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Opening Statement of the Honorable **Ed Royce (R-CA), Chairman**
Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific Hearing:
“Reinforcing the U.S.-Taiwan Relationship”
April 17, 2018

(As prepared for delivery)

Thank you, Chairman Yoho for holding this important hearing on Taiwan. Over the last several months, we have seen many positive developments in the U.S.-Taiwan relationship. The Taiwan Travel Act, for which I was an original co-sponsor, was signed into law by the President, and this was deeply appreciated by the Taiwan people.

It was a message I heard time and again when I was in Taipei over the Easter recess for meetings with President Tsai and other members of her cabinet. I believe that by encouraging more frequent visits between our two governments – including at the highest levels – we will further strengthen the critical U.S.-Taiwan partnership. That is why I make a point as Chairman to visit Taiwan every year.

I have always been a champion for strengthening Taiwan’s economic and people-to-people links from the grassroots level on up to the high-level policy making in Washington. Last month, I took the inaugural China Airlines daily, non-stop flight from Ontario, California to Taoyuan Airport in Taiwan. This was built upon the years of work in supporting linkages between U.S. and Taiwan through the Visa Waiver and Global Entry Program in 2012 and 2017 respectively. These programs have already translated into new growth with travel volume between the U.S. and Taiwan increasing by more than 50 percent.

Perhaps most pressing today is Taiwan’s inclusion at the World Health Assembly meeting next month. Over the years, Taiwan has contributed to international efforts to improve global health with financial and technical assistance. However, it was excluded from the meeting last year after eight consecutive years of being able to observe the meetings. Keeping Taiwan out can only hurt global health, and there should be no question about its participation this year.

Over the weekend, the New York Times ran an article that named Taiwan as the new bastion of free speech in Asia. Indeed, I have seen this with my own eyes. The U.S. and Taiwan’s shared commitment to democracy, human rights, and rule of law serve as the bedrock of this partnership, so I am glad we are here today to discuss how we can reinforce this important relationship.

Thank you again Chairman Yoho. I look forward to hearing the witnesses’ testimonies.