



Written Testimony for the Record  
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**Congressional-Executive Commission on China,**  
Hearing entitled: “*Bringing Home Americans Detained in China*”  
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### **American Citizens’ Relatives Jailed in China for Practicing Falun Gong**

Thank you to Chairman Smith, Co-Chairman Merkley, and distinguished members of the Commission, for holding this hearing. Today, I am bringing before you the cases of four U.S. citizens whose families are jailed or under house arrest in China.

In July 1999, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) launched a violent campaign to persecute [Falun Gong](#), also known as Falun Dafa. The ancient spiritual practice in the Buddhist tradition combines meditation and gentle exercises (similar to yoga or tai chi) with a moral philosophy centered on the tenets of Truthfulness, Compassion, and Tolerance.

A [quarter century](#) later, Falun Gong practitioners remain a large proportion of prisoners of conscience in China. Included among them are multiple relatives of U.S. citizens and residents. These individuals have been unjustly imprisoned in China or barred from leaving the country, simply for practicing Falun Gong, sharing information about it, or exposing the rights abuses faced by others.

Given the tight censorship and brutality with which Chinese security agents treat Falun Gong practitioners, their loved ones in the United States are often unable to receive timely updates on their condition and are fearful they are being tortured—or even killed—at any moment. Indeed, since 2019, at least two Falun Gong practitioners jailed in China with family living in the United States have died in police custody with signs of abuse ([Ms. Meng Hong](#) from Heilongjiang whose daughter lives in California and [Ms. Ji Yunzhi](#) from Inner Mongolia whose son resides in New York).

The following four U.S. citizens reside in the United States, but suffer from the trauma of the CCP’s persecution by being separated from loved ones and fearing for their jailed relatives’ well-being.

1. **New York: Lydia and Steven Wang**, a brother and sister who are both U.S. citizens, live with their families in New York, where Steven has worked for Shen Yun Performing Arts as a principal dancer since 2008. Their mother, [Ms. Liu Aihua](#), was sentenced in Hunan Province to four years in prison on March 10, 2023. She was last seen at the No. 4 Detention Center of Changsha City. Ms. Liu was likely sentenced for distributing informational pamphlets to raise awareness about the persecution, according to family. It is unknown whether she is facing torture in prison. She has yet to meet her grandchildren in New York. Lydia and

Steven's father Wang Guanghui passed away in September 2009 after a lengthy detention in China for practicing Falun Gong.

In a 2021 interview, Steven recalled visiting his parents in prison during a prior detention before he left China for the United States. "Every time we went to visit them, they looked like they'd been starved," he said. "They never told me what it was like in there. They only told me they were doing fine. But you can probably imagine—you could tell from their withered faces that they'd been tortured."

Lydia Wang previously testified before a [Congressional briefing](#) in 2023. Ms. Liu Aihua's case is included in the [USCIRF](#) prisoner database. For more details, see a [page](#) dedicated to her case on the Falun Dafa Information Center website.

2. **Texas: Grace Chen**, a 19-year-old U.S. Army medic and naturalized citizen. Her [parents](#), Mr. Yang Chen and Ms. Zhimin Cao, were sentenced in Hunan Province in 2020 for an unknown length of time. According to Grace, the extended family has been unable to reach the couple in detention since their arrest. Lawyers hired by the family were pressured by their law firms or provincial justice bureaus to withdraw from the case and were stonewalled by Liuyang Police Department and the Liuyang Procuratorate from helping the couple. Mr. Chen is currently imprisoned at Wangling Prison; Mrs. Cao is at Hunan Province Women's Prison.

Grace Chen previously spoke on a [panel](#) at the International Religious Freedom Summit. Her parent's case was also covered by the [Jubilee Campaign](#). For more details, see a [page](#) dedicated to their case on the Falun Dafa Information Center website.

3. **Texas/New York: Danielle Wang**, a civil engineer from Texas and New York and a U.S. citizen. Her father, Mr. Wang Zhiwen, was sentenced on December 27, 1999 to 16 years in a show trial broadcasted live through an international CNN newscast. Prior to the CCP's launch of the persecution, Mr. Wang had been a volunteer coordinator in Beijing, organizing meditation practice sites for teaching Falun Gong's exercises. After his release in 2016, Danielle and her husband traveled to China to escort her father to the United States. But CCP agents surrounded the U.S. Consulate in Guangzhou and followed them, taking photos and even monitoring their movement inside their hotel. Before the trio could board a ferry from Guangdong to Hong Kong, Chinese customs officers cut up his passport and rendered it useless. Wang remains under house arrest today.

Danielle Wang previously testified before a [Congressional hearing](#) in 2013 and a [CECC hearing](#) in 2016. Her father's case was also covered by the [CECC](#), [USCIRF](#), [Lantos Commission](#), [ChinaAid](#), and the [Houston Chronicle](#). For more details, visit her [interview](#) with Friends of Falun Gong or a [short documentary](#) about her story on Faluninfo TV.

### Recommendations

It is vital that the U.S. government do more to free these prisoners of conscience. Doing so would reunite families of U.S. citizens across multiple generations and demonstrate to the CCP that the U.S. takes these cases seriously, potentially deterring future prosecutions of Falun Gong practitioners with American relatives. Once released, these individuals would be able to offer first-hand information on detention conditions in China, including potentially forced labor linked

to exports to the United States. Moreover, their release could inspire hope for millions of Falun Gong practitioners and other religious prisoners in China, even those without U.S. ties who would benefit from the increased scrutiny and advocacy for their plight. Specifically:

1. **The U.S. government should urgently ask Chinese officials for information** about the whereabouts and expected release dates for Mr. Yang Chen and Ms. Zhimin Cao, permission for relatives or lawyers of Ms. Liu Aihua to visit her; and for Mr. Wang Zhiwen to receive a passport. The U.S. should call for the immediate release of Ms. Liu Aihua, Mr. Yang Chen and Mrs. Zhimin Cao, Mr. Wang Zhiwen, and for all four of these individuals to be permitted to leave China and come to the United States to reunite with their family. The U.S. should further bar entry to Chinese official Zeng Qinghong, who was reportedly involved in the decision to block Danielle Wang's father from leaving the country.
2. **Senators should schedule a vote and pass [S.4914, the Falun Gong Protection Act](#)**, which would increase transparency, accountability, and deterrence surrounding the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners specifically, and lethal organ transplant abuses in China more broadly.
3. **Members of Congress should write to the U.S. State Department** asking the ambassador to China and top officials to raise these three cases in meetings with Chinese counterparts, including at the highest levels of diplomacy.
4. **The CECC should add** Ms. Liu Aihua, Mr. Yang Chen, and Ms. Zhimin Cao to the Political Prisoner Database.
5. **Ambassadors, government officials, and NGO experts on China should meet with these U.S. citizens** to better understand conditions in China and identify ways to support their family's quest for freedom. Include them in private hearings, events, or roundtables regarding religious persecution, freedom of expression, or political prisoners in China.

"I don't know if I will ever see my mother again," recalls Lydia Wang. "As long as the persecution of Falun Gong continues, my mother remains at risk of further harm if she stays in China. I request the United States government's assistance in securing her release. We would like to bring her safely home to New York."

For more information on these and other family rescue cases in the United States, please visit the [Falun Dafa Information Center](#) website.