



**Statement of U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown,  
Chairman of the Congressional-Executive  
Commission on China (CECC)**

**CECC Roundtable on “Prospects for  
Democracy and Press Freedom in Hong  
Kong”**

**April 3, 2014**

*As prepared for delivery.*

Anson Chan and Martin Lee are here at a critical time for Hong Kong. The future of freedom and democracy in Hong Kong is under serious threat.

China promised to let the people of Hong Kong freely elect their leaders and enjoy the freedoms of speech, press, and religion.

China is backtracking on these promises.

In just three short years, the people of Hong Kong are to elect their leader, the Chief Executive, in the first election by “universal suffrage.” But we know that China is already placing “pre-conditions” on who can run, raising serious doubts about whether the elections will be free and fair.

The environment for press freedom in Hong Kong is deteriorating. Incidents of violence and harassment against journalists have risen. Hong Kong’s media faces ever-increasing pressure from mainland China.

This Commission has made it a priority to monitor and report on developments in Hong Kong, and we will continue to do so.

We, in Congress and on this Commission, must hold China accountable for its commitments. We must continue to listen and learn from people like our distinguished panelists today.

Too much is at stake for Hong Kong, mainland China, and the international community.

At the end of the day, Hong Kong is not just a financial center of 7 million people.

It is a test of China's commitment to the internationally recognized rights of people everywhere to freely elect their leaders and to enjoy basic freedoms.

It is a test of whether China will allow genuine democracy and freedom to take root in Hong Kong.

I urge China to follow through on its commitments.

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