



**Statement of U.S. Representative  
Christopher Smith, Cochairman of the  
Congressional-Executive Commission on  
China (CECC)**

**CECC Hearing on “The Future of  
Democracy in Hong Kong”**

**November 20, 2014**

Thank you, Chairman Brown, for calling this hearing. I would like to welcome our witnesses and thank them for agreeing to testify today. The future of Hong Kong’s democracy is truly an international concern as the presence of Lord Patten and the other witnesses here today confirms. I look forward to your testimony.

This is the second public event that the Commission has held on the issue of Hong Kong. In April, the Commission heard from Martin Lee and Anson Chan, two veterans of Hong Kong’s political world. Their work, as well as the work of Hong Kong’s new generation of leaders, has inspired this Commission and the U.S. Congress.

As has been mentioned already, Senator Brown and I have introduced bills in the House and Senate to update U.S. policy on Hong Kong. I have also agreed to start the Congressional Hong Kong Caucus, to demonstrate the Congress’s concern about Hong Kong’s autonomy and its importance to U.S. national interests.

As our witnesses today will attest, under the “one country, two systems” model, China guaranteed that Hong Kong could retain its separate political, legal, and economic systems for at least 50 years. Hong Kong’s constitution, the Basic Law, protects the rights of the people of Hong Kong to free speech, assembly, and the power to choose their own government, ultimately through universal suffrage.

These promises were made to the people of Hong Kong and to the international community.

Instead of keeping these promises, Beijing has decided to stack the deck against democracy and the rule of law, demanding that both judges and any future Chief Executive must “love the country and love Hong Kong.” In August of this year, Beijing further ruled the people of Hong Kong could not freely choose their next leader.

Such demands will undermine an independent judiciary and make the 2017 Chief Executive election look more like an Iranian election than one that is free and fair.

The slow erosion of press freedoms and the rule of law, the setbacks to Hong Kong’s democratic developments, and Beijing’s less than subtle oversight of Hong Kong are the reasons the protests materialized and why they are ongoing. No matter what is said by

President Xi or other Chinese officials, the “umbrella movement” was a creation of Beijing’s policies and its rough oversight.

There is no “black hand” of foreign forces behind the protests, only requests for Beijing to live up to its promises and to ensure Hong Kong’s unique system of autonomy within China.

Hong Kong’s unique system has ensured prosperity and spurred the type of creativity that only comes with the advance of fundamental freedoms. The freedoms of speech, assembly, association, and religion, and an independent judiciary, are the foundation on which Hong Kong’s continued prosperity and stability are based.

This is what the people of Hong Kong want, it is what they have conveyed to their leaders, and to Beijing repeatedly for the past 17 years.

Hong Kong’s continued autonomy and the advance of its democracy is a concern of the U.S. Congress and of freedom-loving peoples everywhere.

If given a real choice, people everywhere vote to advance representative governments that protect the rule of law and the fundamental freedoms of speech, assembly, association, and religion. The people of Mainland China do not have such a choice and attempts to pursue universally-recognized rights are often met with repression and harassment.

This cannot be Hong Kong’s future.

Hong Kong is the true embodiment of the “China Dream” and that fact may scare some in the Communist Party. We stand with those who want Hong Kong to remain free, vital, prosperous, and democratic—as Beijing has long promised.