we hoped would have happened long ago.

If the Chinese government is ever to treat its people with basic human rights, it must be sent a bold and clear message that its record of violence and suppression is completely unacceptable. Few actions can speak louder than if the President of the United States were to condemn the Chinese human rights record with the entire world watching. Refusing to attend the opening ceremonies would accomplish exactly that. We hope that you agree with us that the Chinese government's actions are unacceptable and that we must send a bold message now, while the world is focused on China.

Sincerely,



ROBERT MENENDEZ
United States Senator



ROBERT BYRD
United States Senator



HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
United States Senator