

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 1, 2010

His Excellency, Thorbjorn Jagland
Chairman
Nobel Peace Prize Committee
Henrik Ibsens Gate 51
0255 Oslo
Norway

Dear Chairman Jagland and Members of the Nobel Peace Prize Committee:

We, the undersigned members of the United States Congress, respectfully nominate Chen Guangcheng, Gao Zhisheng, and Liu Xiaobo for the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize.

Chen, Gao, and Liu form a trio of activists outstanding for their human rights advocacy in China. For years, these three figures have called on their government to substantially improve its human rights record. In so doing they have been remarkable for their patriotism, their civil courage, and the generous tone of their work, which has never sought to divide their country or cause civil conflict, but always to raise the Chinese people's awareness of their dignity and rights, and to call their government to govern within its constitution, its laws, and the international human rights agreements it has signed.

These human rights advocates are making a signal contribution to peace. One of the most crucial factors determining whether the twenty-first century will be peaceful will be China's internal development—whether China recognizes its citizens' human rights and their desire to live in a democratic state ruled by law, or persists in non-representative government and repression. By jointly awarding Chen, Gao, and Liu the Nobel Peace Prize, you would not only recognize their contributions to peace, but you would further inspire millions of Chinese whose hearts resonate with the ideals these three figures have heroically articulated.

Taken together, Chen, Gao, and Liu represent three of the most remarkable facets of the Chinese human rights movement. Chen, prevented from attending law school by his blindness, became a self-taught lawyer, and responded in a concrete way to the injustices his neighbors were suffering—including gross abuses in the enforcement of the one-child policy in his native city of Linyi. Gao is a lawyer who in recent years played a leading role in a movement of human rights lawyers which defends those the government persecutes most harshly, conducting their defense by demanding that the prosecution conform to the law--and thus making plain that the prosecution does not do so, and that the government does not allow itself to be limited by its laws but uses them as a tool of repression. Liu is a visionary leader who has repeatedly and publicly called on the

Chinese government to recognize the human rights of its citizens, most recently as a leader of the Charter 08 movement. Currently, Chen is serving a prison term for his defense of human rights, Liu has been sentenced to 11 years in prison (his appeal is pending), and Gao has disappeared under suspicious circumstances.

Though Chen, Gao, and Liu are three of the most outstanding Chinese human rights defenders, well-known in China, and profoundly respected by human rights advocates around the world, few governments or inter-governmental organizations have the courage to brave the Chinese government's displeasure and honor them. Throughout its history, the Nobel Peace Prize Committee has often distinguished itself by its willingness to award prizes despite the strong opposition of governments. We can think of no one so deserving of recognition as Chen Guangcheng, Gao Zhisheng, and Liu Xiaobo, and no one whose recognition would be more timely or do more to foster peace in the twenty-first century.

Sincerely,


CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
Member of Congress


JOSEPH R. PITTS
Member of Congress


DAVID WU
Member of Congress


LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART
Member of Congress


GUS M. BILIRAKIS
Member of Congress


BOB INGLIS
Member of Congress


THADDEUS G. MCCOTTER
Member of Congress