

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 4785

To support the human rights of Uyghurs and members of other minority groups residing in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and safeguard their distinct identity, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 29, 2021

Mrs. KIM of California (for herself, Mr. BERA, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mrs. DEMINGS, Ms. TENNEY, Mr. MALINOWSKI, Mr. JACKSON, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. CHABOT, Ms. TITUS, and Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

A BILL

To support the human rights of Uyghurs and members of other minority groups residing in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and safeguard their distinct identity, 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,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Uyghur Policy Act of
5 2021”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) The People’s Republic of China (PRC) con-
2 tinues to repress the distinct Islamic, Turkic identity
3 of Uyghurs and members of other minority groups
4 of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region
5 (XUAR) in northwestern China.

6 (2) Uyghurs, and other predominantly Muslim
7 ethnic minorities living in the XUAR, have main-
8 tained throughout their history a distinct religious
9 and cultural identity.

10 (3) Human rights, including freedom of religion
11 or belief, and respect for the Uyghurs’ unique Mus-
12 lim identity are legitimate interests of the inter-
13 national community, including the particular concern
14 of Islamic nations.

15 (4) The People’s Republic of China has ratified
16 the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and
17 Cultural Rights and is thereby bound by its provi-
18 sions. China has also signed the International Cov-
19 enant on Civil and Political Rights. Article One of
20 both covenants state that all peoples have the right
21 to self-determination.

22 (5) An official campaign to encourage Han Chi-
23 nese migration into the XUAR has placed immense
24 pressure on those who seek to preserve the ethnic,
25 cultural, religious, and linguistic traditions of the

1 Uyghurs people. Chinese authorities have supported
2 an influx of Han Chinese economic immigrants into
3 the XUAR, implemented discrimination against
4 Uyghurs in hiring practices, and provided unequal
5 access to healthcare services.

6 (6) The authorities of the People’s Republic of
7 China have manipulated the strategic objectives of
8 the international war on terror to increase their cul-
9 tural and religious oppression of the Muslim popu-
10 lation residing in the XUAR.

11 (7) Following unrest in the region, in 2014,
12 Chinese authorities launched their “Strike Hard
13 against Violent Extremism” campaign, in which du-
14 bious threats of widespread extremist activity were
15 used as justification for gross human rights viola-
16 tions committed against members of the Uyghur
17 community in the XUAR.

18 (8) Chinese authorities have made use of the
19 legal system as a tool of repression, including for the
20 imposition of arbitrary detentions and for torture
21 against members of the Uyghur and other popu-
22 lations.

23 (9) Uyghurs and Kazakhs who have secured
24 citizenship or permanent residency outside of China

1 have attested to repeated threats, harassment, and
2 surveillance by Chinese officials.

3 (10) Reporting from international news organi-
4 zations has found that over the past decade, family
5 members of Uyghurs living outside of China have
6 gone missing or been detained to force their return
7 to China or silence dissent.

8 (11) Credible evidence from human rights orga-
9 nizations, think tanks, and journalists confirms that
10 more than 1,000,000 Uyghurs and members of other
11 Muslim ethnic minority groups have been imprisoned
12 in “political reeducation” centers.

13 (12) Independent accounts from former detain-
14 ees of “political reeducation” centers describe inhu-
15 mane conditions and treatment including forced po-
16 litical indoctrination, torture, beatings, rape, forced
17 sterilization, and food deprivation. Former detainees
18 also confirmed that they were told by guards the
19 only way to secure release was to demonstrate suffi-
20 cient political loyalty.

21 (13) News surrounding the ongoing atrocities in
22 the XUAR and advocacy efforts to assist Uyghurs
23 remains muted in most Muslim majority nations
24 around the world.

1 (14) Both Secretary of State Antony Blinken
2 and Former Secretary of State Michael Pompeo
3 have stated that the Chinese government in Xinjiang
4 has committed genocide and crimes against human-
5 ity.

6 (15) Government branches of other nations
7 have also declared genocide in Xinjiang, including
8 the parliaments of the United Kingdom, Belgium,
9 Czechia, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Canada.

10 **SEC. 3. DECLARATIONS OF POLICY.**

11 Congress—

12 (1) calls upon the Government of the People’s
13 Republic of China to open the XUAR to regular vis-
14 its by United States Members of Congress, Congres-
15 sional staff delegations, the United States Special
16 Coordinator for Uyghur Issues under section 4, and
17 members and staff of the Congressional-Executive
18 Commission on the People’s Republic of China;

19 (2) calls upon the Government of the People’s
20 Republic of China to recognize, and seek to ensure,
21 the distinct ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic
22 identity of Uyghurs and members of other groups in
23 the XUAR;

24 (3) calls upon the Government of the People’s
25 Republic of China to cease all government-sponsored

1 crackdowns, imprisonments, and detentions of people
2 throughout the XUAR aimed at those involved in
3 the peaceful expression of their ethnic, cultural, po-
4 litical, or religious identity;

5 (4) commends countries that have provided
6 shelter and hospitality to Uyghurs in exile, including
7 Turkey, Albania, and Germany; and

8 (5) urges countries with sizeable Muslim popu-
9 lations, given their common religious and cultural
10 identity, to demonstrate particular concern over the
11 plight of Uyghurs.

12 **SEC. 4. UNITED STATES SPECIAL COORDINATOR FOR**
13 **UYGHUR ISSUES.**

14 (a) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be within
15 the Department of State a United States Special Coordi-
16 nator for Uyghur Issues (in this section referred to as the
17 “Special Coordinator”), to be designated by the Secretary
18 of State in accordance with subsection (b).

19 (b) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary of State shall
20 consult with the Chairs and Ranking Members of the
21 Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate and the
22 Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representa-
23 tives prior to the designation of the Special Coordinator.

24 (c) CENTRAL OBJECTIVE.—The Special Coordinator
25 should seek to promote the protection and preservation of

1 the distinct ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic iden-
2 tities of the Uyghurs.

3 (d) DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Special
4 Coordinator should, as appropriate—

5 (1) coordinate United States Government poli-
6 cies, programs, and projects concerning the
7 Uyghurs;

8 (2) vigorously promote the policy of seeking to
9 protect the distinct ethnic, religious, cultural, and
10 linguistic identity of the Uyghurs and seek improved
11 respect for human rights in the Xinjiang Uyghur
12 Autonomous Region (XUAR);

13 (3) maintain close contact with religious, cul-
14 tural, and political leaders of the Uyghurs, including
15 seeking regular travel to the XUAR and to Uyghur
16 settlements in Central Asia, Turkey, Albania, Ger-
17 many, and other parts of Europe;

18 (4) lead coordination efforts for the release of
19 political prisoners in the XUAR who are being de-
20 tained for exercising their human rights;

21 (5) consult with Congress on policies relevant to
22 the XUAR and the Uyghurs;

23 (6) coordinate with relevant Federal agencies to
24 administer aid to Uyghur rights advocates; and

1 (7) make efforts to establish contacts with for-
2 eign ministries of other countries, especially in Eu-
3 rope, Central Asia, and the Islamic world, to pursue
4 a policy of promoting greater respect for human
5 rights and religious freedom for Uyghurs and other
6 groups.

7 (e) SUPPORT.—The Secretary of State shall ensure
8 the Special Coordinator has adequate resources, staff, and
9 administrative support to carry out this section.

10 **SEC. 5. PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN THE ISLAMIC WORLD ON**
11 **THE UYGHUR SITUATION.**

12 (a) FUNDING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATES.—Of
13 the amounts authorized to be appropriated for the U.S.
14 Speaker Program in the Bureau of Educational and Cul-
15 tural Affairs of the Department of State, \$250,000 for
16 each of fiscal years 2022, 2023, and 2024 is authorized
17 to be available for human rights advocates on behalf of
18 the Uyghurs and members of other minority groups, whose
19 names may be provided by representatives of the global
20 Uyghur community and in consultation with the Depart-
21 ment of State and the United States Special Coordinator
22 for Uyghur Issues under section 4, to speak at public di-
23 plomacy forums in Islamic majority countries and other
24 regions on issues regarding the human rights and religious
25 freedom of Uyghurs and members of other minority

1 groups in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region
2 (XUAR).

3 (b) UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR GLOBAL MEDIA.—

4 It is the sense of Congress that the United States Agency
5 for Global Media should facilitate the unhindered dissemi-
6 nation of information to Islamic majority countries on
7 issues regarding the human rights and religious freedom
8 of Uyghurs and members of other minority groups in the
9 XUAR.

10 **SEC. 6. ACCESS TO DETENTION FACILITIES AND PRISONS**
11 **AND THE RELEASE OF PRISONERS.**

12 (a) SENSE OF CONGRESS ON POLITICAL REEDUCA-
13 TION AND DETENTION FACILITIES.—It is the sense of
14 Congress that the United States Government should, in
15 cooperation with other like-minded countries, develop a
16 strategy to—

17 (1) pressure the People’s Republic of China to
18 immediately close all detention facilities and “polit-
19 ical reeducation” camps housing Uyghurs and mem-
20 bers of other ethnic minority groups in the Xinjiang
21 Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR); and

22 (2) support the United Nations Commissioner
23 for Human Rights and numerous United Nations
24 Special Rapporteurs’ urgent calls for immediate and
25 unhindered access to detention facilities and “polit-

1 ical reeducation” camps in the XUAR by inde-
2 pendent international organizations and the Office of
3 the United Nations High Commissioner for Human
4 Rights for a comprehensive assessment of the
5 human rights situation.

6 (b) SENSE OF CONGRESS ON PRISON ACCESS AND
7 PRISONER RELEASE.—It is the sense of Congress that the
8 President and Secretary of State, in meetings with rep-
9 resentatives of the Government of the People’s Republic
10 of China, should—

11 (1) request the immediate and unconditional re-
12 lease of all prisoners detained for their ethnic, cul-
13 tural, religious, and linguistic identities, or for ex-
14 pressing their political or religious beliefs in the
15 XUAR;

16 (2) seek access for international humanitarian
17 organizations, including the International Federation
18 of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, to pris-
19 oners in the XUAR to ensure such prisoners are not
20 being mistreated and are receiving necessary medical
21 care;

22 (3) seek the immediate release of Ekpar Asat,
23 who participated in the Department of State’s Inter-
24 national Visitors Leadership Program in 2016 and
25 incarcerated after returning to the XUAR and is

1 now serving a 15-year prison sentence on charges of
2 “inciting ethnic hatred and ethnic discrimination”;
3 and

4 (4) seek the immediate release of Canadian citi-
5 zens Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor who have
6 been imprisoned without trial since 2018.

7 **SEC. 7. REQUIREMENT FOR UYGHUR LANGUAGE TRAINING.**

8 The Secretary of State shall ensure that Uyghur lan-
9 guage training is available to Foreign Service officers as
10 appropriate, and that every effort is made to ensure that
11 a Uyghur-speaking member of the Foreign Service (as
12 such term is described in section 103 of the Foreign Serv-
13 ice Act of 1980 (22 U.S.C. 3903)) is assigned to United
14 States diplomatic and consular missions in China.

15 **SEC. 8. UYGHUR CONSIDERATIONS AT THE UNITED NA-**
16 **TIONS.**

17 It is the sense of Congress that—

18 (1) the United States Government should op-
19 pose any efforts to prevent consideration of the
20 issues related to the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous
21 Region (XUAR) in any body of the United Nations;

22 (2) the United States Government should op-
23 pose any efforts to prevent the participation of any
24 Uyghur human rights advocates in nongovernmental

1 fora hosted by or otherwise organized under the aus-
2 pices of any body of the United Nations; and

3 (3) the Secretary of State should instruct the
4 United States Permanent Representative to the
5 United Nations to support the appointment of a spe-
6 cial rapporteur or working group for the XUAR for
7 the purposes of monitoring human rights violations
8 and abuses in the XUAR, and for making reports
9 available to the High Commissioner for Refugees,
10 the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the
11 Human Rights Commission, the General Assembly,
12 and other United Nations bodies.

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