

117TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 4821

To hold accountable senior officials of the Government of the People's Republic of China who are responsible for, complicit in, or have directly persecuted Christians in China, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 29, 2021

Mrs. HARTZLER (for herself, Mr. DUNCAN, Mr. GALLAGHER, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. ADERHOLT, Mr. LATTA, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Ms. SALAZAR, Mr. TIMMONS, Mr. GOOD of Virginia, Mr. HICE of Georgia, Mr. BUDD, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. STEUBE, Mr. GUEST, Mr. GOHMERT, Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS, Mr. GAETZ, Mr. BABIN, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. BROOKS, Mrs. WAGNER, Mr. PFLUGER, Mr. RESCHENTHALER, Mr. GROTHMAN, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Ms. LETLOW, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. MANN, Mr. WALTZ, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. OWENS, Mr. BUCK, Mrs. MILLER of Illinois, and Ms. STEFANIK) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committees on the Judiciary, and Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

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## A BILL

To hold accountable senior officials of the Government of the People's Republic of China who are responsible for, complicit in, or have directly persecuted Christians in China, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Combating the Perse-  
3 cution of Christians in China Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 Congress makes the following findings:

6 (1) According to the Department of State’s  
7 International Religious Freedom reports, there are  
8 an estimated 12,000,000 Chinese Catholics and  
9 60,000,000 to 80,000,000 Chinese Protestants wor-  
10 shipping in both officially registered and unregistered  
11 churches in China.

12 (2) The practice of Christianity is overseen by  
13 four major entities: Three-Self Patriotic Movement,  
14 the China Christian Council, the Chinese Patriotic  
15 Catholic Association, and the Bishops Conference of  
16 Catholic Church in China.

17 (3) The activities of state-sanctioned religious  
18 organizations are regulated by the Chinese Com-  
19 munist Party, which manages all aspects of religious  
20 life.

21 (4) The Chinese Communist Party is actively  
22 seeking to control, govern, and manipulate all as-  
23 pects of faith through the “Sinicization of Religion”,  
24 a process intended to shape religious traditions and  
25 doctrines so they conform with the objectives of the  
26 Chinese Communist Party.

1           (5) On February 1, 2018, the Chinese govern-  
2           ment implemented new religious regulations that im-  
3           posed restrictions on Chinese contacts with overseas  
4           religious organizations, required government ap-  
5           proval for religious schools, websites, and any online  
6           religious service, and effectively banned unauthorized  
7           religious gatherings and teachings.

8           (6) Since February 1, 2018, forced closures of  
9           churches, arbitrary detention, and arrest of Chris-  
10          tian clergy and practitioners have steadily increased,  
11          including the arrest and 9-year prison sentence of  
12          Pastor Wang Yi of the Early Rain Covenant  
13          Church.

14          (7) In September 2018, the Holy See an-  
15          nounced that a Provisional Agreement on the ap-  
16          pointment of bishops had been signed with the Chi-  
17          nese government; however, several news sources have  
18          reported that since the agreement was signed Chi-  
19          nese authorities have detained clergy, pressured  
20          them to join an “independent church”, closed unreg-  
21          istered churches, and removed children from church-  
22          es.

23          (8) There are credible reports of Chinese au-  
24          thorities raiding house churches, removing crosses,  
25          confiscating religious paraphernalia, installing sur-

1       veillance cameras on church property, pressuring  
2       churches to sing songs of the Chinese Communist  
3       Party and display the national flag during commu-  
4       nity worship, forcing churches to replace images of  
5       Jesus Christ or the Virgin Mary with pictures of  
6       President Xi Jinping, and banning children and stu-  
7       dents from attending church services.

8               (9) It has been reported that China is rewriting  
9       and will issue a version of the Bible with the “cor-  
10      rect understanding” of the text according to the Chi-  
11      nese Communist Party.

12              (10) According to the Department of State’s  
13      International Religious Freedom reports, the Chi-  
14      nese government has imprisoned thousands of indi-  
15      viduals of all faiths for practicing their religious be-  
16      liefs and often labels them as “cults”.

17              (11) Prisoners include Pastor Zhang Shaojie, a  
18      Three-Self church pastor from Nanle County in Chi-  
19      na’s central Henan was sentenced in July 2014 to  
20      12 years in prison for “gathering a crowd to disrupt  
21      the public order”, and Pastor John Cao, a United  
22      States permanent resident from Greensboro, North  
23      Carolina, who was sentenced for 7 years in prison in  
24      March 2018 under contrived charges of organizing  
25      illegal border crossings.

1           (12) Since 1999, the Department of State has  
2           designated China as a country of particular concern  
3           under the International Religious Freedom Act of  
4           1998.

5           (13) The Bipartisan Congressional Trade Prior-  
6           ities and Accountability Act of 2015 states that the  
7           United States overall trade negotiating objectives  
8           must “take into account conditions relating to reli-  
9           gious freedom of any party to negotiations for a  
10          trade agreement with the United States”.

11          (14) The National Security Strategy of the  
12          United States issued in 2017, 2015, 2006, 2002,  
13          1999, 1998, and 1997, committed the United States  
14          to promoting international religious freedom to ad-  
15          vance the security, economic, and other national in-  
16          terests of the United States.

17 **SEC. 3. STATEMENT OF POLICY.**

18          (a) **HOLDING CHINESE OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLE**  
19 **FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ABUSES TARGETING CHINESE**  
20 **CHRISTIANS.**—It is the policy of the United States to con-  
21 sider senior officials of the Government of the People’s  
22 Republic of China who are responsible for, complicit in,  
23 or have directly persecuted Christians in China to have  
24 committed—

1           (1) a gross violation of internationally recog-  
2 nized human rights for purposes of imposing sanc-  
3 tions with respect to such officials under the Global  
4 Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act (22  
5 U.S.C. 2656 note); and

6           (2) a particularly severe violation of religious  
7 freedom for purposes of applying section  
8 212(a)(2)(G) of the Immigration and Nationality  
9 Act (8 U.S.C. 1182(a)(2)(G)) with respect to such  
10 officials.

11       (b) ENSURING TRADE NEGOTIATIONS CONSIDER RE-  
12 LIGIOUS FREEDOM CONDITIONS.—It is the policy of the  
13 United States to ensure that trade negotiations with  
14 China include religious freedom conditions as mandated  
15 by the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Ac-  
16 countability Act of 2015 (19 U.S.C. 4201 et seq.).

17       (c) DEPARTMENT OF STATE PROGRAMMING TO PRO-  
18 MOTE RELIGIOUS FREEDOM FOR CHINESE CHRIS-  
19 TIAN.—Consistent with section 401 of the Frank R. Wolf  
20 International Religious Freedom Act (Public Law 114–  
21 281; 130 Stat. 1436), of the funds available to the Depart-  
22 ment of State for international religious freedom pro-  
23 grams, the Ambassador-at-Large for International Reli-  
24 gious Freedom should support efforts to protect and pro-  
25 mote international religious freedom in China and for pro-

1 grams to protect Christians in China and other religious  
2 groups.

3 (d) REDESIGNATION OF CHINA AS A COUNTRY OF  
4 PARTICULAR CONCERN.—It is the policy of the United  
5 States to continue to redesignate China as a “country of  
6 particular concern”, as long as China continues to engage  
7 in systematic and egregious religious freedom violations,  
8 as defined by the International Religious Freedom Act of  
9 1998 (Public Law 105–292).

10 (e) INTERNATIONAL MINISTERIAL TO ADVANCE RE-  
11 LIGIOUS FREEDOM.—It is the policy of the United States  
12 that the Department of State will host once every two  
13 years the Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom in  
14 order to bring together leaders from around the world to  
15 discuss the challenges facing religious freedom, identify  
16 means to address religious persecution and discrimination  
17 worldwide, and promote great respect for and preservation  
18 of religious liberty.

19 **SEC. 4. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

20 It is the sense of Congress that the United States  
21 should promote religious freedom in China by—

22 (1) strengthening religious freedom diplomacy  
23 on behalf of Christians and other religious minorities  
24 facing restrictions in China;

1           (2) raising cases relating to religious or political  
2 prisoners at the highest levels with Chinese officials  
3 because experience demonstrates that consistently  
4 raising prisoner cases can result in improved treat-  
5 ment, reduced sentences, or in some cases, release  
6 from custody, detention, or imprisonment;

7           (3) encouraging Members of Congress to  
8 “adopt” a prisoner of conscience in China through  
9 the Lantos Human Rights Commission’s “Defending  
10 Freedom Project”, raise the case with Chinese offi-  
11 cials, and work publicly for their release;

12           (4) calling on the Chinese Government to un-  
13 conditionally release religious and political prisoners  
14 or, at the very least, ensure that detainees are treat-  
15 ed humanely with access to family, the lawyer of  
16 their choice, independent medical care, and the abil-  
17 ity to practice their faith while in detention; and

18           (5) encouraging the global faith community to  
19 speak in solidarity with the persecuted religious  
20 groups in China, including Christians.

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