



# Committee of 100

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Ensuring Full Inclusion in America,  
Advancing U.S.-China Relations

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November 2, 2023

Dear NDAA Conferees:

I write today to urge you to ensure that the Fiscal Year 2024 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) conference agreement does not include research security provisions that would undermine the scientific ecosystem in the United States.

Committee of 100 is a 30-year-old nonprofit organization of prominent Chinese Americans, including distinguished leaders in academia, business, science, medicine, technology, and the arts. Formed in the aftermath of Tiananmen Square at the recommendation of Dr. Henry Kissinger, we promote the full advancement and inclusion of Chinese Americans and constructive dialogue between the U.S. and China

We fully support recent U.S. government initiatives to counter threats from the People's Republic of China (PRC) to proprietary American advances in science and technology and have actively engaged with lawmakers as a productive voice in this discussion. For example, we featured speakers from the FBI at our annual conference this past May. However, several research security provisions included as part of the House-passed NDAA, if enacted, would hinder essential scientific collaboration and the advancement of federally funded research projects as well as negatively impact the ability to attract and retain a diverse community of researchers who contribute significantly to scientific and technological progress. These provisions include:

**SEC. 214. Certain Disclosure Requirements for University Research Funded by the Department of Defense (DOD):** As part of this section, principal investigators of DOD-funded research at U.S. higher education institutions must publicly disclose the background of their researchers, including their nationality, education, and employment history, among other information. Apart from the burdensome reporting requirements with which higher education institutions would have to comply, such information would be publicly accessible on a federal government website.

While we support the need for appropriate safeguards to protect America's confidential research, the provision is duplicative. The White House Office of

Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) has already undertaken similar efforts, through National Security Presidential Memorandum 33 (NSPM-33), to improve the application and disclosure process for Federal grants research. Further, a Statement of Administration Policy (SAP) [issued](#) by President Biden opposing Section 214 affirms that the DOD already employs rigorous security and data control standards to protect research, including without impacting access to top talent or imposing additional reporting burdens on research institutions.

Committee of 100 is also concerned that the provision may adversely affect the recruitment of researchers from international talent pools, which may result in limited expertise, talent loss to competing countries, and an innovation slowdown. We strongly believe that scientific breakthroughs often require collaboration and the exchange of ideas among researchers from different institutions and countries. Lastly, in the same SAP, the President underscores that the public disclosure of detailed information about all DOD-funded researchers could inadvertently compromise national security.

**SEC. 1810. Report on China Benefitting from U.S. Taxpayer-Funded Research:**

Under this section, the Defense Secretary must report to Congress the extent to which taxpayer-funded research has benefited China. The report must also include a list of U.S. government-funded entities (such as labs and research and higher education institutions) that have hired Chinese nationals or allowed Chinese nationals to conduct research, including an estimate of the number of nationals hired or involved in research projects.

We are concerned that this section may incite unnecessary fear within the Asian American scientific community and discourage academics, regardless of their ethnic background, from working with Chinese scientists and institutions, no matter how benign their work may be. As with Section 214, this section may ultimately impact the U.S.' ability to attract and retain top talent, potentially undermining U.S. economic and national security interests.

**SEC. 1879. Prohibition on Funding Research in China:** This section would prohibit Federal agencies from funding research conducted by the Chinese government, the CCP, or its affiliates.

To reiterate, Committee of 100 fully supports U.S. government-led efforts to combat PRC threats to scientific and technological progress in our nation. Section 1879, as well as Section 1810, however, would not further these objectives. Instead, it would inadvertently confront national security threats from the PRC at the expense of cross-border research collaboration with China, hindering the publication of valuable foundational research in a transparent and open academic ecosystem.



To provide an example, the Agreement between the U.S. and China on Cooperation in Science and Technology (STA) has facilitated research endeavors between the U.S. and China, ultimately leading to outcomes that are of great benefit to both our nation and the global community.<sup>1</sup> In one instance, a study conducted jointly between the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Chinese health officials [demonstrated](#) the efficacy of folic acid to reduce birth defects. The CDC and Chinese health officials have also [co-implemented](#) the Global AIDS Program (GAP) to support national and local HIV prevention and control programs. Lastly, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been [collaborating](#) with China on environmental issues for over three decades, including by improving air quality, reducing toxic chemical exposure, and developing environmental laws.

Committee of 100 appreciates your attention to these concerns and hopes to continue working with you towards our shared goal of promoting a dynamic research ecosystem while ensuring we can attract the best and brightest talent who will play a pivotal role in driving noteworthy advancements throughout the scientific and technological enterprise. Thank you for considering our views and for your service to our nation.

Sincerely,



Cindy Tsai  
President, Committee of 100

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<sup>1</sup> (Seligsohn, 2023)

