

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 10537

To support and promote the human rights of Southern Mongolians in the People's Republic of China, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 19, 2024

Mr. MCGOVERN introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committees on the Judiciary, Financial Services, and House Administration, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To support and promote the human rights of Southern Mongolians in the People's Republic of China, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Southern Mongolian
5 Human Rights Policy Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

1 (1) According to the China Statistical Yearbook
2 for 2021, more than 6,000,000 ethnic Mongolians
3 live in the People’s Republic of China, of which some
4 two-thirds live in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous
5 Region, and many others in three prefectures and
6 eight counties designated as autonomous for Mongo-
7 lians by the Government of the People’s Republic of
8 China.

9 (2) Over the centuries, successive central Chi-
10 nese governments have promoted the migration of
11 Chinese people into the area currently administered
12 as the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, and
13 today only about 18 percent of the population of the
14 Region is counted as ethnically Mongolian.

15 (3) The Constitution and 1984 Regional Ethnic
16 Autonomy Law of the People’s Republic of China
17 guarantee numerous rights to Mongolian and other
18 designated minorities, including autonomous govern-
19 ment, protection for religions and cultures, control
20 over local economic development, and management
21 of local natural resources, and the right “to use and
22 develop their own spoken and written languages and
23 their freedom to preserve or reform their own folk-
24 ways and customs,” including to “use textbooks in

1 their own languages and use these languages as the
2 media of instruction”.

3 (4) In 2020, officials in the Inner Mongolia Au-
4 tonomous Region announced a new policy to effec-
5 tively replace Mongolian as the principal language of
6 instruction with Chinese, in the subjects of history,
7 politics, and literature, and shut down Bainu, the
8 only Mongolian-language-based social media website
9 based in the country. Beginning in September 2023,
10 schools across the region largely removed Mongolian-
11 language instruction from elementary and secondary
12 schools throughout the region. Reports indicate that
13 high school and college entrance exams will be con-
14 ducted in Chinese exclusively starting in 2025 and
15 2028, respectively. The People’s Republic of China
16 authorities have banned Mongolian language books
17 from bookstores and removed signs in the unique,
18 vertically-written Mongolian script from schools,
19 buildings, streets, and parks.

20 (5) The People’s Republic of China officials
21 launched “patriotic education” campaigns at schools
22 and universities throughout the Inner Mongolia Au-
23 tonomous Region, designed to suppress manifesta-
24 tions of Mongolian identity in favor of the common
25 Chinese national identity” and encourage “all ethnic

1 groups to accept the great mother country, Chinese
2 nationality, Chinese culture, [and the] Chinese Com-
3 munist Party.” In response to the new education
4 policy, tens of thousands of Southern Mongolians in
5 the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region launched
6 protests, in which some 300,000 Southern Mongo-
7 lian students boycotted school and teachers went on
8 strike, and some individuals reportedly committed
9 suicide in protest. Security authorities responded
10 harshly by arresting, beating, detaining, jailing, and
11 placing under home confinement some estimated
12 8,000 to 10,000 Southern Mongolians.

13 (6) Chinese authorities now fully control all ac-
14 tivities of the Chinggis Khan Mausoleum in the
15 Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, including the
16 schedule, scale, and ticketing of ritual ceremonies
17 and approval and monitoring of gatherings, denying
18 Southern Mongolians the ability to carry out tradi-
19 tional rituals and observances free of government in-
20 terference and profiteering. This has broken an
21 eight-century-long memorial tradition at the site,
22 which has served as an historical and cultural rep-
23 resentation of the Mongolian identity.

24 (7) The People’s Republic of China policies
25 have undermined the religious heritage of Southern

1 Mongolians, many of whom follow Tibetan Bud-
2 dhism, including through the destruction of mon-
3 asteries and temples during the Cultural Revolution,
4 and interference in the ability to choose their own
5 religious leaders. Restrictions on travel and freedom
6 of religion or belief inhibit the ability of Southern
7 Mongolians to affiliate, engage, and communicate
8 with Mongol communities around the world, espe-
9 cially those with cultural, linguistic and religious
10 links to people in the country of Mongolia and the
11 Buryatia, Kamykia, and Tuvan regions of the Rus-
12 sian Federation, resulting in a diminution of their
13 common cultural heritage.

14 (8) The People's Republic of China policies
15 have effectively ended the traditional Southern Mon-
16 golian economic livelihood of pastoralism, a key
17 marker of Mongol identity, by forcibly resettling
18 more than 246,000 nomadic households to urban
19 and agricultural areas where Mandarin language
20 and Chinese cultural elements dominate. These poli-
21 cies have cut off Southern Mongolians from their an-
22 cestral lands and increased their economic depend-
23 ence on the state, eroding their social cohesion. This
24 has led to severe social and psychological impacts,
25 including mental illness and economic deprivation.

1 (9) The environment of the Inner Mongolia Au-
2 tonomous Region has degraded under the People's
3 Republic of China policies that have removed no-
4 mads, ending traditional stewardship of grazing
5 lands, and exploited natural resources through min-
6 ing and heavy industry without sufficient stake-
7 holder input from local inhabitants, resulting in air
8 and water pollution and severe health problems
9 among local Southern Mongolians. Bayan Obo, the
10 largest rare earth mine in the world, is the source
11 of toxic waste, including radioactive thorium that
12 has been seeping into groundwater.

13 (10) Southern Mongolian dissidents, activists,
14 writers, bloggers, lawyers, and their family members
15 who have attempted to exercise their freedom of ex-
16 pression and defend their legal rights have been de-
17 tained, arrested, imprisoned, and placed under home
18 confinement by the People's Republic of China au-
19 thorities. Activist Yanjindulam remains under home
20 confinement after being released from prison, artist
21 Ashidaa is still under home confinement, lawyer
22 Huhbulag has been detained multiple times, and dis-
23 sident Almaz has been frequently harassed and de-
24 tained by the authorities.

1 (11) Authorities detained rights activist Hada,
2 who promoted self-determination and democracy for
3 Southern Mongolians, in 1995 and sentenced him to
4 15 years in 1996. He was held without legal basis
5 for an additional four years following the expiration
6 of his sentence. Hada was subsequently placed under
7 home confinement until his disappearance in Sep-
8 tember 2020. In 2011, Hada’s wife Xinna, an out-
9 spoken critic of human rights violations in Southern
10 Mongolia, was arrested before being sentenced to
11 three years in prison, suspended for five years. Their
12 son Uiles was sentenced at the age of 17 to two
13 years in prison on the basis of multiple fabricated
14 charges. The family’s welfare and whereabouts have
15 been unknown since September 2020.

16 (12) Chinese authorities have subjected South-
17 ern Mongolians to transnational repression. Since
18 2009, at least five Southern Mongolian dissidents in
19 exile have been forcibly returned to China, including
20 from Mongolia. On May 3, 2023, Chinese police offi-
21 cers detained Lhamjab Borjigin, a long-time dis-
22 sident writer and historian, in Ulaanbaatar, Mon-
23 golia, and forcibly returned him to China on the
24 same day. Lhamjab Borjigin had escaped from home
25 confinement on March 6, 2023, after he was sen-

1 tenced to one year in prison, suspended for two
2 years, for writing a book entitled “China’s Cultural
3 Revolution”.

4 (13) The Congressional-Executive Commission
5 on China reported that “[d]uring the Commission’s
6 2023 reporting year, Chinese Communist Party and
7 government authorities implemented policies that
8 limited the freedom of ethnic minority groups to ex-
9 press their cultural and religious identities in con-
10 travention of the PRC Regional Ethnic Autonomy
11 Law and international human rights treaties, includ-
12 ing the International Covenant on Civil and Political
13 Rights”.

14 (14) The Government of the People’s Republic
15 of China’s policies have undermined the ability of
16 Southern Mongolians to exercise their rights under
17 the People’s Republic of China’s constitution and
18 law, and under international law, to safeguard and
19 develop their own language, culture, religion or be-
20 lief, and economic livelihoods, as part of a deliberate
21 effort to erase their distinct Mongolian culture and
22 Sinicize the Southern Mongolian people, which some
23 observers have called a form of cultural genocide.

24 **SEC. 3. STATEMENT OF POLICY.**

25 It is the policy of the United States—

1 (1) to support and promote human rights of
2 Southern Mongolians in the People’s Republic of
3 China, including the fundamental freedoms of ex-
4 pression, peaceful assembly, and religion or belief
5 and rights related to arbitrary detention, discrimina-
6 tion and other abuses;

7 (2) to support the aspirations of the Southern
8 Mongolian people to safeguard their cultural and lin-
9 guistic heritage, including the ability to use and pro-
10 mote their own spoken and written language, and
11 protect their traditional pastoralist way of life that
12 they have maintained for thousands of years; and

13 (3) to press the Government of the People’s Re-
14 public of China to allow the Southern Mongolian
15 people the ability to enjoy the autonomy guaranteed
16 to them by the Constitution and 1984 Regional Eth-
17 nic Autonomy Law, including in education.

18 **SEC. 4. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

19 It is the sense of Congress that—

20 (1) the United States supports the legitimate
21 aspirations of the Southern Mongolian people to
22 safeguard their cultural and linguistic heritage and
23 practice their traditional way of life without threat
24 of forced assimilation policies of the Government of

1 the People's Republic of China and the Chinese
2 Communist Party;

3 (2) the President should—

4 (A) condemn human rights abuses against
5 Southern Mongolians by authorities of the Peo-
6 ple's Republic of China; and

7 (B) call on such authorities to allow South-
8 ern Mongolians the ability to exercise the au-
9 tonomy guaranteed under the constitution and
10 law of the People's Republic of China, including
11 to conduct their affairs and receive education in
12 their own spoken and written language;

13 (3) the Secretary of State should—

14 (A) work with United States allies and
15 partners and through multilateral institutions
16 to advocate for the human rights of Southern
17 Mongolians;

18 (B) urge the United Nations Human
19 Rights Council to prioritize assessment of the
20 human rights of Southern Mongolians in its re-
21 views of the People's Republic of China compli-
22 ance with international human rights law, in-
23 cluding through the Universal Periodic Review
24 process, and to request travel by United Na-

1 tions officials to assess conditions of Southern
2 Mongolians in the People’s Republic of China;

3 (C) promote the right of Southern Mongo-
4 lians to protect their spoken and written lan-
5 guage;

6 (D) promote the freedom of religion or be-
7 lief Southern Mongolians;

8 (E) work with the United Nations Edu-
9 cational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
10 (UNESCO) to identify and protect world herit-
11 age sites in areas of traditional Mongolian cul-
12 ture in the People’s Republic of China; and

13 (F) coordinate closely with the inter-
14 national community on targeted sanctions and
15 visa restrictions;

16 (4) the United States companies and individ-
17 uals operating in areas designated as autonomous
18 for Mongolians in the People’s Republic of China
19 should take steps to ensure that their commercial
20 activities do not contribute to human rights viola-
21 tions, undermine the autonomous rights of Southern
22 Mongolians, or contribute to the environmental deg-
23 radation or resettlement of nomads in those areas,
24 and are consistent with the United Nations Guiding
25 Principles on Business and Human Rights; and

1 (5) the United States Ambassador to the Peo-
2 ple's Republic of China should expeditiously seek to
3 meet with Hada and his family members, as well as
4 other Southern Mongolian dissidents, activists, writ-
5 ers, and lawyers who are either in prison or under
6 detention or home confinement.

7 **SEC. 5. DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR MATTERS.**

8 (a) INNER MONGOLIA SECTION IN UNITED STATES
9 EMBASSY IN BEIJING, CHINA.—

10 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State
11 should consider establishing an Inner Mongolian
12 team within the United States Embassy in Beijing,
13 China, to follow political, economic, and social devel-
14 opments in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region
15 and other areas designated by the People's Republic
16 of China as autonomous for Mongolians, with due
17 consideration given to hiring Southern Mongolians
18 as Locally Employed Staff.

19 (2) DUTIES.—The responsibilities of the team
20 described in paragraph (1) should include reporting
21 on human rights issues and access to areas des-
22 ignated as autonomous for Mongolians by United
23 States Government officials, journalists, nongovern-
24 mental organizations, and the Southern Mongolian
25 diaspora.

1 (3) LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS.—The Sec-
2 retary of State should ensure that the Department
3 has sufficient proficiency in Mongolian language in
4 order to carry out paragraph (1), and that the
5 United States Embassy in Beijing, China, has suffi-
6 cient resources to hire Local Employed Staff pro-
7 ficient in the Mongolian language, as appropriate.

8 (b) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date
9 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall
10 submit to the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Sen-
11 ate and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House
12 of Representatives a report on staffing described in sub-
13 section (a).

14 **SEC. 6. RELIGIOUS FREEDOM.**

15 (a) HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTS.—The Ambassador at
16 Large for International Religious Freedom shall, con-
17 sistent with the duties under sections 101(c) and 102(a)
18 of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22
19 U.S.C. 6411(c), 6412(a)), assist the Secretary of State to
20 assess the impact of the restrictions on Tibetan Buddhism
21 by the Government of the People’s Republic of China on
22 the religious freedom of—

23 (1) practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism in the
24 People’s Republic of China who are not Tibetan; and

1 (2) practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism outside
 2 the People’s Republic of China, including their abil-
 3 ity to travel to and share information with practi-
 4 tioners inside the People’s Republic of China.

5 (b) ANNUAL REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS
 6 FREEDOM.—The Secretary of State, with the assistance
 7 of the Ambassador at Large for International Religious
 8 Freedom, shall ensure that the report required under sec-
 9 tions 102(b) of the International Religious Freedom Act
 10 of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6411(c), 6412(b)) assesses, as appro-
 11 priate, the impact of the restrictions on Tibetan Buddhism
 12 by the Government of the People’s Republic of China on
 13 the religious freedom of —

14 (1) practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism in the
 15 People’s Republic of China who are not Tibetan; and

16 (2) practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism outside
 17 the People’s Republic of China, including their abil-
 18 ity to travel to and share information with practi-
 19 tioners inside the People’s Republic of China.

20 **SEC. 7. IDENTIFICATION OF PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR**
 21 **HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES AGAINST SOUTHERN**
 22 **MONGOLIANS IN THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF**
 23 **CHINA; IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS.**

24 (a) REPORT REQUIRED.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days
2 after the date of the enactment of this Act, and an-
3 nually thereafter, the President shall submit to the
4 appropriate congressional committees a report that
5 identifies each foreign person, including any official
6 of the Government of the People’s Republic of
7 China, that the President determines is responsible
8 for any of the following with respect to Southern
9 Mongolians in the People’s Republic of China:

10 (A) Torture.

11 (B) Cruel, inhuman, or degrading treat-
12 ment or punishment.

13 (C) Prolonged or arbitrary detention with-
14 out charges and trial.

15 (D) Causing the disappearance of persons
16 by the abduction and clandestine detention of
17 those persons.

18 (E) Other flagrant denial of the right to
19 life, liberty, or the security of persons.

20 (F) Other gross violations of human rights
21 committed against Southern Mongolians.

22 (2) FORM.—The report required by paragraph
23 (1) shall be submitted in unclassified form, but may
24 include a classified annex.

1 (b) IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS.—The President
2 should impose sanctions pursuant to one or more of the
3 following authorities with respect to each foreign person
4 identified in the report required by subsection (a):

5 (1) The Global Magnitsky Human Rights Ac-
6 countability Act (22 U.S.C. 10101 et seq.).

7 (2) Section 7031(c)(1)(A) of the Department of
8 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
9 Appropriations Act, 2024 (division F of Public Law
10 118–47; 8 U.S.C. 1182 note).

11 (3) Section 212(a)(2)(G) of the Immigration
12 and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1182(a)(2)(G)).

13 (c) SUNSET.—This section, and any sanctions im-
14 posed under this section, shall terminate on the date that
15 is 5 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

16 (d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

17 (1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-
18 TEES.—The term “appropriate congressional com-
19 mittees” means—

20 (A) the Committee on Foreign Relations
21 and the Committee on Banking, Housing, and
22 Urban Affairs of the Senate; and

23 (B) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and
24 the Committee on Financial Services of the
25 House of Representatives.

1 (2) FOREIGN PERSON.—The term “foreign per-
 2 son” means an individual or entity that is not a
 3 United States person.

4 (3) UNITED STATES PERSON.—The term
 5 “United States person” means—

6 (A) a United States citizen or an alien law-
 7 fully admitted for permanent residence to the
 8 United States;

9 (B) an entity organized under the laws of
 10 the United States or of any jurisdiction within
 11 the United States, including a foreign branch of
 12 such an entity; or

13 (C) any person in the United States.

14 **SEC. 8. VOICE OF AMERICA BROADCASTS IN THE MONGO-**
 15 **LIAN LANGUAGE.**

16 (a) ESTABLISHMENT OF SERVICE.—Not later than
 17 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the
 18 Chief Executive Officer of the United States Agency for
 19 Global Media shall establish, through the Voice of Amer-
 20 ica, a service to provide Voice of America Mongolian lan-
 21 guage programming to Mongolian language speakers in
 22 Mongolia, the People’s Republic of China, and the Russian
 23 Federation.

24 (b) REPORT.—Not later than 270 days after the date
 25 of the enactment of this Act, the Chief Executive Officer

1 of the United States Agency for Global Media shall submit
2 to the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate and
3 the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Rep-
4 resentatives a report detailing the implementation of this
5 section, including a description of programming and
6 broadcast hours.

7 (c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
8 authorized to be appropriated to the Voice of America for
9 purposes of carrying out this section \$2,000,000 for each
10 of fiscal years 2025 and 2026.

11 **SEC. 9. SUPPORT FOR SOUTHERN MONGOLIAN CULTURE.**

12 (a) REPRESSED CULTURES PRESERVATION.—

13 (1) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of
14 Congress that the Smithsonian Institution should
15 fund activities to help preserve cultures endangered
16 by the repressive policies of the People’s Republic of
17 China, including those of Southern Mongolians, Ti-
18 betans, Uyghurs, and Hong Kongers, through the
19 World Cultures Center and other programs designed
20 to promote preservation efforts, as well as research,
21 exhibitions, and education programming.

22 (2) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after
23 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary
24 of the Smithsonian Institution shall submit to the
25 Committee on Rules and Administration of the Sen-

1 ate and the Committee on House Administration of
2 the House of Representatives a report on its plans
3 to help preserve cultures endangered by the policies
4 of the People's Republic of China, including those of
5 Southern Mongolians, Tibetans, Uyghurs, and Hong
6 Kongers.

7 (b) ASSISTANCE FOR CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS,
8 MUSEUMS, AND LIBRARIES.—

9 (1) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of
10 Congress that the Director of the Institute for Mu-
11 seum and Library Sciences should establish a grant
12 program, or make available grants through an exist-
13 ing program, to support efforts by diaspora commu-
14 nities in the United States to preserve their cultural
15 heritage that is threatened by the repressive policies
16 of the People's Republic of China, including the ef-
17 forts of Southern Mongolians, Tibetans, Uyghurs,
18 and Hong Kongers.

19 (2) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after
20 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director
21 of the Institute for Museum and Library Sciences
22 shall submit to the Committee on Health, Edu-
23 cation, Labor and Pensions of the Senate and the
24 Committee on Education and the Workforce of the
25 House of Representatives a report on the feasibility

1 of establishing a grant program, or to otherwise
2 make available grants through an existing program,
3 to support efforts by diaspora communities in the
4 United States to preserve their cultural heritage that
5 is threatened by the repressive policies of the Peo-
6 ple’s Republic of China, including those of Southern
7 Mongolians, Tibetans, Uyghurs, and Hong Kongers,
8 including efforts to engage with such diaspora com-
9 munities.

10 **SEC. 10. SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS IN SOUTHERN MON-**
11 **GOLIA.**

12 (a) DECLARATION OF POLICY.—It is the policy of the
13 United States to support the right of Southern Mongolians
14 to make decisions in accordance with principles of auton-
15 omy regarding their economic development, including the
16 ability to maintain traditional livelihoods, such as pas-
17 toralism, as well as cultural preservation, environmental
18 sustainability, and resource extraction, in areas designated
19 as autonomous for Southern Mongolians in the People’s
20 Republic of China.

21 (b) INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS.—
22 The Secretary of the Treasury should instruct the United
23 States executive director of each international financial in-
24 stitution to use the voice and vote of the United States
25 to support financing of projects in areas designated as au-

1 autonomous for Mongolians in the People’s Republic of
2 China if such projects do not provide incentives for the
3 migration and settlement of non-Mongolians into Southern
4 Mongolian areas or facilitate the transfer of ownership of
5 Southern Mongolian land and natural resources to non-
6 Mongolians, are based on a thorough needs-assessment,
7 foster self-sufficiency of the Southern Mongolian people,
8 respect Mongolian culture, traditions, and traditional live-
9 lihoods, and are subject to effective monitoring.

10 (c) PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT.—The Secretary
11 of State, in coordination with the Secretary of Commerce,
12 should encourage United States businesses and individuals
13 that are engaged in commerce or investing in enterprises
14 in areas designated as autonomous for Mongolians in the
15 People’s Republic of China to be guided by the United
16 Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human
17 Rights, including the creation, in consultation with other
18 relevant Departments, of a business advisory covering
19 such areas, with particular focus on the mining and ex-
20 tractive industries sector, that provides strict guidelines
21 not to directly or indirectly contribute to the violation of
22 the human rights of local Mongolians, harm to their com-
23 munities, or destruction of the natural environment and
24 traditional Mongolian way of life.

○