



## INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

### **Bipartisan bill targets Uyghur, Tibetan forced labor**

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A new bipartisan bill prohibiting goods made by Uyghur forced labor from entering the United States will also mandate a US government enforcement strategy for dealing with coerced labor by Tibetans.

The Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act will create a “rebuttable presumption” that goods made in Xinjiang—which Uyghurs know as East Turkestan—are the result of forced labor and cannot enter the United States, unless there is “clear and convincing” evidence to the contrary.

A bipartisan group of legislators—Reps. James P. McGovern, D-Mass., Chris Smith, R-N.J., Thomas R. Suozzi, D-N.Y., Vicky Hartzler, R-Mo., Tom Malinowski, D-N.J., Mike Gallagher, R-Wis., and Jennifer Wexton, D-Va.—introduced the bill in the House today, Feb. 18, 2021.

An earlier version of the legislation passed the House in September 2020 by a vote of 406-3.

### **Enforcement strategy**

The updated House bill includes new references to Tibet, including the finding that, “hundreds of thousands of rural residents of the Tibet Autonomous Region participated in ‘military-style’ training, ideological education, and vocational training before being transferred to job postings in the [Tibet] Autonomous Region or elsewhere in China.”

The bill notes the “similarity of the Tibet Autonomous Region system to that in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.”

The TAR makes up about half of Tibet, a historically independent country that China annexed more than 60 years ago and turned into what is now one of the least free places on Earth.

Under the new bill, the US’ Forced Labor Enforcement Task Force will have to produce a strategy to “effectively address forced labor in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China or [goods] made by Uyghurs, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Tibetans, or members of other persecuted groups [through forced labor] in any other part of the People’s Republic of China.”

This enforcement strategy will have to include a list of products made wholly or partly by the involuntary labor of Tibetans or members of the other persecuted groups, as well as a list of businesses that have sold such products in the United States.

### **Tibetan coerced labor**

The issue of Tibetan coerced labor has captured the attention of lawmakers and activists around the globe since scholar Adrian Zenz published a groundbreaking report in September 2020 exposing a large-scale coercive labor program in the TAR.

According to Zenz’s research, the program pushed more than half a million rural Tibetans off their land and into military-style training centers in just the first seven months of 2020.

Afterward, many of the Tibetans were sent to other areas of Tibet and China and pushed into low-wage factory and construction work.

Zenz later appeared on the International Campaign for Tibet’s Tibet Talks series to discuss his findings.

Following his report, more than 60 parliamentarians from 16 countries—including the United States—called on their governments to “take immediate action to condemn these atrocities and to prevent further human rights abuses.”

The 63 parliamentarians were members of The Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China, on which Zenz serves as ethnic minority advisor.

## ICT quote

*International Campaign for Tibet Interim President Bhuchung K. Tsering said:*

“Americans have long been strong supporters of the Tibetan people, and they do not want their goods and products tainted by the coerced labor of Tibetans living under China’s authoritarian rule. Similarly, Americans are appalled at China’s horrific treatment of Uyghurs, which the US government has labeled as genocide. We thank Reps. McGovern, Smith and their colleagues for making Tibet part of this urgent legislation, and we call on both houses of Congress to pass the bill with haste.



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