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**Congressional-Executive Commission on China**

**Hong Kong’s Future in the Balance:**

**Eroding Autonomy and Challenges to Human Rights**

**May 15, 2019**

***Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL)***

***Cochair***

I want to thank the Chairman for convening this important hearing. As we have observed over the last five years, Hong Kong’s autonomy and freedoms that are guaranteed by the joint declaration and their basic law are just eroding rapidly due to the interference of the Chinese Communist Party’s government in the affairs of Hong Kong.

I want to thank the witnesses. You are all truly champions of freedom and democracy and you appear today, as we know, under both threats and risks to yourself and to those you care about.

The last year has been particularly troubling since the last time this Commission had a hearing on this issue. The Hong Kong Government banned the National Party, disqualified political candidates from office for their political views, they expelled the *Financial Times* news editor, they sentenced the 2014 Occupy Central Organizers and other pro-democracy leaders to prison terms of between eight and sixteen months.

We just learned this morning that the Hong Kong Court has issued guilty verdicts for six pro-democracy advocates who participated in the 2016 demonstration against the Chinese government’s interpretation of oath taking that lead to the disqualification of the pro-democracy legislators. Most recently, and equally concerning are amendments to the extradition laws that are being, at this moment, debated in the legislative council and protested in the streets.

Martin Lee’s, Mr. Lee’s, apt description of the proposed amendment that it will quote “legalize kid-knapping”. Legalize kid-knapping, that should be a something that should concern everyone. That includes, by the way, 85,000 U.S. citizens who are living in Hong Kong. It is one of the reasons why I’ll be reintroducing the [*Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act*](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__www.rubio.senate.gov_public_index.cfm_press-2Dreleases-3FID-3DA514829F-2D4B12-2D4F74-2DB7CD-2DD9E8B9C25B7C&d=DwMF_w&c=L93KkjKsAC98uTvC4KvQDdTDRzAeWDDRmG6S3YXllH0&r=j8FO1Dd9iuASwkXFRjP1PUESUryXcxjxoWZptW3mQKk&m=xrIYFSPlw3UxNBNJDytHM8yxtZIEgQU9MtkKtVc9Rx4&s=-Wu3DQUgX41OhYNpl8Pd7RkT3gXDvYeeXAQkE4chI-I&e=) which updates our Hong Kong policy and establishes punitive measures against government officials responsible for suppressing fundamental freedoms in Hong Kong.

I want to make this point, we have important challenges in our relationship with China. We have important agreements on a variety of issues that I hope we can find agreement on, but the future of Hong Kong and human rights in general cannot be sidelined as part of those conversations and I continue to encourage the administration and others involved in these talks to make that point.

I want to ask a question for the panel in general. Recently, you may or may not be aware that, CBS network television network [censored](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__twitter.com_marcorubio_status_1126173131918454786&d=DwMF_w&c=L93KkjKsAC98uTvC4KvQDdTDRzAeWDDRmG6S3YXllH0&r=j8FO1Dd9iuASwkXFRjP1PUESUryXcxjxoWZptW3mQKk&m=xrIYFSPlw3UxNBNJDytHM8yxtZIEgQU9MtkKtVc9Rx4&s=x-Tkr11kgpzk9OG5C1xq_WVJnHCL8hRj1EQ5IFT5iw0&e=) eight minutes out of a show *The Good Fight* because it contained a cartoon that criticized American corporations that are bowing to Chinese censorship. CBS claimed that it feared for the welfare of its journalists in Beijing if a critical cartoon was broadcast on an entertainment show broadcast in the United States.

So think about that, a major American network, censored a television show, it was afraid to offend China and as a result, put our journalists at risk operating within China. I think it’s a good opportunity to talk a little bit about censorship and how it manifests itself in Hong Kong.