

**A RESOLUTION**

**Proposed  
Resolution  
20-855**

*To declare the sense of the Council of the District of Columbia in support of renaming a portion of  
International Place, N.W., for Dr. Liu Xiaobo.*

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the “Sense of the Council of the District of Columbia in Support of Renaming a Portion of International Place, N.W., for Dr. Liu Xiaobo Resolution of 2014”.

**Sense of the  
Council of the  
District of  
Columbia in  
Support of  
Renaming a  
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Place, N.W.,  
for Dr. Liu  
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2014**

Sec. 2. The Members of the Council of the District of Columbia find that:

(1) June 4, 2014, marked the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre in which the Chinese government exercised military force to brutally suppress peaceful pro-democracy demonstrators.

(2) Dr. Liu Xiaobo is a Chinese scholar and democracy activist who was first imprisoned for 2 years by the Chinese government following the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests, then served 3 years in a labor camp for criticizing China’s one-party system. Dr. Liu was finally arrested in 2009 on the grounds of “inciting subversion” after he authored a political manifesto known as Charter 08, which called for democratic reform and respect for human rights in China.

(3) In recognition of Dr. Liu’s long and non-violent struggle for fundamental human rights in China, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in October 2010.

(4) After Dr. Liu’s receipt of the award, the Chinese government placed his wife, Liu Xia, a poet and painter, under house arrest where she has remained since without charge. Liu Xia now suffers from severe depression, has no ability to challenge her detention, and refuses to seek medical attention out of fear of further punishment.

(5) Andrei Sakharov was a Soviet activist who was arrested in 1980 and sent to internal exile in an isolated Russian city where he was kept under police surveillance and repeatedly subjected to searches and heists by the government.

(6) After Mr. Sakharov’s wife, Yelena Bonner, was also detained in 1984, he began a hunger strike, demanding permission for his wife to travel to the United States for heart surgery. Instead, she was sentenced by a court to join her husband in exile.

(7) Later in 1984, Senator Alphonse D’Amato (R-NY) authored an amendment approved by Congress that renamed the land occupied by the Soviet Embassy on 16<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W., in the District of Columbia as 1 Andrei Sakharov Plaza.

(8) Mr. Sakharov started a new hunger strike, renewing his demand for his wife to seek medical attention in the United States. By October of 1985, she was finally allowed to

travel to the United States for heart surgery, and in December of 1986, Mr. Sakahrov and his wife were allowed to return out of exile to Moscow.

(9) The renaming of the street in front of the Soviet embassy was credited, in part, with raising public awareness and symbolically demonstrating to the Soviets that the attention of the nation's capital was focused on this human rights violation.

(10) On May 29, 2014, 13 Members of Congress, including Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) and Congressman Frank Wolf (R-VA), sent a letter to the Mayor of the District of Columbia and the Council of the District of Columbia requesting that District take steps, using its local authority, to rename the street in front of the Chinese embassy for Dr. Liu.

(11) There are times – and this is one of them – when the naming of a street, even symbolically, can advance the cause of human rights in the world.

(12) After reviewing land records, it was determined that the land on which the Chinese embassy sits at 3505 International Place, N.W., in Square 2055, and the system of roads within that square, including International Place, N.W., are owned and maintained by the United States government and are not under the jurisdiction of the District of Columbia. Therefore, the street cannot be designated by the Council pursuant to the process outlined in the Street and Alley Closing and Acquisition Procedures Act of 1982, effective March 10, 1983 (D.C. Law 4-201; D.C. Official Code § 9-201 *et seq.*), for renaming public spaces in the District.

Sec. 3. It is the sense of the Council of the District of Columbia that:

(1) Renaming the street in front of the Chinese Embassy in the District of Columbia after Dr. Liu Xiaobo would send a clear and powerful message that the United States remains vigilant and resolute in its commitment to safeguard human rights around the globe, particularly at a time when the world community remembers the events of Tiananmen Square 25 years ago this month.

(2) The Council appreciates recognition by Members of Congress of the District's prerogative in addressing local issues locally, including the naming of public spaces within the District.

(3) Because International Place, N.W., is not on public space controlled by the District, actions should be taken by the Congress or appropriate federal agencies to rename the portion of International Place, N.W., adjacent to the Chinese Embassy for Dr. Liu Xiaobo.

Sec. 4. The Council of the District of Columbia shall transmit a copy of this resolution, upon its adoption, to the President of the United States, the United States House of Representatives, and the United States Senate.

Sec. 5. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon the first date of publication in the District of Columbia Register.