

Joshua Wong's testimony  
U.S. Congressional hearing  
May 3, 2017

You may have known about Hong Kong's political arrangement as "One Country, Two Systems." But it has now become "One Country, One-and-a-Half Systems," and potentially "One Country, One System" in the future if conditions continue to worsen.

I was born less than a year before the handover of Hong Kong from the U.K. to China in 1997. I am 20 years old now. At the same time, the Hong Kong government is preparing its 20th handover anniversary celebration. July 1 will be the first time Xi Jinping visits Hong Kong as the Chinese President.

To pave the way for that, we now face massive political prosecution, while the government intends to disqualify democratically-elected lawmakers in the opposition camp, including the core Umbrella Movement student leader Nathan Law, who was elected last year as the youngest ever legislator at age 23. Unfortunately, Hong Kong remains far from a democracy after the Umbrella Movement.

Some people may think it is failure because we can't achieve the goal of universal suffrage but I am here to tell you today that the spirit of the movement is in the heart of Hong Kong people. That's why I have been trying to gather more support at the international level by strengthening our collaboration around the world.

I am glad to see the reintroduction of the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act by Senators Rubio, Cotton and Cardin. Bipartisan support for the bill proves that protecting Hong Kong's freedoms and autonomy can be—and ought to be—a consensus across the political spectrum. The legislation ensures those who have participated in non-violent assembly in Hong Kong would not be denied American visas on the basis of their criminal records.

Alex Chow, who is in the audience this morning, is another core Umbrella Movement student leader. He was found guilty last July for participating in unlawful assembly, sentenced to three weeks of imprisonment with one year of suspension. Because of Alex's criminal record, he has faced significant barrier in obtaining a British student visa last year for his master's studies in London. He was recently accepted for Ph.D. studies at U.C. Berkeley this coming August, which means he will soon apply for a U.S. student visa. I cannot stress the importance of this legislation for many of those like Alex, who may potentially face difficulties entering free countries.

China's suppression against us is helped by its growing regional domination. Last year, I was invited by top Thai universities, but was not allowed to enter the country and locked up for 12 hours in a detention cell. My requests to contact a lawyer or at least notify my family in Hong Kong were both rejected. I was very worried to be the next Gui Min Hai, one of the five booksellers abducted from Thailand to China. Luckily I was finally released, but the Thai government later said that I would be forever banned to enter the country, as requested by China.

If passed, the proposed legislation will place human rights and democracy at the center of future American policy toward Hong Kong. It will send a strong signal to Beijing that as a world leader, the U.S. believes it is just as important to protect political freedom in Hong Kong as it is to protect economic freedom.

The support of the proposed legislation is also in the American interests. Hong Kong is home to around 85,000 U.S. citizens and 1,400 U.S. companies.

Two-way U.S.-Hong Kong trade was around \$42 billion last year. Most American media outlets, including CNN, the Wall Street Journal, and TIME Magazine establish their Asian offices in Hong Kong.

These are all evidence that despite all the difficulties it is facing, Hong Kong remains the freest city under Chinese administration.

In conclusion, I hope democrats and republicans alike can work together to defend the fundamental human rights values they share, which Hong Kongers will continue to fight hard against Communist Regime for the day will come for us with democracy and exercise our right of self-determination.

I started my fight for democracy six years ago when I was 14. The Father of Hong Kong's Democracy, Martin Lee, is turning 79 years old this year, after four decades of struggle. I wonder, if I come to the age of 79, will I be able to see democracy?

My aspiration, and our generation's challenge is to ensure that Hong Kong continues as a beacon of human right and freedom for China and the world.

To sum up, today the authoritarian regime are dominating our future, but the day will come when we decide the future of Hong Kong. No matter what happens to the protest movement, we will reclaim the democracy that belongs to us, because time is on our side.