

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

January 31, 2018

Berit Reiss-Anderson
Chair
Nobel Peace Prize Committee
NO-0255 Oslo
Norway

Dear Chair Reiss-Anderson and Members of the Nobel Peace Prize Committee:

We, the undersigned members of the United States Congress, respectfully nominate Joshua Wong Chi-fung, Nathan Law Kwun-chung, Alex Chow Yong-kang, and the entire pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong, collectively known as the “Umbrella Movement,” to receive the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of their peaceful efforts to bring political reform and self-determination to Hong Kong and protect the autonomy and freedom guaranteed Hong Kong in the Sino-British Joint Declaration.

Hong Kong’s pro-democracy leaders, politicians and young people took to the streets in the fall of 2014 in response to a decision issued by the National People’s Congress Standing Committee (NPCSC) which ruled that only candidates endorsed by a pro-Beijing nominating committee could run as a candidate for the Chief Executive position in Hong Kong’s government. Article 45 of the Basic Law—Hong Kong’s constitutional document—provides that “the ultimate aim is the selection of the Chief Executive by universal suffrage upon nomination by a broadly representative nominating committee.” The United Nations Human Rights Committee has repeatedly urged Hong Kong to enact reforms to implement elections by universal suffrage, in accordance with article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which applies to Hong Kong under Article 39 of the Basic Law.

Through their respective leadership roles, Wong, Law, Chow, along with other pro-democracy politicians and supporters who took part in the largest pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong’s history, demonstrated civic courage, extraordinary leadership, and an unwavering commitment to a free and prosperous Hong Kong that upholds the rule of law, political freedoms and human rights.

Hong Kong’s pro-democracy advocates have made significant contributions to peace by actively seeking to safeguard the future of Hong Kong at precisely the time that Beijing has taken steps to undermine Hong Kong’s long-cherished autonomy. They have shown great courage in the face of harassment, threats, detention, and legal and financial repercussions. In their writings, speeches and political activism they have boldly challenged the central government’s steady erosion of the “one country, two systems” model prescribed in the Basic Law, which stipulates that the political system practiced in China would not be extended to Hong Kong and that its economic system and way of life would be protected.

Wong, 21, founded the student activist group Scholarism in 2011 at the age of 15, and successfully organized protests in 2012 against the controversial pro-Beijing “moral and national education” school curriculum and later spearheaded efforts to garner support for universal suffrage. His efforts, buoyed by his charismatic leadership and unflinching pursuit of peaceful

change landed him on *TIME Magazine* and *Fortune* lists of the most influential leaders in the world. Just this month he was awarded the prestigious Lantos Human Rights Prize by the Lantos Foundation for Human Rights and Justice.

Law, 24, promoted universal suffrage as a student activist at Lingnan University where he served as student union chief. He was elected Secretary General of the Hong Kong Federation of Students (HKFS), the city's oldest and largest student body, in March 2015. In 2016, Law, Wong, and other Umbrella Movement leaders formed a new political party, Demosisto. He successfully campaigned and won election to Hong Kong's Legislative Council (LegCo) at age 23, making him the youngest lawmaker in the history of Hong Kong's legislature.

Chow, 27, mobilized students to peaceful protest as a leader at the University of Hong Kong and served as Secretary General of the HKFS.

Hong Kong's pro-democracy Umbrella Movement is a multi-generational effort, drawing on decades of struggle to preserve and advance democratic freedoms in Hong Kong before and after the handover from Britain to China. Such leaders include Martin Lee, Emily Lau, Albert Ho, Alan Leong, Leung Kwok-hung, Christine Loh, Benny Tai, Chu Yiu-ming, Lester Shum, Johannes Chan, Anson Chan and many others.

The Umbrella Movement leaders face increasing pressure, detention, and financial penalties for their advocacy for democracy and human rights. By July 2017, Law and five other democratically elected legislators were disqualified from their LegCo seats after the Chinese central government issued an interpretation of the Basic Law deeming certain previously acceptable oath-taking behaviors undertaken by legislators as punishable by disqualification. Wong, Law, and Chow were convicted on trumped-up charges of "unlawful assembly" for their activities during the Umbrella Movement and were given sentences of community service. After Wong and Law completed these sentences, the Hong Kong government sought tougher punishments against the three, resulting in sentences of six to eight months in jail, which makes the three ineligible for running for public office for five years. The three were released on bail on appeal currently before the Court of Final Appeal and they face additional charges and tremendous legal costs that threaten to bankrupt them. Just this month, Joshua was sentenced to an additional three months in prison for his role in the Umbrella Movement. Continued harsh measures against pro-democracy advocates will no doubt have a chilling effect.

While the democracy movement in Hong Kong faces tremendous opposition from the Chinese Communist Party and the Hong Kong government, these young leaders have continued their fight to improve the welfare of Hong Kong. Since their release from prison, the trio started working with LegCo members on prison reform legislation.

Wong, Law, and Chow and the entire Umbrella Movement embody the peaceful aspirations of the people of Hong Kong who yearn to see their autonomies and way of life protected and their democratic aspirations fulfilled. Such yearnings are not unique to the citizens of Hong Kong. Countless others around the world, including in mainland China, aspire to the same ideals but their voices are silenced and their protests forbidden. The Umbrella Movement and its leadership are acting in the long tradition of previous Nobel Peace Prize Laureates who captured the imagination of their fellow countrymen and sought principled and peaceful change from within. Joshua Wong's sentiments on Twitter immediately after the announcement of his

prison sentence capture well the optimistic and persistent spirit that animates their efforts: “The government can lock up our bodies but they cannot lock up our minds! We want democracy in Hong Kong. And we will not give up.”

We deeply appreciated the Nobel Committee’s past willingness to brave the displeasure, and outright retribution, of the Chinese Communist Party and government in awarding the prize to Chinese political prisoner Liu Xiaobo, who last year became the first Peace Prize recipient to die in state custody since Carl von Ossietzky, the German pacifist and opponent of Nazism who won the prize in 1935 and died under guard in 1938. Liu Xiaobo’s unjust imprisonment, and ultimately his death, serve as a stark reminder of China’s authoritarianism and deep disregard for universally-recognized human rights—realities that Wong, Law, and Chow seek to preserve for the city they love.

We can think of no one more deserving of the Committee’s recognition in 2018 than these champions of peace and freedom and Hong Kong’s entire pro-democracy movement.

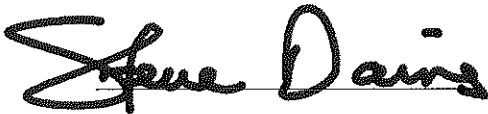
Sincerely,



Senator Marco Rubio



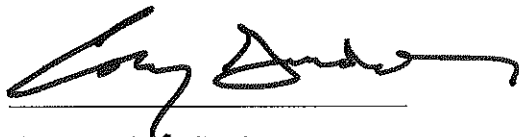
Representative Christopher Smith



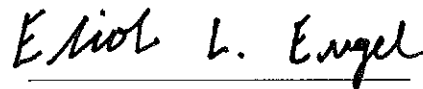
Senator Steve Daines



Senator Gary C. Peters



Senator Cory Gardner



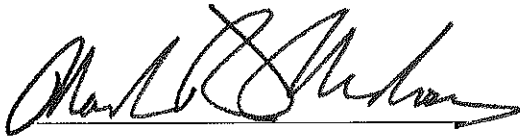
Representative Eliot L. Engel



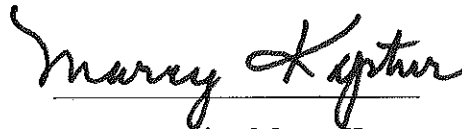
Representative Dana Rohrabacher



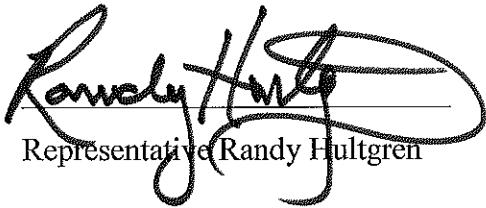
Representative Brad Sherman



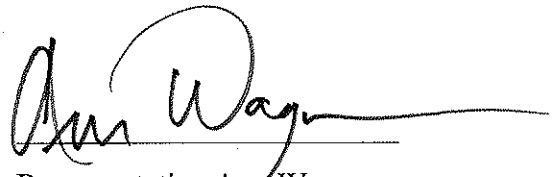
Representative Mark Meadows



Representative Marcy Kaptur



Representative Randy Hultgren



Representative Ann Wagner