



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

**CECC Hearing on “Falun Gong in China: Review
and Update”**

December 18, 2012, Washington, DC

Thank you, Chairman Smith. It's been a pleasure working with Chris Smith during this Congress. I appreciate his leadership on this issue. I want to thank the staff of the Commission, Lawrence Liu and Paul Protic especially, the two staff directors, and all of you who helped to put together the annual report that came out of these hearings, and the work that you all do for human rights.

This is our last hearing for the 112th Congress.

This Commission and others have well documented the abuses committed by the Chinese government and Communist Party against practitioners of Falun Gong.

I would add to that my thanks for the work on the annual report and this hearing and other hearings, the work of the person on my staff, Doug Babcock, and the good work he has done on this.

In this Annual Report, we described the 13-year campaign that Chairman Smith just discussed against Falun Gong as “extensive, systematic, and in some cases violent.”

It is indeed one of the harshest campaigns against a group of believers in modern times.

Countless practitioners of Falun Gong face arbitrary detention, and torture, and psychiatric abuse, and in some cases death --- simply for practicing their beliefs.

Unfortunately, the Communist Party apparently believes that the only way it can survive is to stamp out diversity of opinion and belief wherever it occurs.

For Falun Gong practitioners, this means renouncing your beliefs and being “transformed”—they use the word “transformed”—“through re-education.” Those who seek to defend Falun Gong practitioners are harassed and detained.

All of us are aware of these abuses because of the many Falun Gong practitioners, a number of them in my state of Ohio, who possess the courage to speak out.

That's why we are lucky today to have Bruce Chung with us. Bruce flew all the way from Taiwan on short notice to be here today. He traveled here with his brother, because he believes, as I believe, that the truth must be told.

This summer, and Bruce will discuss this in more detail as our first witness, Bruce was visiting relatives in the People's Republic of China when authorities there detained him. They held him for 54 days.

He was monitored around the clock while in custody, and was subjected to long hours of questioning without access to a lawyer, as interrogators sought to force him to sign a confession. For what?

Authorities claim he threatened national security by trying to broadcast Falun Gong materials in China.

But his real crime was trying to overcome China's censorship and exercise his right—human right—to free expression.

I thank Bruce and other witnesses for being here today. I know it's a difficult decision to decide to speak out and tell your story, especially when the facts can be painful and sensitive.

But know too, that you are doing something extremely important, for you are speaking up for the countless others who could not be here today and letting the world know what is happening inside of China.

In the United States, we believe that our strength as a nation comes from the diversity of our people.

China cannot keep responding to diversity as a threat to be suppressed. This is not an effective strategy.

It's not working on the Tibetan plateau, where a policy of repression has led to a series of terrible tragedies. Nearly 100 Tibetans have committed self-immolation in protest of policies against their religion and against their culture.

It's not working on the Internet, where hundreds of millions of Chinese thirst for a place where they can share uncensored and diverse views about their society and their government.

It's not working against the Uyghur people either.

This strategy won't work in the case of Falun Gong, whose practitioners simply want to live in peace and freedom.

In the United States, we fight for the right of our citizens to practice their beliefs. China seems to often fight against those practices of its people.

China must end all repression of Falun Gong practitioners, guarantee their freedom of belief and expression and assembly, and release all political prisoners.

Threats to freedom only strengthen people's resolve, people like Bruce Chung. It makes them fight harder for what's right. The sooner China realizes this, the better off their people and this world will be.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.