



ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS
SENATOR DAN SULLIVAN, CHAIR
REPRESENTATIVE CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, COCHAIR

October 22, 2025

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Thank you for your unwavering commitment to bringing unjustly detained Americans home, and for your tireless efforts to free hostages and reunite families torn apart by violence and coercion. When you next meet with General Secretary Xi Jinping, we respectfully ask that you personally raise the cases of Americans unjustly detained—or held as hostages to punish Americans or extract political or commercial concessions.

The CCP is the world's largest hostage-taker. It uses detentions and exit bans to punish and censor Americans, gain leverage over U.S. businesses, and pressure changes in U.S. policy—disproportionately targeting Chinese-American and Uyghur-American communities. We know you agree that this is unacceptable, yet the Chinese Communist Party continues these practices with impunity.

In particular, we would appreciate your attention to the cases of Americans Nelson Wells, Jr. and Dawn Michelle Hunt. Each has been incarcerated for more than a decade after arrest and trial proceedings lacking due process; each has endured mistreatment and now faces life-threatening, inadequately treated medical conditions. Their families—U.S. military veterans and law-enforcement personnel—have requested humanitarian transfer or release.

Alongside imprisoned Americans, we urge you to raise exit-ban “hostage” cases that separate U.S. families or hold Americans in China as leverage. Independent reporting indicates tens of thousands of exit bans are imposed annually—evidence of a systemic

tool. Persistent diplomacy by your Administration has worked: the lifting of the exit ban on Wells Fargo executive Chenyue (Jesse) Mao is just the latest example.

Most exit bans are never public, but two current cases stand out: Gao Zhen, a prominent artist and U.S. lawful permanent resident, was detained over artwork disfavored by the CCP; his U.S.-citizen son and his wife are barred from leaving China. In a second case, a U.S. government employee traveling in a personal capacity is under an exit ban—proof that these measures are used even against Americans in public service.

CCP authorities also detain individuals to silence their U.S.-based family members or influence U.S. policy. Dozens of relatives of Radio Free Asia's Uyghur Service journalists remain detained or harassed. The continued imprisonment of Gulshan Abbas exemplifies retaliatory detention intended to chill an American citizen's speech. These practices are hostage-taking.

1. In summary, we respectively request attention to the following requests: Personally raise the cases of Nelson Wells, Jr., and Dawn Michelle Hunt and press for immediate humanitarian transfer or release.
2. Raise the cases of detained American resident Gao Zhen and his U.S.-citizen child, and the U.S. government employee subjected to an exit ban.
3. Instruct your Administration to prioritize the cases of Gulshan Abbas, Pastor Ezra Jin, and Ekpar Asat, as efforts to censor Americans or influence long-standing U.S. policy through detentions should be considered a form of hostage-taking.
4. Meet privately with impacted families and direct your team to provide regular, transparent briefings; expand consular access and medical oversight; and use all available avenues—including humanitarian release, medical parole, and prisoner-transfer mechanisms—to secure relief and release.
5. Coordinate with allies confronting similar abuses and employ the tools available to you under Executive Orders 14348 and 14078, as warranted, to ensure accountability for those responsible for unjust detentions, mistreatment, and exit-ban practices.

We know you agree that American citizens and their families should not be used as bargaining chips in U.S.-China relations. We are grateful for your unwavering dedication to reunite American families—and would appreciate continued top-level engagement until all hostages are liberated, and their families are free from fear, worry, coercion, and censorship imposed on them by the Chinese Communist Party.

We have included a list of names and case information on those mentioned here. But some families do not want the cases of their loved ones published, as they fear retaliation against them in detention or against family members in China. As such, we have also included a confidential annex of names for your consideration.

We look forward to working with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Senator Dan Sullivan
Chairman, Congressional-Executive
Commission on China



Representative Chris Smith
Co-Chairman, Congressional-Executive
Commission on China



Representative John Moolenaar
Chairman, House CCP Select Committee