

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 188

Reps. DeSana, Fox, Jaime Greene, Smit, Beeler, Carra, Friske, Zorn, Fink and Meerman offered the following resolution:

1 A resolution to call for the immediate release of Jimmy Lai
2 from imprisonment and urge the United States government to assert
3 diplomatic pressure on the governments of the People's Republic of
4 China and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region to help
5 secure Mr. Lai's release.

6 Whereas, Jimmy Lai is a longtime advocate for freedom and
7 democracy in Hong Kong. Although Mr. Lai has British citizenship,
8 he chose to live in Hong Kong and pursue a career in media,
9 founding the newspaper *Apple Daily* in 1995, just a few years after
10 the Tiananmen Square protests and shortly before Hong Kong was
11 transferred from the United Kingdom to the People's Republic of
12 China. *Apple Daily* became a well-known, successful publication,

1 investigating local corruption and speaking out against overreach
2 by the Chinese Communist Party. In 2019, when Hong Kong was swept
3 by a wave of pro-democracy, anti-government protests, *Apple Daily*
4 was a strong and outspoken supporter of the movement, printing
5 posters for the demonstrators. Mr. Lai established himself as a
6 high-profile, staunch supporter of the rights promised to Hong Kong
7 under the terms of the Sino-British Joint Declaration on the
8 Question of Hong Kong in 1984; and

9 Whereas, In 2020, the Chinese government retaliated against
10 Mr. Lai and *Apple Daily*, arresting Mr. Lai and charging him with
11 collusion with a foreign country, a crime established by a new
12 national security law that China unilaterally imposed on Hong Kong.
13 Having been delayed multiple times, Mr. Lai's trial under the
14 national security law is currently set for December 2023, and he
15 could face a life sentence if convicted. In 2021, *Apple Daily* was
16 forced to close after the Chinese government raided the newsroom,
17 seized the company's computers, froze its assets, and arrested
18 multiple company executives and a journalist. While awaiting trial
19 under the national security law, Mr. Lai has also been convicted of
20 fraud for violating the terms of a lease, on charges the United
21 States Department of State called "spurious," for which he was
22 sentenced to five years and nine months' imprisonment; charged with
23 conspiracy to print seditious publications; and convicted for two
24 instances of "unauthorized assembly" for his participation in a
25 pro-democracy rally in 2019 and a Tiananmen Square vigil in 2020,
26 for which he was sentenced to over two years in prison; and

27 Whereas, It is unacceptable for the People's Republic of China
28 and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region to weaponize their
29 national security law for purposes of political repression, as they

1 have done in the case of Mr. Lai. The United States and the United
2 Nations Human Rights Committee have expressed deep concern about
3 the national security law and its implementation, and the European
4 Parliament recently adopted a resolution urging the release of Mr.
5 Lai and other pro-democracy activists who were imprisoned for
6 exercising the freedom of speech and expression. Democracies around
7 the world are recognizing the blatant disregard and disrespect for
8 fundamental human freedoms in Hong Kong in recent years; and

9 Whereas, China's 2020 national security law and its
10 utilization for political purposes pose a threat to free speech
11 around the globe, including in Michigan. The national security law
12 purports to apply to violations committed outside of Hong Kong by
13 non-residents, a feature the United Nations Human Rights Committee
14 has noted with grave concern. Michiganders should not have to fear
15 being treated like Mr. Lai if they exercise their rights under the
16 United States Constitution to engage in political speech; now,
17 therefore, be it

18 Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we call for the
19 immediate release of Jimmy Lai from imprisonment; and be it further

20 Resolved, That we urge the United States government to assert
21 diplomatic pressure on the governments of the People's Republic of
22 China and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region to help
23 secure Mr. Lai's release; and be it further

24 Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the
25 United States Secretary of State and the United States Ambassador
26 to the People's Republic of China.