

FRANK PALLONE, JR., NEW JERSEY  
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RANKING MEMBER

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS  
**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

2125 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115  
Majority (202) 225-2927  
Minority (202) 225-3641

October 3, 2021

Varshini Prakash  
Executive Director and Co-Founder  
Sunrise Movement  
50 F Street NW, Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20001

Ms. Prakash:

We write to you with significant concerns that American progressive advocacy groups may be advancing U.S. government economic and environmental policies to the benefit of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

In a July 7, 2021 letter, Sunrise Movement, along with more than 40 other progressive groups, called on the Biden-Harris Administration and the Congress to abandon an “antagonistic posture” towards China in favor of a more cooperative relationship to combat climate change.<sup>1</sup> In doing so, Sunrise Movement appears to be requesting the U.S. government not only to ignore China’s crackdown on Hong Kong and its atrocious human rights abuses, including its continued genocide of Uyghur Muslims, but also to ignore the clear threat China poses to America’s economic and national security.

Specifically, you wrote that “anti-China rhetoric” does nothing to “support the wellbeing of everyday people” in *China* and you blame the United States for climate emissions, while ignoring China’s human rights abuses and dominant contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>2</sup> You demand the United States “do much more than China” to address climate change “equitably.”<sup>3</sup> Shockingly, this letter reads more like CCP propaganda designed to blame

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<sup>1</sup>Alexander Ward, *Biden’s new Cold War with China will result in climate collapse, progressives warn*, Politico (July 7, 2021), available at <https://www.politico.com/news/2021/07/07/biden-china-climate-collapse-progressives-498588>.

<sup>2</sup>*Id.*; also see <http://foe.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Cooperation-Not-Cold-War-To-Confront-the-Climate-Crisis-129.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

and weaken the United States to benefit China's national and economic security agenda. It's noteworthy that the CCP's official newspaper, *People's Daily*, covered your letter on July 9, 2021, to argue for better cooperation, precisely what you demand.<sup>4</sup>

China's foreign influence campaign is well-known. The CCP's strategy is first to cut off criticism of China's government, then to co-opt American influences to promote China's narrative.<sup>5</sup> China's goal is to "influenc[e] the influencers" in order to get "Americans to carry its message to other Americans."<sup>6</sup> Your July 7, 2021 letter appears to reflect the CCP's strategy to cut off criticism of China's government and to promote the CCP's preferred policy interests.

We are concerned that foreign interests may be influencing your advocacy activities directed toward Congress. In light of our jurisdiction over foreign commerce and environmental policy, we seek to understand the relationship between your work and Chinese efforts to influence U.S. policy development. Accordingly, to assist us in our oversight of China's influence and our initial steps to examine this important matter, please respond to the following questions no later than October 15, 2021:

1. Does Sunrise Movement or any agents of Sunrise Movement currently or has Sunrise Movement previously received funds or anything of value directly from the CCP or any individual or organization connected to the CCP?
  - a. If yes, please provide the specific amount or thing of value you received and the date on which you received it.
2. Does Sunrise Movement currently or has Sunrise Movement previously taken any action at the request of the CCP or any individual or organization connected to the CCP?
  - a. If yes, please detail what action was taken and the date on which such action was taken.
3. Regarding your July 7, 2021 letter, please answer the following:
  - a. Did Sunrise Movement initiate the drafting of the letter? If not, please identify which group did.
    - i. If Sunrise Movement did not know who initiated the drafting of the letter, please identify who did initiate the drafting of the letter and who asked Sunrise Movement to sign the letter.

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<sup>4</sup> *Progressive groups call on U.S. gov't to better cooperate with China on climate change*, *People's Daily* (July 9, 2021) available at <http://en.people.cn/n3/2021/0709/c90000-9869992.html>

<sup>5</sup> Josh Rogin, *China's foreign influence operations are causing alarm in Washington*, *Washington Post* (December 10, 2017), available at [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/chinas-foreign-influencers-are-causing-alarm-in-washington/2017/12/10/98227264-dc58-11e7-b859-fb0995360725\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/chinas-foreign-influencers-are-causing-alarm-in-washington/2017/12/10/98227264-dc58-11e7-b859-fb0995360725_story.html)

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

- b. Was Sunrise Movement asked by the CCP or any individual or organization connected to the CCP to draft, sign, or promote the letter? If so, please identify who Sunrise Movement communicated with in this regard.
  - c. Did the CCP or any individual or organization connected to the CCP ask Sunrise Movement for assistance in promoting China's narrative on climate change?
  - d. Did the CCP or any individual or organization connected to the CCP ask Sunrise Movement for assistance to help downplay criticism of the CCP?
  - e. Did the CCP or any individual or organization connected to the CCP ask Sunrise Movement to lobby the U.S. government on their behalf as it relates to climate change?
4. Is Sunrise Movement aware of the ongoing genocide of the nearly 2 million Uyghurs, Kazakhs, and other Muslim minorities in China?
- a. If yes, does Sunrise Movement believe America should speak out against those human rights abuses?
  - b. If yes, does Sunrise Movement believe America should take action to address them?
  - c. If yes, does Sunrise Movement believe America should ignore those human rights abuses to cooperate with China to address climate change?
  - d. If no, has Sunrise Movement been asked by the CCP or any individual or organization connected to the CCP to ignore such abuses?
5. Is Sunrise Movement aware of the progressive group Human Rights Watch and its recent report that found the "darkest period for human rights in China since the 1989 massacre that ended the Tiananmen Square democracy movement"?<sup>7</sup>
- a. If yes, does Sunrise Movement agree or disagree with Human Rights Watch?
  - b. If yes, does Sunrise Movement have any concerns with China's ongoing human rights abuses?
  - c. Does Sunrise Movement believe partnering with China to address climate change, or any other matter, would condone China's ongoing genocide of Uyghurs, Kazakhs, and other Muslim minorities in China? If so, does Sunrise Movement support a boycott, divestment, and sanctions against China in response to its genocide?

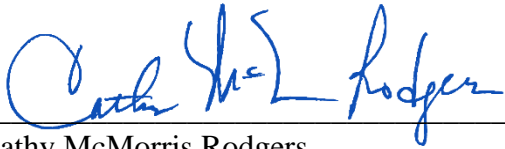
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<sup>7</sup> *World Report 2021, Events of 2020*, Human Rights Watch (2021), available at [https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media\\_2021/01/2021\\_hrw\\_world\\_report.pdf](https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media_2021/01/2021_hrw_world_report.pdf)

6. Has Sunrise Movement criticized the CCP for any action it has taken, including their continued genocide of Uyghur Muslims?
- a. If yes, please provide a specific criticism of the CCP.
  - b. If not, why not?

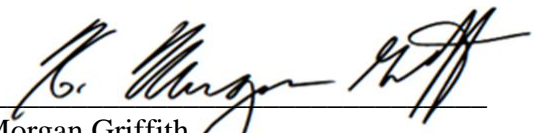
If you have any questions, please contact Bijan (BJ) Koohmaraie at (202) 225-3641.  
Thank you for your prompt attention to this request.

Sincerely,



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Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
Republican Leader  
Committee on Energy and Commerce



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H. Morgan Griffith  
Republican Leader  
Subcommittee on Oversight  
and Investigations