



For immediate release

June 30, 2020

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US Congress Introduces Bi-Partisan Refugee & Immigration Protection Bills for Hong Kongers

“Hong Kong Safe Harbor Act” (Rep. Curtis, Castro, Gallagher, Sherman, Cheney, Rouda, Yoho, and Suozzi)

“Hong Kong People’s Freedom and Choice Act” (Rep. Malinowski, Kinzinger, Curtis, McGovern, Phillips, Lowenthal)

Both bills include HKDC-championed measures that could provide Temporary Protected Status (TPS), refugee, competitive visas, or expedited “green cards” to qualifying Hong Kong residents

WASHINGTON, DC (June 30, 2020) – Over the past months, HKDC has proposed and promoted a number of policies to the Administration and Congress that if enacted, would provide Hong Kong residents, who have a credible fear of political persecution and/or those with close personal and business ties in the US, immigration or refugee status and protection.

As the Chinese government continues on its path to strip away Hong Kong’s autonomy and freedoms, the US is taking steps to make sure that any and all Hong Kong residents fleeing political persecution is welcome in America. Just last Friday, the Standing Committee of China’s National People’s Congress announced a draft outline of the National Security Law for Hong Kong, the proposed law will effectively give the Beijing government direct, unfettered and unlimited jurisdiction and law enforcement to suppress dissent and protest under the guise of “national security”.

The two bi-partisan bills being introduced include provisions and designations championed by **HKDC**, including:

1. **Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Hong Kongers:** Provide Hong Kong residents who are in the US at the time of the designation, to remain in the US legally and obtain work permits.
2. **Maintains Hong Kong’s status as autonomous for the purposes of immigration:** For not less than 5 years from such time as the President suspends, in whole or in part, special treatment of Hong Kong under U.S. law, Hong Kong will continue to be considered a separate foreign state apart from the PRC.
3. **Designates certain Hong Kongers as “Priority 2” refugees:** The act would, using standards defined in the “Lautenberg Amendment”, designate Hong Kongers who have a credible fear of persecution **and** who have strong personal, family, or business ties in the US as refugees.
4. **Provides special immigration status for certain high-skilled Hong Kongers:** Competitive visas for residents of Hong Kong who have received a graduate diploma from an accredited institution, have completed

undergraduate education in the United States, or is the sole or majority owner of a company with more than 50 direct employees or greater than \$5 million in assets.

5. Expedites Lawful Permanent Residents (LPR or 'green card') status Hong Kongers residing in the

US: Modelled after the Chinese Student Protection Act of 1992, it would allow Hong Kong residents (including students) who are residing in the US during the 5 year period beginning with June 1, 2019, and have a credible fear of political persecution to apply for a "green card".

In response, HKDC releases the following statement by Samuel Chu, Managing Director:

"Both of these bi-partisan bills, and the Senate companion bills, are natural extensions of America's commitment and promise to safeguard the freedoms and autonomy of Hong Kong. As the world witnesses the collapse of 'one country, two systems' in real-time, and present threat of CCP turning Hong Kong into an authoritarian police state under the new national security law – the US and the rest of the world must protect Hong Kongers who are facing arrest, extradition, secret trial, imprisonment, and even torture for exercising their basic freedoms.

The protest movement in Hong Kong has inspired the world – America not only has a long tradition of serving as a refuge for those fleeing political persecution, the US also shares deep social, cultural and economic ties with the people of Hong Kong.

For many who have had public and frontline roles in the protest of the past year, these protections could mean the difference between continuing to fight for Hong Kong here in the US or life sentences as political prisoners in China – for some – they could mean the difference between life and death.

One of the most unique features of the US-Hong Kong relationship is Hong Kong's autonomous status for the purposes of immigration. HKDC strongly supports maintaining that status even if the US suspend or revoke Hong Kong's special status under the 1992 Hong Kong Policy Act.

Beyond sheltering those who are in immediate danger of persecution, the proposed measures would also target talented individuals – those with college degrees, who are high-skilled, or own businesses. Welcoming them to America is not only the right thing to do, but it also strengthens the hand of the US in the global competition for economic and human capitals, scientific and technological innovations against China."



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