



**Statement of Rep. James P. McGovern,  
Chairman of the Congressional-Executive  
Commission on China (CECC)**

**CECC Hearing on  
“Hong Kong’s Summer of Discontent  
and U.S. Policy”**

**Tuesday, September 17, 2019, 10 a.m.  
419 Dirksen Senate Office Building**

As prepared for delivery.

Good morning and welcome to today’s hearing on “Hong Kong’s Summer of Discontent and U.S. Policy Responses.”

This is the second China Commission hearing this year on the situation in Hong Kong.

During our May hearing, the commission heard compelling testimony from Hong Kong pro-democracy advocates including Martin Lee and Nathan Law, who expressed serious concerns about the extradition bill that was quickly moving towards becoming law at that time.

That legislation would have put anyone in Hong Kong—including U.S. citizens—at risk of extradition to mainland China, where lack of due process and custodial abuses have been well documented.

Over the last 16 weeks, millions of people from all walks of life in Hong Kong have taken to the streets in an unprecedented and sustained show of unity.

The protesters have inspired the world and have risked their lives, their health, their jobs, and their education, to fight for the future of Hong Kong.

Thank you for your courage and bravery. We stand in solidarity with you.

As protests continued throughout the summer, Hong Kong police used excessive and unnecessary force to target those engaged in peaceful demonstrations.

The U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights has called for an investigation. The U.K. has suspended export licenses for the sale of tear gas and crowd control equipment.

In the House of Representatives, Congressman Chris Smith and I have introduced H.R. 4270, the “PROTECT Hong Kong Act” that would prohibit U.S. exports of police equipment to Hong Kong.

U.S. companies should not be selling equipment used to violently crackdown on pro-democracy protesters. I hope Congress will pass this legislation as soon as possible.

Although consideration of the extradition bill has been suspended, the people of Hong Kong are calling for greater accountability and democratic participation.

It’s my understanding that the Hong Kong protestors have outlined “Five Demands” of Hong Kong and Chinese authorities.

I look forward to hearing from today’s witnesses what those demands are specifically; what progress has been made by the Chinese and Hong Kong governments on achieving them; what remains to be done; and how we in Congress and the international community might be helpful.

The “one country, two systems” framework was enshrined in the 1984 Sino-British Declaration and Hong Kong’s Basic Law.

This is an international treaty, signed by the Chinese government, to allow Hong Kong a “high degree of autonomy” with the “ultimate aim” of electing its Chief Executive and Legislative Council members by universal suffrage.

The 2014 “Umbrella Movement” protests were sparked by the Chinese government reneging on its commitments to make Hong Kong more democratic. It is the continuing erosion of Hong Kong’s autonomy and rule of law that fuel the protests in Hong Kong today.

Over the last five years, the Chinese government has prioritized control over Hong Kong by stifling free expression and restricting the space for democratic participation.

We have seen the prosecution and sentencing of pro-democracy leaders, the disqualification and removal of pro-democracy legislators, and the introduction of a new national anthem bill that would restrict free expression.

Anson Chan, the former Hong Kong Chief Secretary and Legislative Council member, recently offered this insight:

“If only Beijing would understand what makes Hong Kong tick, what are the values we hold dear, then they can use that energy to benefit both China and Hong Kong. Instead, they have this mentality of control.”

While the protests were sparked by concerns about the extradition bill, the heart of the discontent is that Hong Kong’s political leaders do not represent and are not accountable to the people. Instead, Hong Kong’s leaders are beholden to the Chinese government.

Millions of people would not have to protest in the streets if they could freely choose their political leaders.

I hope the Chinese government would understand that stability and prosperity can be achieved if Hong Kong’s autonomy is respected, and if the Chief Executive and Legislative Council members were elected without Chinese influence over candidate selection.

In light of the continuing erosion of Hong Kong’s autonomy and the recent violence against peaceful protesters, I believe it is time for the United States to reconsider its policies toward Hong Kong.

U.S.-Hong Kong relations are governed by the U.S.-Hong Kong Policy Act of 1992 that commits the United States to treating Hong Kong as a separate customs territory from the rest of China, so long as Hong Kong remains “sufficiently autonomous.”

I am proud to support H.R. 3289, the “Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act,” sponsored by Senator Rubio and Congressman Smith.

The legislation would require the Secretary of State to certify on an annual basis that Hong Kong is “sufficiently autonomous” in order to justify special economic, financial, and trade treatment different from mainland China under U.S. law.

It is time we put the Chinese government on annual notice that further erosion of autonomy or a crackdown in Hong Kong will cause the city, and by extension mainland China, to lose its special economic and trade arrangement with the U.S.

Over the years, Hong Kong has prospered and become the financial center of Asia because of its strong commitment to the rule of law, good governance, human rights, and open economic system.

The erosion of this unique system threatens not only the people who attempt to speak out, but the economic vitality of the city itself.

To be clear, we stand together with the people of Hong Kong, and indeed all the people of China, when we express our concerns about the human rights violations of the Hong Kong and Chinese governments.

Our focus today is doing right by the people of Hong Kong as they seek a democratic future that protects Hong Kong’s autonomy and rule of law.