

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 7, 2019

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Madam Speaker:

We write to respectfully urge you to invite Tsai Ing-Wen, the President of Taiwan, to address a joint session of Congress in the near future. This invitation would be consistent with U.S. law, enhance U.S. leadership in the Indo-Pacific region, and justly reward a true friend and ally of the United States and the American people.

As you know, April 10th will mark the 40th anniversary of the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA). The TRA forms the basis of the U.S. unofficial relationship with Taiwan. In particular, the TRA requires “to make clear that the United States decision to establish diplomatic relations with the People’s Republic of China rests upon the expectation that the future of Taiwan will be determined by peaceful means.”

The People’s Republic of China (PRC) has continued to escalate its rhetoric and actions that threaten Taiwan’s democracy and sovereignty. Since the May 2016 inauguration of President Tsai, five nations have withdrawn diplomatic recognition from Taiwan, due to pressure from Beijing. In his New Year’s message earlier this month, PRC President Xi Jinping would not rule out the use of force to “re-unify” mainland China and Taiwan.

Since the TRA went into effect, Congress has expressed near-unanimous bipartisan support for Taiwan, including encouraging high-level leader visits between Taiwan and the United States. Most recently, the Taiwan Travel Act (P.L. 115-135), signed into law on March 16, 2018, explicitly allows “high-level officials of Taiwan to enter the United States, under conditions which demonstrate appropriate respect for the dignity of such officials, and to meet with officials of the United States.” The Asia Reassurance Initiative Act of 2018 (P.L. 115-409), signed into law on December 31, 2018, re-affirms the provisions of the Taiwan Travel Act.

While we understand that the honor of addressing a joint address to Congress is generally reserved for recognized heads of state, there is also clear precedent for inviting prominent democratic leaders. On November 15, 1989, Lech Walesa addressed a joint session of Congress as chairman of the Solidarity movement. On June 26, 1990, Nelson Mandela addressed a joint session of Congress as deputy president of the African National Congress.

President Tsai is a genuine democratic leader engaged in a struggle against an authoritarian and oppressive system that seeks to deny the Taiwanese people democratic rights and fundamental freedoms. Extending an invitation for President Tsai to address a joint session of Congress in this historic year for U.S.-Taiwan relations would send a powerful message that the United States and the American people will always stand with the oppressed, and never the oppressor.

We urge you to favorably consider this request.

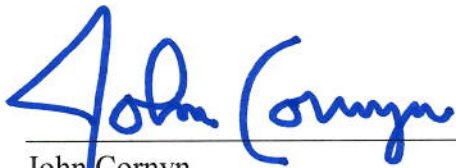
Sincerely,



Cory Gardner
United States Senator



Marco Rubio
United States Senator



John Cornyn
United States Senator



Tom Cotton
United States Senator



Ted Cruz
United States Senator