

United States Senate

February 23, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

We write to urge you to implement the proposed rule requiring that educational institutions participating in the Student and Exchange Visitor Program report on their contracts with Confucius Institutes. We also stand in support of our colleagues in the House, who have similarly written to you in support of the proposed rule. Confucius Institutes are a tool of the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) propaganda efforts in the United States, and we must protect our nation's students by enforcing transparency.

We have significant concerns regarding the CCP's nefarious actions and urge you to follow through on your commitments to advancing the interests of the American people as we collectively respond to the challenge that the CCP poses. We believe it is critically important to better understand and reduce the CCP's influence on the American people, including through the Hanban, its propaganda arm that runs Confucius Institutes through the PRC Ministry of Education. The proposed rule is a necessary step in that effort and would bring needed transparency to Confucius Institutes.

The Senate, including the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee via the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, has repeatedly conducted oversight of the problematic presence of Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms in American campuses. Such oversight uncovered serious concerns about academic freedom and the CCP's long-term goal to exert political influence over U.S. elites through our education system, as detailed in its report, "China's Impact on The U.S. Education System:"

"Confucius Institute funding comes with strings that can compromise academic freedom... The Chinese teachers sign contracts with the Chinese government pledging they will not damage the national interests of China. Such limitations attempt to export China's censorship of political debate and prevent discussion of potentially politically sensitive topics... Confucius Institutes exist as one part of China's broader, long-term strategy. Through Confucius Institutes, the Chinese government is attempting to change the impression in the United States and around the world that China is an economic and security threat. Confucius Institutes' soft power encourages complacency towards China's pervasive, long-term initiatives against both government critics at home and businesses and academic institutions abroad."

Many in Congress have worked for years on bipartisan efforts to raise awareness in their states of the problems associated with CCP funding in our institutions of higher learning, and believe that this rule will serve as a tool in our efforts to heighten public awareness of the risks of Confucius Institutes.

While we understand that your administration may be engaged in a broad review of regulatory actions, we believe that the proposed rule is necessary to enhance our understanding the reach of the CCP in the U.S. and urge you to implement it, or a similar rule, swiftly.

Respectfully,



Mitt Romney
United States Senator



Charles E. Grassley
United States Senator



Rob Portman
United States Senator



Marco Rubio
United States Senator