

## TLHRC Hearing Organ Harvesting 5.12.22

Good morning and thank you to our co-chairs, my good friend Chris Smith and James McGovern for holding this hearing today. China has a long history using a variety of repressive methods as a part of a genocidal campaign to forcibly remove the people and culture of certain religious and ethnic minorities within China. The topic of today's hearing, organ harvesting, has for too long been sweep under the rug by the international community.

While this heinous practice has been used against a variety of ethnic and religious groups like the Uyghurs, Tibetans, Muslims, and Christians, Falun Gong practitioners in particular have been the target of the CCP. Falun Gong is a traditional spiritual discipline founded in 1992 and only 4 years later started facing oppression from the state, which has only increased in intensity.

Falun Gong practitioners suffer from persecution, intimidation, imprisonment, torture, and even death at the hands of the CCP solely because of adherence to their personal beliefs. They are the main source of organs illegally harvested by the Chinese government and are particularly targeted for other brutal treatment and torture while being held in Chinese prisons, concentration camps, and detention facilities.

This is not something that just affects people in China, but even my constituents. My constituent, You Zhou, and his family are Falun Gong practitioners. Months ago, his father, was abducted from his home in China without any charge being leveled or any notification to his family. Weeks later, You finally heard news of his abduction, but the local police station and detention center would not confirm his father's status or allow anyone to communicate with him. You contacted my office, and I was able to write a letter on his family's behalf to the Chinese government. Weeks later and with pressure from my office, the local police finally confirmed the imprisonment of his father and the charge he was being held with. I have since sent follow up letters to the Chinese government, continuing to advocate on Deyong Zhou's behalf and against his unjust imprisonment.

The United States and our allies must send a strong and unwavering message in defense of basic human rights and protections for all people. I'm encouraged by EU High Representative Josep Borrell's recent statement on China's organ harvesting, asserting that "respect for human rights is not an option." The right to worship and freedom of belief must be protected throughout the globe. No person should ever be intimidated, forced from their ancestral homeland, imprisoned, or murdered because of their beliefs.

This has been something I've fought for my entire congressional career as the co-chair of the International Religious Freedom Caucus and as a member of the Executive Committee for this commission. I'm a proud cosponsor of my friend's bill, the Stop Forced Organ Harvesting Act of 2021, and thank him for his leadership on this issue. I am also a proud cosponsor of the Falun Gong Protection Act.

I will continue to work with my friend and our likeminded colleagues to get these bills passed into law. It's passed time we stop China's brutal treatment of its own citizens.

I yield back to the chair.