



ONE HUNDRED SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
REPRESENTATIVE JAMES P. MCGOVERN, CHAIRMAN
SENATOR MARCO RUBIO, COCHAIRMAN

January 14, 2020

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

We write to express our deep concern about the Chinese government's imprisonment or arbitrary detention of U.S. citizens and permanent residents in China as well as its unacceptable use of "exit bans" on Americans in China—a practice that prevents them from leaving China and is reportedly being used to coerce settlement of business disputes or force their cooperation in investigations of their relatives living outside China. We request that you meet with the families of Americans whose loved ones are being held in China and that you persistently raise the following cases in discussions with Chairman Xi Jinping and other senior Chinese officials:

- **John Cao:** In March 2018, Pastor John Cao (Cao Sanqiang) was sentenced to seven years in prison for allegedly "organizing others to illegally cross the border." Pastor Cao is a legal permanent resident who resides in North Carolina and his wife and two adult children are U.S. citizens. Cao spent years building schools and providing economic assistance to ethnic minority communities in Myanmar (Burma). His family is concerned about his deteriorating health. The U.N. Working Group on Arbitrary Detention concluded in September 2019 that Pastor Cao was arbitrarily detained and asked the Chinese government to release him immediately and compensate him for his unlawful detention.
- **Kai Li:** In September 2016, businessman Kai Li, a U.S. citizen, was taken into custody by Chinese authorities on state security charges. The authorities did not notify the U.S. Embassy while they held Li for two months in Residential Surveillance at a Designated Location—a form of incommunicado detention that can last up to six months, restricts access to counsel, and places detainees at risk of abuse by authorities. In July 2018, he was sentenced to ten years in prison following a one-hour secret trial held in August 2017. U.S. diplomats were prevented from attending his trial. His family reports that

prison officials have arbitrarily restricted Li's access to communications and have threatened him for writing letters to elected U.S. Government officials.

- **Jacob Harlan and Alyssa Petersen:** Detained in September 2019, these two American citizens ran an English-language teaching company in China. The two are reportedly being held in the city of Zhenjiang in Jiangsu Province on suspicion of “organizing others to illegally cross the border”—the same charge used to sentence Pastor Cao. Petersen's family claims that she was held incommunicado for two weeks and located only after State Department intervention. Their detention coincided with the arrest of a Chinese official in New York on visa fraud charges, raising speculation that the case was an act of retaliation by the Chinese government. The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs claims to have released Harlan and Peterson on “bail.” Nevertheless, according to their families, both were detained again on December 30, 2019.
- **David Lin:** Detained in 2006 while waiting for approval to build a church, American Pastor David Lin was convicted on charges related to fraud and given a life sentence, which was recently reduced. He is now scheduled to be released in 2030. His family is concerned for his physical and emotional health and believes that he has been subjected to possible mistreatment in detention.
- **Victor and Cynthia Liu:** Since the summer of 2018, the Liu siblings have been prevented from leaving China under an “exit ban.” Their mother, Sandra Han, is currently detained on criminal charges in China, though authorities have not criminally detained the two adult children. The family's New York-based attorney believes they are being used as human collateral to coerce their father, Liu Changming, to return to China to face fraud charges.

We know there are other American citizens prevented from leaving China, including those whose cases are not public. The use of “exit bans” amounts to *de facto* hostage taking and violates the Chinese government's obligations under Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and also may violate the U.S.-China Consular Convention as well. We ask that you continue to vigorously push back against the Chinese government's use of a tool that disproportionately targets American citizens of Chinese descent.

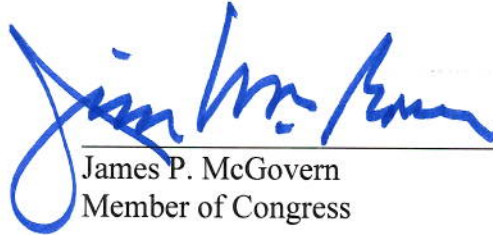
In addition to raising the cases of Americans mentioned in this letter with Chairman Xi and other senior Chinese officials, we ask that you seek the release of the family members of American citizens and legal permanent residents detained in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR). These family members, like the Americans mentioned above, need the Administration to be tenacious advocates for them and the estimated 1.8 million ethnic Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims arbitrarily detained in the XUAR.

Thank you for your consideration of our requests.

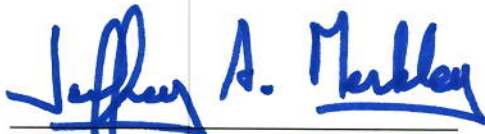
Sincerely,



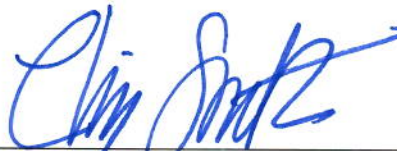
Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Jeffrey A. Merkley
U.S. Senator



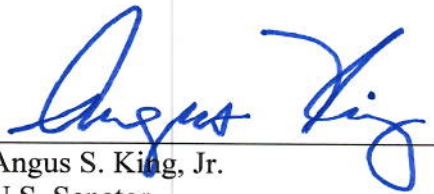
Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress



Tom Cotton
U.S. Senator



Thomas R. Suozzi
Member of Congress



Angus S. King, Jr.
U.S. Senator



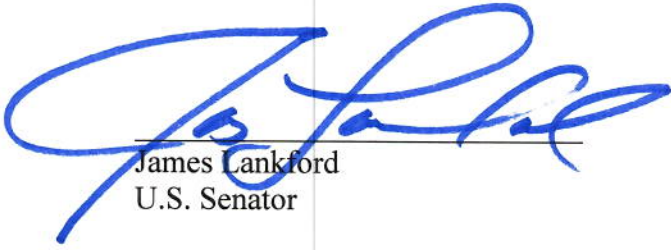
Vicky Hartzler
Member of Congress




Steve Daines
U.S. Senator



Tom Malinowski
Member of Congress



James Lankford
U.S. Senator



Brian Mast
Member of Congress



Ben McAdams
Member of Congress