



Harvard Model Congress

Boston 2024

CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY SECURITY THREATS UPDATE

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Over the past few months, there have been several executive and legislative actions taken to mitigate the potential security threats posed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). HR 6307, also known as the “CLARITY Act,” was introduced by Representative Zachary Nunn (R-IA) and Representative Abigail Spanberger (D-VA) to limit the United States government from using blockchain technology created by the Chinese Communist Party and other groups considered to be foreign adversaries (Spanberger, 2023). The bipartisan bill has been introduced in the House of Representatives, but it has yet to receive a vote. While there have been federal initiatives to limit the influence of the CCP, state legislative efforts have also advanced.

Under the leadership of Governor Ron DeSantis (R-FL), the Florida Legislature has passed several bills to limit the influence of Communist China. Governor DeSantis signed 4 bills focused on the CCP, specifically in the following four areas: (1) banning Chinese affiliates from buying farmland or property near critical infrastructure and military installations (2) prohibiting sensitive data storage on servers owned by the CCP (3) prohibiting Chinese influence in higher education (4) blocking access to Chinese-affiliated apps such as TikTok on educational and governmental devices (DeSantis, 2023). While many claim these are measures necessary to control the influence of the CCP, they have incited free speech and equal protection concerns from critics.

In response to the law, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) filed a lawsuit, claiming the law is “unconstitutional” and racially unjust (American Civil Liberties Union, 2023). Despite these claims, the District Court for the Northern District of Florida upheld the law, where it continues to be enforced as of December 2023. These initiatives to ban the ownership of American land by Chinese affiliates have extended beyond Florida.

In December 2023, Governor Kristi Noem (R-SD) led an open letter signed by 16 Republican governors to the Biden Administration opposing land ownership by members of the Chinese Communist Party (Gov. Noem, 2023). While eleven states, primarily

Republican-led, have enacted laws to restrict foreign ownership of lands, many governors have called on the federal government to enforce stricter regulations on CCP investments. Despite these concerns, there has been little public action on the part of the Biden Administration to prevent land ownership by CCP members.

While there have been extensive state-level measures, some symbolic actions have been taken on the federal level to combat the influence and potential threats from the CCP. In May 2023, the House of Representatives passed HR 1156, the “China Financial Threat Mitigation Act” to require the Department of Treasury to report potential risks to the United States by China’s economic sector (Spanberger, 2023). This bill, introduced by Rep. Spanberger (D-VA), received an overwhelming 400-5 vote in the House of Representatives, but has yet to receive a vote in the Senate.

As it appears there are many disjointed measures on the local, state, and federal level to combat the growing presence of the Chinese Communist Party in the United States, it is unclear whether there will be a federal law or initiative to act. Despite the lack of joined effort, there appears to be a growing bipartisan consensus on the need to combat the CCP.

As the growing emergence of the CCP affects all segments of the American economy, Republicans and Democrats alike continue to call for increased regulation and monitoring. The concrete actions in response to these threats are unclear.

The United States and China continue to compete in the global economy; therefore, communication is essential. In December 2023, Chinese and American militaries spoke for the first time in over a year, marking a renewed effort to restore ties between both powers (Lubold, 2023). Will these talks lead to increased collaboration between the United States and China? Only time will tell.

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