

## STATEMENT FOR THE CONGRESSIONAL HEARING ON CHEN GUANGCHENG

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*In Jesus' Name, Simply Love Her*

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Chairman Smith and Ranking Members of Congress, I thank you for granting me the opportunity to share my written testimony on the subject of Chen Guangcheng's escape to and departure from the US Embassy in Beijing. I also thank Chairman Smith and Paul Protic for bravely trying to go to China to help Chen.

I have long admired Secretary Hilary Clinton as a female world leader. She inspired a whole generation—myself included—at the UN Women's Conference in 1995 when she declared that “women's rights are human rights.” She spoke those oft-quoted words in Beijing years ago, but what happened to Chen Guangcheng under her watch in Beijing yesterday was a betrayal of these very same rights she vowed to uphold.

This is because Chen Guangcheng is not just a “dissident.” In fact, he did not even advocate against the central government. He is a folk hero in China, a defender of women, children, and the poor. Chen has worked tirelessly on behalf of women who face forced abortion and sterilization at the hands of the officials who should be protecting their citizens' rights.

Words simply cannot express Chen's value as a human rights advocate. He is fighting one of the most brutal state-sanctioned human rights abuses in the world.

As a self-taught lawyer, he became troubled at the plight of young women in his province of Shandong. Under the One-Child Policy, women are regularly subjected to invasive “pregnancy checks,” and officials brutalize them if they try to refuse. If they become pregnant, they are forced to undergo abortions, even very late in their terms—and many are sterilized under threat. The numbers are sobering:

- 400 million babies have been forcibly aborted or killed after birth.
- Because of the One-Child Policy and a cultural preference for males, one out of every six girls is aborted, killed, or abandoned.
- There are now nearly 40 million “missing” women.
- Sex trafficking and crime are skyrocketing in China in conjunction with the bachelor boom. Women are increasingly commoditized, with traffickers selling girls to families as child brides.
- These social trends impact women in alarming ways: suicide is the leading cause of death for young women in China, and China is the only country in the world where female suicide rates outstrip those of males. 500 women kill themselves every day—that's one every three seconds.

This is the evil that Chen was fighting. Please pause and think about that for a moment. Pray for this incredibly brave man.

In 2005, Chen investigated the methods of the One-Child Policy enforcers in his region, and he found that 7,000 women had undergone forced abortion in his area alone. He filed a class action lawsuit on behalf of 130,000 women who suffered forced abortions and sterilizations. Retaliation came swiftly: the government

imprisoned Chen for four years for “obstructing traffic,” and kept him under lockdown in his own home since his 2010 release. There, a pack of guards continually harassed Chen and his wife along with their six-year-old daughter.

Last week, I and other advocates of freedom in China watched with joy as Chen Guangcheng made his bid for freedom. Truth mirrored art in his escape, which played out like *The Shawshank Redemption*. (Chinese web censors even placed “Shawshank” on their list of banned search terms.) The blind lawyer scaled a wall, crossed a river, and evaded eight rings of vigilant guards to break free. He then traveled on foot through fields for twenty hours before meeting activist He Peirong at a pre-arranged location. She and others risked their lives to take him to the US Embassy in Beijing, where they knew he would find freedom.

But we let them down. Shamefully, US officials encouraged Chen to leave the Embassy and stay in China, in accordance with the Chinese government’s request. He left the Embassy yesterday morning under duress after being told that the Chinese authorities were going to take his wife and children back to Shandong and remove the possibility of reunification. The US denied that any coercion took place—but if this is not coercion, then *what is?* What has become of the American government? Is it a mere enabler of the Chinese officials’ brutal treatment of Chen, plus the millions of women and children he defended?

US Embassy staff assured Chen they would stay with him at the hospital to ensure his safety, but left him without protest after the Chinese told them “visiting hours” had ended. They also failed to get a written version of the agreement they reached with the Chinese negotiators, an elementary error that could have disastrous consequences. They should have known better, having been given the authority to represent America. How could anyone not see the necessity of a written statement? And how could they ignore the fate of the activists who helped Chen escape? Many of them have been jailed since Friday.

Now Chen’s wife is reporting that the family is in grave danger. He is under surveillance and American officials have reportedly been barred from visiting him.

I do not believe that Secretary Clinton and Ambassador Locke were simply naïve, that they thought China would honor its word and allow Chen to live in freedom and safety. Nor do I want to believe that they willfully misled Chen into thinking this was a possibility. Freedom for human rights activists within China is not a reality, and I can only conclude that the current administration viewed Chen Guangcheng as a distraction that needed to be dealt with quickly—he was just a fly to be swatted away before diplomatic talks began. But this “fly” they swatted is a hero to everyone in China who values freedom and admires the United States’ commitment to humanity. With sadness, I can tell you that the network of activists that watched this week with baited breath is now demoralized and hopeless.

I will not mince my words: this was an *unqualified disaster*. It was a disaster for the Obama administration, for the America we love, and for those in China who pray for freedom. If there is any way to turn this around, we must. And I call upon you, Honorable Members of Congress, to try.

I still pray. I have hope. Please join me in praying for Chen, his family, and the courageous people who brought him to the US Embassy. For while I am disappointed with the administration, my hope lies in the faithful and loving God:

*He upholds the cause of the oppressed*

*and gives food to the hungry.*  
*The LORD sets prisoners free,*  
*the LORD gives sight to the blind,*  
*the LORD lifts up those who bowed down,*  
*the LORD loves the righteous.*  
*The LORD watches over the alien*  
*and sustains the fatherless and the widow.*  
—Psalm 146: 7-9

Please join me in prayer, for I believe God will bring Chen and his friends and family to freedom. And He is patient with all of us. He gives us the chance to be modern Esthers and Mordecais, bravely confronting oppression to join in His glory. Let us not miss this opportunity again!  
In Jesus' name, I pray. *Amen.*

*Chai Ling is the founder of All Girls Allowed, a humanitarian organization inspired by the love of Jesus to restore life, value and dignity to girls and mothers in China and to reveal the injustice of the One-Child Policy.*