



**Statement of U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown,
Chairman of the Congressional-Executive
Commission on China (CECC)**

**CECC Hearing on “The Future of
Democracy in Hong Kong”
Thursday, November 20, 2014**

Thank you all for attending this important hearing on the future of democracy in Hong Kong.

There is bipartisan concern in the U.S. over the future of Hong Kong, as you can tell by my colleagues who have joined me on the dais today.

For the first time in this organization’s history, the two chairs of this Commission have led a bipartisan effort to introduce legislation, in this case to renew our commitment to freedom and democracy in Hong Kong.

I commend my co-chair, Congressman Chris Smith, for working with me on this issue.

I also thank our Republican and Democratic co-sponsors, some of whom have joined us today.

The legislation, called *the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act*, is a much-needed amendment to the *1992 Hong Kong Policy Act*. It reinstates reporting requirements that lapsed in 2007 and requires the President to certify that Hong Kong remains

sufficiently autonomous before undertaking any new laws or agreements that treat Hong Kong different from China.

We urge quick passage of this bipartisan bill.

Why are we in Washington so concerned about Hong Kong?

China made a promise. China made a promise to the international community and to the people of Hong Kong that they could enjoy certain freedoms and freely elect their leaders. It is those freedoms and autonomy that have ensured Hong Kong's stability and prosperity.

But now China is backtracking on these promises and threatening the future viability of Hong Kong as an international finance center and a free city.

Not only that, Chinese leaders are seeking to distract from the issue by **claiming that the protests are part of some foreign conspiracy**, masterminded by the United States.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

As we have all witnessed, the students, the workers, and the ordinary citizens who have demonstrated at great risk to their livelihood represent a genuine desire.

It is a universal wish for **basic freedoms and democracy**.

It is a wish that no amount of money can replace.

Hong Kong is a test of China's willingness to comply with its international commitments.

If China can so easily renege on its promises to Hong Kong, then how can we expect China to hold up its end of the bargain on issues like **World Trade Organization** compliance or future trade agreements?

As the democracy movement in Hong Kong enters a new phase, we call on the Hong Kong government to exercise restraint, engage in genuine dialogue with the protesters, and to respect their peaceful calls for democracy.

We call on China to fulfill the commitment it made to allow the people of Hong Kong to run and vote in free and fair elections.

We also send a message to the people of Hong Kong and China, that they have an ally in the United States.

We will continue to monitor the situation closely and to speak out whenever the universal freedoms of the people of Hong Kong and China are threatened.

I look forward to the testimony of the esteemed witnesses.