

July 22, 2020



California, 30th District
Office: (202) 225-5911

Congressman Brad Sherman

Dear Colleague,

Our dear friend and colleague, Eliot Engel, is leaving Congress at the end of this year. I write to seek your support to be Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the 117th Congress.

I have more seniority on the Committee than any returning Democrat. For almost 24 years, I have served on, and dedicated my professional life to, the Foreign Affairs Committee. **I have served on every one of the Committee's six subcommittees, and I have served as Chair or Ranking Member of a Foreign Affairs subcommittee for over 17 years.**

I bring a strong commitment to the values of the Democratic Party. I have voted with our party 99% of the time, according to Bloomberg Government. My most recently available ratings from progressive organizations are: *NAACP, 100%; Human Rights Campaign, 100%; Planned Parenthood 100%;* and the *Sierra Club 97%*. I have consistently stood with a majority of our caucus on major trade agreements.

Next year, the Committee must begin to restore America's international relationships and our standing in the world. America must rejoin the WHO, the JCPOA, and the Paris Agreement. We need to increase our aid to the developing world, improve global health, work cooperatively to contain the current pandemic, combat global climate change, and diversify our diplomatic corps so that it truly represents America.

We need to deploy diplomacy first and avoid bellicose tirades and military deployments. For too long we have relied on a military-first response, while failing to invest in diplomacy, peace building, humanitarian assistance and economic engagement that benefits American workers and the people of developing nations.

We must de-escalate our naval confrontation with China, and we must act so that AUMFs passed nearly two decades ago cannot be used to justify endless wars, or be contorted to provide flimsy legal basis for new interventions. **I have passed into law a provision making the War Powers Act enforceable by tying it to Congress' near absolute authority over the expenditure of funds.** As Chair, I will work tirelessly to assert the rights of Congress under the Constitution and the War Powers Act to prevent military interventions not explicitly authorized by Congress.

The front pages of our newspapers focus on crises with Russia, China and the Middle East. I believe the Committee should focus on Africa and Latin America. By focusing our diplomacy, foreign aid, and international cooperation in these regions, we will be able to build important partnerships with the countries there, and prevent future crises.

My work on human rights has been inspired by my wife, Lisa, who has worked for 20 years in the State Department's *Bureau of Democracy and Human Rights*, chiefly on promoting democracy in East Africa. I have actively championed human rights and democratic freedoms, and recently chaired a series of three subcommittee hearings on human rights in Asia, including the Muslim Uyghurs of China, whom our President was so anxious to sell out. Earlier this month, I passed into law the *Hong Kong Autonomy Act (H.R. 7440)*, the principal Congressional effort to prevent further erosion of Hong Kong's freedoms.

For over two decades, I've done everything asked of me, and more, to increase the number of Democrats serving in the House. In addition, at the request of Leadership, I have helped scores of Democratic members design and implement their mail and email programs.

I represent a diverse majority-minority district; half of my constituents are immigrants and their families. I have learned how to involve interested constituencies in the efforts of our Committee, particularly in the fight for human rights.

Should you grant me the privilege of serving as Chair of the Committee, I would represent not just myself and my district, but all Democratic members. I will seek your views and those of all our Democratic colleagues, in order to pass legislation that reflects our values.

It has been a tradition for the Democratic Chair of the full Foreign Affairs Committee to provide subcommittee chairs with the opportunity to appoint three of their own staff members, paid for by the committee budget. I intend to continue that tradition because I believe that effective subcommittee chairs are an excellent way to empower many talented members of our caucus. Traditionally, Foreign Affairs Committee mark-ups have been by consensus. I would depart from that tradition to pass bills that reflect Democratic priorities, even over the objections of the minority party.

I look forward to listening to your ideas on how we can best use the Foreign Affairs Committee to advance our values. Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brad Sherman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Brad Sherman