

Reps. Gosselin, Accavitti, Acciavatti, Anderson, Ball, Brandenburg, Caswell, Espinoza, Garfield, Gillard, Gleason, Jones, Lemmons, Jr., Meyer, Miller, Mortimer, Palsrok, Pearce, Proos, Sheltrown, Stahl, Stakoe, Stewart, Taub, Tobocman, Van Regenmorter, Vander Veen and Zelenko offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 84.

A resolution to express the deep concern of the Michigan House of Representatives about the lack of free speech and human rights in the People's Republic of China.

Whereas, The state of Michigan recognizes the importance of freedom of speech and the open exchange of information. Our people have enshrined these convictions in Article I, Section 5 of the *Constitution of the State of Michigan of 1963*, by declaring that freedom of speech and freedom of the press are basic rights. Other sections of Article I express our strongly held beliefs in human rights and freedom for our people, including freedom of religion. The people of Michigan value the free flow of information as a protector of our liberty and recognize that human rights depend on freedom. For people living under oppressive and violent regimes, freedom of speech is especially important to nurture human rights; and

Whereas, The communist government of the People's Republic of China has a history of human rights abuses, including the brutal ongoing persecution of the peaceful practice of Falun Gong. Established churches have been forced underground, and priests and ministers risk arrest and imprisonment for practicing their faith outside of state-supervised churches. The state-run media of China has complete control of the broadcast and print media, allowing the state to suppress information and disseminate propaganda. Heavily slanted information about the September 11 attacks, the SARS outbreak, and persecution of dissidents stymies the development of human rights. This media monopoly extends the reach of the government to ethnic Chinese communities around the world that lack alternative views about China; and

Whereas, In order to help foster respect for human rights, democratic principles, and freedom of belief, the people of China and ethnic Chinese communities around the world need Chinese-language alternatives to the state propaganda engineered in Beijing. New Tang Dynasty Television (NTDTV) was established in July 2003 in New York as a Chinese-language news and information satellite broadcasting channel. As a forum for ideas of freedom and human rights independent of the government of the People's Republic of China, the station attracted the ire of the communist Chinese government. The Chinese government worked to prevent the development of this station, including interference in local NTDTV coverage in Michigan. This pressure resulted in the decision by the French satellite company, Eutelsat, to drop NTDTV transmissions to China by April 15, 2005, contradicting the company's commitment to pluralism, non-discrimination, and the free flow of ideas. The general secretary of the International Federation of Journalists calls this suppression of NTDTV a shocking act of censorship; and

Whereas, Our recognition of the value of freedom of speech, respect for human rights, and freedom of religion makes the actions of the Chinese government an affront to our deeply held convictions. Freedom and liberty require the protection offered by the free exchange of ideas. Our government should strenuously object to the censorship by the People's Republic of China that has driven NTDTV from the air, and work to place this valuable alternative voice back in operation; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we express the deep concern of the Michigan House of Representatives about the lack of free speech and human rights in the People's Republic of China; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the members of the Michigan congressional delegation, the United States Secretary of State, and the ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the United States.