

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 543

Recognizing Hong Kong’s bilateral relationship with the United States, condemning the interference of the People’s Republic of China in Hong Kong’s affairs, and supporting the people of Hong Kong’s right to protest.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AUGUST 30, 2019

Mr. SHERMAN (for himself, Mrs. WAGNER, Mr. CONNOLLY, and Mr. YOHO) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Recognizing Hong Kong’s bilateral relationship with the United States, condemning the interference of the People’s Republic of China in Hong Kong’s affairs, and supporting the people of Hong Kong’s right to protest.

Whereas the United States-Hong Kong Policy Act of 1992 (Public Law 102–383) states that—

(1) “[s]upport for democratization is a fundamental principle of United States foreign policy”;

(2) “the human rights of the people of Hong Kong are of great importance to the United States and are directly relevant to United States interests in Hong Kong [and] serve as a basis for Hong Kong’s continued economic prosperity”; and

(3) Hong Kong must remain sufficiently autonomous from the People's Republic of China to justify a different treatment than accorded to the People's Republic of China under United States law;

Whereas the United States maintains substantial economic and political interests in Hong Kong, with more than 1,300 United States firms operating in the Special Administrative Region, owing largely to Hong Kong's favorable business environment;

Whereas the United States supports Hong Kong's "high degree of autonomy" promised by the Sino-British Joint Declaration of 1984 in accordance with the "one country, two systems" framework by concluding and implementing bilateral agreements, promoting trade and investment, and bolstering educational, academic, and cultural links;

Whereas the Department of State reported in its 2019 Hong Kong Policy Act Report, dated March 21, 2019, that the People's Republic of China has implemented a number of fixed "redlines" inconsistent with China's commitments in the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, and the Sino-British Joint Declaration of 1984, which have diminished Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy;

Whereas the Communist Party of China has increasingly constrained Hong Kong's freedoms in violation of the "one country, two systems" framework by supporting, among other actions, the banishment of the pro-independence Hong Kong National Party, the restriction of entry for individuals critical of the Communist Party of China, the refusal of a United States extradition request in May 2018, and the indiscriminate disqualification of can-

didates for office due to their alleged support for Hong Kong self-determination;

Whereas, on April 3, 2019, the Government of Hong Kong introduced a bill to amend the Fugitive Offenders and Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Ordinance laws (commonly known as the extradition bill) concerning extradition to expand the extradition arrangement to include mainland China, which would allow for the handover of any persons in the territory of Hong Kong, residents and nonresidents, as well as materials in their possession;

Whereas the Department of State issued a statement on June 9, 2019, warning that the lack of procedural protections in the bill could negatively impact Hong Kong's long-standing protections of human rights, fundamental freedoms, and democratic values;

Whereas, on June 9, 2019, approximately 1,000,000 people peacefully rallied against the bill, and on June 12, 2019, in Admiralty, tens of thousands staged a protest outside the city's government headquarters to stop the legislators from moving forward with the bill;

Whereas, on June 12, the Government of Hong Kong took advantage of the acts of a small minority of protesters and classified the largely peaceful protest as an unlawful assembly and a "riot", a charge that can result in a prison sentence of up to 10 years for those who were arrested;

Whereas the police's excessive use of force on June 12, 2019, to disperse the protestors, including tear gas, beanbag rounds, rubber bullets, batons, and pepper spray, widely visible in video footage, fueled tensions, contributed to

worsening violence, and caused severe injuries to protesters;

Whereas, on June 16, 2019, approximately 2,000,000 people peacefully gathered in Admiralty, equivalent to 25 percent of the population, the largest protest in Hong Kong's history;

Whereas, on July 21, 2019, a self-professed progovernment mob of men violently attacked protestors, innocent bystanders, and journalists with sticks and metal bars in Yuen Long, which resulted in the hospitalization of 45 people, with 1 person in critical condition;

Whereas the Royal Hong Kong Police have failed to take action against the progovernment "triad" gangs, suggesting the police may be complicit in their actions;

Whereas the protestors' demands include: the complete withdrawal of the bill to amend the extradition bill; the implementation of universal adult suffrage in the election of Chief Executive and the Legislative Council; the establishment of an independent commission to investigate whether police have used excessive force; the declassification of the protest as a riot; and the dropping of all charges against persons who did not personally engage in violence;

Whereas, on July 27, 2019, 9 people were injured when police fired rubber bullets at demonstrators in Yuen Long who were protesting the July 21, 2019, triad gangs' violent attacks and the lack of a police response to them;

Whereas, on July 29, 2019, China's spokesman for the State Council's Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office issued a statement referring to the protesters as "radical elements

committing evil and criminal acts”, and applauding the police for sticking to their posts;

Whereas, on July 30, 2019, China’s Foreign Ministry said the pro-democracy protests are the “work of the United States”, alleging that there had been unprecedented levels of contact between prodemocracy leaders and the United States;

Whereas the Chinese Communist Party has expressed its “strong indignation” and has called the protests “absolutely intolerable”, raising fears that the Party may use force in an attempt to violently suppress the protestors;

Whereas, on August 5, 2019, teachers, aviation workers, finance employees, and civil servants went on strike across 7 districts, the largest citywide strike in decades, which evolved into a wave of demonstrations, and resulted in the police firing 800 tear gas rounds to clear the protestors, almost as many as were used in the previous 8 weeks;

Whereas, on August 5, 2019, a self-professed pro-government mob of men violently attacked demonstrators with sticks and metal bars in North Point after the demonstrators were dispersed by police from Admiralty, and again the police did not respond to the ambush;

Whereas, on August 6, 2019, a Chinese Communist Party official threatened the demonstrators by stating that, “those who play with fire will perish by it” and “as for their [the demonstrators,] punishment, it’s only a matter of time”; and

Whereas, on August 7, 2019, pro-Beijing media began publishing articles accusing Julie Eadeh, the Political Counselor at the United States Consulate General in Hong

Kong, of subversion, as well as publicly identifying her husband and family: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) calls on the Government of Hong Kong to
3 begin to undertake steps towards negotiations to ad-
4 dress the demonstrators' 5 central demands: the
5 complete withdrawal of the bill to amend the Fugitive
6 Offenders and Mutual Legal Assistance in
7 Criminal Matters Ordinance laws (commonly known
8 as the extradition bill); the implementation of uni-
9 versal adult suffrage; the establishment of an inde-
10 pendent investigation; the declassification of the pro-
11 test as a riot; and the dropping of all charges
12 against persons arrested during the protests;

13 (2) condemns the Hong Kong police's use of
14 force against the demonstrations in a manner that
15 violates citizens' rights of freedom of expression and
16 peaceful assembly;

17 (3) calls on the Administration to ensure that
18 munitions and crowd-control equipment the United
19 States sells to the Hong Kong police aren't used to
20 repress peaceful protests in Hong Kong;

21 (4) condemns the efforts by the Hong Kong
22 and Chinese Governments to characterize the pro-
23 tests as "riots" and to blame the United States for

1 involvement in the political instability they alone cre-
2 ated;

3 (5) shares the concerns of the people of Hong
4 Kong that the lack of procedural protections in the
5 proposed amendments to the extradition bill, which
6 would negatively impact the territory's longstanding
7 protections of human rights, fundamental freedoms,
8 and democratic values as enshrined in the Basic
9 Law and the Sino-British Joint Declaration of 1984;

10 (6) recognizes the “one country, two systems”
11 framework and the Basic Law afford Hong Kong a
12 high degree of autonomy with respect to economic
13 and trade matters, and rule of law;

14 (7) condemns the pro-Beijing media for tar-
15 geting Julie Eadeh, the Political Counselor at the
16 United States Consulate General in Hong Kong, and
17 her family; and

18 (8) calls on the Government of Hong Kong and
19 all governments—

20 (A) to protect the rights of freedom of ex-
21 pression and peaceful assembly;

22 (B) to condemn all acts of violence against
23 those seeking to further their democratic rights;
24 and

1 (C) to refrain from the use of violence.

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