



Gendercide: China's Missing Girls Official Hearing: Congressional Executive Commission on China

*Opening remarks by Rep. Chris Smith, Chairman
Rayburn House Office Building Room 2255
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There are tens of millions of missing girls in China today – a predictable consequence of Beijing's cruel and barbaric child limitation policies and a cultural preference for boys.

In her book, *Unnatural Selection: Choosing Boys Over Girls, and the Consequences of a World Full of Men*, Mara Hvistendahl, one of our witnesses today, writes that “there are over 160 million females ‘missing’ from Asia's population. That is more than the entire female population of the United States. And gender imbalance—which is mainly the result of sex selective abortion—is no longer strictly an Asian problem.”

In Azerbaijan and Armenia, in Eastern Europe, and even among some groups in the United States, couples are making sure at least one of their children is a son. So many parents now select for boys that they have skewed the sex ratio at birth of the entire world.

The global crisis of missing girls constitutes a gross human rights abuse—which is aptly described as gendercide—the extermination of the girl child in society simply because she happens to be a girl.

For most of us, the statement “it's a girl” is cause for enormous joy, happiness and celebration. But in many countries, and even in some parts of the U.S.—it can be a death sentence. In China and India alone, an estimated three girls are aborted every minute because she is a girl.

Gendercide is not only a predictable tragedy of lost potential, but also a demographic time bomb, particularly in China, with social, political, and potentially even security implications.

China faces some of the world's most severe gender imbalances—according to official estimates, there are currently 34 million more males than females in China. Demographic experts, such as Valerie Hudson and Nicholas Eberstadt, who have testified before this commission previously, have warned that China's large number of “surplus males” could lead to societal instability, higher crime rates and sexual violence,

and has already increased trafficking of women and girls.

Trafficking, in particular, is a predictable consequence. As the author of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000—America’s landmark law to combat sex and labor trafficking—I am deeply concerned that China has become the human sex trafficking magnet of the world.

We have seen a marked increase of women trafficked from neighboring Southeast Asian countries such as Vietnam, Myanmar, and Cambodia being trafficked into China as brides and for sexual exploitation. North Korean women who escape into China also remain at risk for human trafficking for forced marriages and forced labor.

China’s gender imbalances are significantly exacerbated by government policy—particularly its draconian population control policies. Chinese law bans the use of ultrasound scanning technologies to determine the gender of unborn babies, but because couples are limited to one or two children, millions have circumvented the law to abort female unborn babies to ensure their “government approved child” will be a son.

China’s recently announced “Two-Child Policy” will not address China’s demographic imbalances. Data has shown that sex ratios are often more skewed after the birth of the first child. In many parts of China, the largest sex ratio imbalances are found in townships or villages, where many residents were already allowed to have a second child.

We are holding this hearing today not only to better understand the magnitude of the problem, but to find better ways to help rescue the next generation of potentially missing girls from violence and death.

1) Are there models from other places with past or present gender imbalances—such as South Korea and India—that can be used in China and elsewhere? As Valerie Hudson has testified before this commission previously, South Korea addressed skewed sex ratios in part by elevating the status and value of women and daughters, specifically in terms of encouraging female access to education, as well as equal inheritance, marriage, and property rights.

2) Given that the Obama Administration, the UN, and especially the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) have failed to adequately address the scandal of gendercide, what needs to be done to end these massive crimes against women?

3) What can the Congress do to help U.S.-based companies, such as General Electric, prevent ultrasound equipment which should be used to promote the wellness of unborn children from being employed on a gender crime search and destroy mission.

4) What role can the President, including the State Department and Congress play to encourage durable reforms of Chinese policies?

5) What U.S. laws need to be reformed or enforced? In 2000, I authored a visa ban law for those complicit in coercive abortion. Not only has the Administration failed to enforce the ban, but has not responded to our December 9th letter asking why.

6) Congress passed and the President signed into law the Girls Count Act this past year—championed by Senator Rubio and Congressman Steve Chabot. This law makes protecting children, especially the girl child, a priority of U.S. foreign policy. How should this law be implemented and directed?

By shining a light on what is happening in China with its missing girls, we hope to move toward a world where every woman is valued and deeply respected because of her intrinsic dignity, and where every child is welcomed regardless of his or her sex.