

5. POLICY POSITION

ADVANCING FREE SPEECH IN CHINA

Background

It is not the desire of the Southern Legislative Conference to interfere in the internal affairs of a sovereign nation nor to dictate the form of government of any nation.

It appears a state of war exists between the Chinese people and the central government as a result of the June 4, 1989, massacre of thousands of its own people by the People's Liberation Army.

The Chinese government has imposed martial law on its citizens and has issued an enemies list including student leaders, teachers, workers and prominent intellectuals such as Fang Lizhi and his wife, Li Suxian; have expelled members of the international media, have ordered the army and police to shoot those citizens who foment unrest and have effectively sealed off its borders.

Significant economic reforms have been initiated in the People's Republic of China that have expanded the gross national product by an average of 10% and have raised the overall standard of living for the Chinese people, but because of a lack of a sufficient political reform has rendered a system rife with official corruption, favoritism, and the lack of responsiveness to the People's needs.

United States cities and Chinese cities were beginning to form relationships as Sister Cities and Friendships Cities; trade, cultural, technical, and educational exchanges were taking place. American industry, business, education and medicine were beginning to invest in and form partnerships with the People's Republic of China.

Recommendation

The Southern Legislative Conference strongly supports the rights of the Chinese people to demonstrate for government reforms that insure the basic human rights in a civilized society.

The Southern Legislative Conference strongly condemns the Chinese central government for the brutal massacre of June 4, 1989, and the continuous persecution of its citizens.

The Southern Legislative Conference supports President Bush's decision to suspend a government to government sales and commercial exports weapons to the People's Republic of China; to suspend visas of both U.S. and Chinese military leaders; to conduct sympathetic review of requests by Chinese students in the U.S. to extend their stay; to offer humanitarian and medical assistance through the Red Cross to those injured in the assault on Beijing; to review other aspects of our bilateral relationship as events in China continue to unfold; and continue to protect the lives of Fang Lizhi and Li Suxian.

The Southern Legislative Conference encourages the Chinese government to advance the policies of free speech, free press, and genuine openness which were being expanded prior to the uprising in Tiananman Square and that the Chinese government cease engaging in a senseless war on its citizens and return the reality of a civilized nation. :

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(Sponsor: Representative Mark O'Brien, Kentucky)

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