

**Suspend the Rules And Pass the Bill, H.R. 4821, with Amendments**

**(The amendments strike all after the enacting clause and insert a new text and a new title)**

117<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
1<sup>ST</sup> SESSION

# H. R. 4821

To hold accountable senior officials of the Government of the People's Republic of China who are responsible for, complicit in, or have directly persecuted Christians in China, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 29, 2021

Mrs. HARTZLER (for herself, Mr. DUNCAN, Mr. GALLAGHER, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. ADERHOLT, Mr. LATTA, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Ms. SALAZAR, Mr. TIMMONS, Mr. GOOD of Virginia, Mr. HICE of Georgia, Mr. BUDD, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. STEUBE, Mr. GUEST, Mr. GOHMERT, Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS, Mr. GAETZ, Mr. BABIN, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. BROOKS, Mrs. WAGNER, Mr. PFLUGER, Mr. RESCHENTHALER, Mr. GROTHMAN, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Ms. LETLOW, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. MANN, Mr. WALTZ, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. OWENS, Mr. BUCK, Mrs. MILLER of Illinois, and Ms. STEFANIK) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committees on the Judiciary, and Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

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## A BILL

To hold accountable senior officials of the Government of the People's Republic of China who are responsible for, complicit in, or have directly persecuted Christians in China, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Combating the Perse-  
5 cution of Religious Groups in China Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

8 (1) According to the Department of State’s  
9 International Religious Freedom (IRF) report esti-  
10 mates, Buddhists comprise 18.2 percent of the coun-  
11 try’s total population, Christians, 5.1 percent, Mus-  
12 lims, 1.8 percent, followers of folk religions, 21.9  
13 percent, and atheists or unaffiliated persons, 52.2  
14 percent, with Hindus, Jews, and Taoists comprising  
15 less than one percent.

16 (2) The Government of the People’s Republic of  
17 China (PRC) recognizes five official religions, Bud-  
18 dhism, Taoism, Islam, Protestantism, and Catholi-  
19 cism (according to the State Department’s IRF re-  
20 port) and only religious groups belonging to one of  
21 the five sanctioned “patriotic religious associations”  
22 representing these religious are permitted to register  
23 with the government and hold worship service, ex-  
24 cluding all other faiths and denying the ability to

1 worship without being registered with the govern-  
2 ment.

3 (3) The activities of state-sanctioned religious  
4 organizations are regulated by the Chinese Com-  
5 munist Party, which manages all aspects of religious  
6 life.

7 (4) The Chinese Communist Party is actively  
8 seeking to control, govern, and manipulate all as-  
9 pects of faith through the “Sinicization of Religion”,  
10 a process intended to shape religious traditions and  
11 doctrines so they conform with the objectives of the  
12 Chinese Communist Party.

13 (5) On February 1, 2018, the PRC Government  
14 implemented new religious regulations that imposed  
15 restrictions on Chinese contacts with overseas reli-  
16 gious organizations, required government approval  
17 for religious schools, websites, and any online reli-  
18 gious service, and effectively banned unauthorized  
19 religious gatherings and teachings.

20 (6) There are numerous reports that authorities  
21 forced closures of Buddhist, Christian, Islamic, and  
22 Taoist houses of worship and destroyed public dis-  
23 plays of religious symbols throughout the country.

24 (7) Authorities arrested and detained religious  
25 leaders trying to hold services online.

1           (8) There are credible reports of Chinese au-  
2           thorities raiding house churches and other places of  
3           religious worship, removing and confiscating reli-  
4           gious paraphernalia, installing surveillance cameras  
5           on religious property, pressuring congregations to  
6           sing songs of the Chinese Communist Party and dis-  
7           play the national flag during worship, forcing  
8           churches to replace images of Jesus Christ or the  
9           Virgin Mary with pictures of General Secretary Xi  
10          Jinping, and banning children and students from at-  
11          tending religious services.

12          (9) It has been reported that the PRC is rewrit-  
13          ing and will issue a version of the Bible with the  
14          “correct understanding” of the text according to the  
15          Chinese Communist Party. Authorities continued to  
16          restrict the printing and distribution of the Bible,  
17          Quran, and other religious literature, and penalized  
18          publishing and copying businesses that handled reli-  
19          gious materials.

20          (10) According to the Department of State’s  
21          IRF reports, the PRC Government has imprisoned  
22          thousands of individuals of all faiths for practicing  
23          their religious beliefs and often labels them as  
24          “cults”.

1           (11) The Political Prisoner Database main-  
2           tained by the human rights NGO Dui Hua Founda-  
3           tion counted 3,492 individuals imprisoned for “orga-  
4           nizing or using a ‘cult’ to undermine implementation  
5           of the law.” Prisoners include—

6                   (A) the 11th Panchen Lama, Gedun  
7                   Choekyi Nyima, who has been held captive  
8                   along with his parents since May 17, 1995;

9                   (B) Pastor Zhang Shaojie, a Three-Self  
10                  church pastor from Nanle County in central  
11                  Henan was sentenced in July 2014 to 12 years  
12                  in prison for “gathering a crowd to disrupt the  
13                  public order”;

14                  (C) Pastor John Cao, a United States per-  
15                  manent resident from Greensboro, North Caro-  
16                  lina, who was sentenced for 7 years in prison in  
17                  March 2018 under contrived charges of orga-  
18                  nizing illegal border crossings; and

19                  (D) Pastor Wang Yi of the Early Rain  
20                  Covenant Church who was arrested and sen-  
21                  tenced to 9 years in prison for “inciting to sub-  
22                  vert state power” and “illegal business oper-  
23                  ations”.

1           (12) Authorities continue to detain Falun Gong  
2 practitioners and subject them to harsh and inhu-  
3 mane treatment.

4           (13) Since 1999, the Department of State has  
5 designated the PRC as a country of particular con-  
6 cern under the International Religious Freedom Act  
7 of 1998.

8           (14) The National Security Strategy of the  
9 United States, issued in 2017, 2015, 2006, 2002,  
10 1999, 1998, and 1997, committed the United States  
11 to promoting international religious freedom to ad-  
12 vance the security, economic, and other national in-  
13 terests of the United States.

14 **SEC. 3. STATEMENT OF POLICY.**

15           (a) HOLDING PRC OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLE FOR  
16 RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ABUSES TARGETING CHINESE  
17 CHRISTIANS OR OTHER RELIGIOUS MINORITIES.—It is  
18 the policy of the United States to consider senior officials  
19 of the Government of the People’s Republic of China  
20 (PRC) who are responsible for or have directly carried out,  
21 at any time, persecution of Christians or other religious  
22 minorities in the PRC to have committed—

23           (1) a gross violation of internationally recog-  
24 nized human rights for purposes of imposing sanc-  
25 tions with respect to such officials under the Global

1 Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act (22  
2 U.S.C. 2656 note); and

3 (2) a particularly severe violation of religious  
4 freedom for purposes of applying section  
5 212(a)(2)(G) of the Immigration and Nationality  
6 Act (8 U.S.C. 1182(a)(2)(G)) with respect to such  
7 officials.

8 (b) DEPARTMENT OF STATE PROGRAMMING TO PRO-  
9 MOTE RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC  
10 OF CHINA.—The Ambassador-at-Large for International  
11 Religious Freedom should support efforts to protect and  
12 promote international religious freedom in the PRC and  
13 for programs to protect Christians and other religious mi-  
14 norities in the PRC.

15 (c) DESIGNATION OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF  
16 CHINA AS A COUNTRY OF PARTICULAR CONCERN.—It is  
17 the policy of the United States to continue to designate  
18 the PRC as a “country of particular concern”, as long  
19 as the PRC continues to engage in systematic and egre-  
20 gious religious freedom violations, as defined by the Inter-  
21 national Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (Public Law 105–  
22 292).

23 **SEC. 4. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

24 It is the sense of Congress that the United States  
25 should promote religious freedom in the PRC by—

1           (1) strengthening religious freedom diplomacy  
2           on behalf of Christians and other religious minorities  
3           facing restrictions in the PRC;

4           (2) raising cases relating to religious or political  
5           prisoners at the highest levels with PRC officials be-  
6           cause experience demonstrates that consistently rais-  
7           ing prisoner cases can result in improved treatment,  
8           reduced sentences, or in some cases, release from  
9           custody, detention, or imprisonment;

10          (3) encouraging Members of Congress to  
11          “adopt” a prisoner of conscience in the PRC  
12          through the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commis-  
13          sion’s “Defending Freedom Project”, raise the case  
14          with PRC officials, and work publicly for their re-  
15          lease;

16          (4) calling on the PRC Government to uncondi-  
17          tionally release religious and political prisoners or, at  
18          the very least, ensure that detainees are treated hu-  
19          manely with access to family, the lawyer of their  
20          choice, independent medical care, and the ability to  
21          practice their faith while in detention;

22          (5) encouraging the global faith community to  
23          speak in solidarity with the persecuted religious  
24          groups in the PRC; and



1           (6) hosting, once every two years, the Ministe-  
2           rial to Advance Religious Freedom organized by the  
3           Department of State in order to bring together lead-  
4           ers from around the world to discuss the challenges  
5           facing religious freedom, identify means to address  
6           religious persecution and discrimination worldwide,  
7           and promote great respect for and preservation of  
8           religious liberty.

9   **SEC. 5. SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING ACTIONS AT**  
10                                   **UNITED NATIONS.**

11           It is the sense of Congress that the United Nations  
12           Human Rights Council should issue a formal condemna-  
13           tion of the People’s Republic of China for the ongoing  
14           genocide against Uyghurs and other religious and ethnic  
15           minority groups, as well as for its persecution of Chris-  
16           tians, Falun Gong, and other religious groups.

          Amend the title so as to read: “A bill to hold ac-  
countable senior officials of the Government of the Peo-  
ple’s Republic of China who are responsible for or have  
directly carried out, at any time, persecution of Chris-  
tians or other religious minorities in China, and for other  
purposes.”.