

the United States on their school campuses. Think about that. American universities are agreeing to comply with Chinese law on their campuses. This application of Chinese law at these schools can result, of course, in exporting China's censorship of political debate and prevent discussion of politically sensitive topics.

As such, numerous U.S. school officials told the subcommittee that Confucius Institutes were not the place to discuss topics like the independence of Taiwan, Tibet, or the Tiananmen Square massacre. Put simply, as one U.S. school administrator told us: "You know what you're getting when something is funded by the Chinese government."

Investigators from the Government Accountability Office also spoke with U.S. officials, who acknowledge that hosting the Confucius Institute could limit events or activities critical of China, not just at the Confucius Institute but also elsewhere on campus.

In response to the growing popularity of Confucius Institutes, the United States initiated its own public diplomacy program in China through the State Department. The Chinese Government effectively shut it down. Since 2010, the State Department has provided \$5.1 million in grant funding for 29 American Cultural Centers in China. Through this program, a U.S. school would partner with a Chinese school to set up a cultural center, which would enable Chinese students to better understand our country, our culture.

The Chinese Government stifled the program from the start. Seven of the 29 American Cultural Centers never even opened. Of those that did open, they needed permission from the Chinese partner schools, sometimes including local Chinese Communist Party officials, just to hold events. Eventually, because of the obstacles, the State Department stopped funding the program altogether. There are four programs remaining. They are all going to be phased out entirely by this summer.

We heard some very interesting testimony today from the State Department—testimony that details the academic environment in China that has made it impossible for us to have the kind of freedom they enjoy over here. The State Department testimony aligns with the findings of our investigation.

For example, while the State Department conducts various public diplomacy programs in China, the Chinese Government has increasingly impeded access to some segments of Chinese society, including Chinese schools and universities. All Chinese institutions, including universities, have a foreign affairs officer or a "gatekeeper" that is an internal governmental office that manages contact between the non-Chinese entities and the institution. Any Chinese institutions that wish to interact with foreign government officials must obtain approval first from this gatekeeper.

The State Department even told us that the Fulbright Program, a prestigious and longstanding student exchange program, is impeded as Chinese authorities have prevented Chinese alumni of the Fulbright Program from forming a Fulbright Association, a standard practice in other countries. We even heard directly from an American educator who was detained by the Chinese police and questioned extensively about her involvement with a State Department grant. While the Department of State said they conveyed to the Chinese Government that it expects reciprocal access for U.S. diplomats in our programs, it is not happening. Obviously, more needs to be done.

While the State Department is mostly known for its overseas diplomatic efforts, it also has oversight responsibilities right here in the United States with regard to these Confucius Institutes. The State Department conducts field site reviews to ensure that foreign nationals who come to the United States on these Exchange Visitor Programs have visas that are appropriate and that they are here for the stated reason.

There are roughly 100 Confucius Institutes at colleges and universities in America, yet the State Department has conducted field visits only to two of them. At those two, they found serious problems. At the Confucius Institute, the State Department revoked more than 30 visas for Chinese visitors who were supposed to be working at the university that sponsored their visa but were actually teaching in the K-12 environment. They also discovered evidence of "fraudulent paperwork and coaching" that was a "deliberate attempt to deceive" investigators, according to the State Department.

The Chinese director coached the Chinese teachers to tell the State Department they were working on research programs that they really weren't working on at the university's campus.

State also told us it does not collect the visa information specifically related to the Confucius Institute, so we don't know how many Confucius Institute teachers there are or where they are. Again, they visited only 2 schools out of 100, and in those they found serious problems with regard to the State Department's responsibilities on visas.

Our investigation also identified failures at the Department of Education that have contributed to a lack of transparency and oversight at schools that take money from foreign governments. If a U.S. school receives more than \$250,000 from a single foreign source in 1 year, it is required by law to report that data to the Department of Education, which, in turn, publishes it on its website. The Department of Education, however, has not issued any guidance on foreign gift reporting for 14 years, the same year that China opened its first Confucius Institute, and our investigation was able to find

that 70 percent of the colleges and universities that should have reported receiving funds for Confucius Institutes from China did not; 70 percent are out of compliance. When a school fails to report a foreign gift, the Department of Justice can force the school to comply, but only at the request of the Secretary of Education. The Department of Education has never referred this type of case to them—never.

We received two important commitments at the hearing this morning. One is the Department of Education has committed to issuing new guidance to the more than 3,000 schools it oversees. This guidance is important to ensure that schools know that they are obligated to report receiving these foreign government funding sources. They also agreed to step up their enforcement on the law on reporting foreign government funds from Confucius Institutes.

The State Department committed this morning to do more to ensure visas are being properly used at Confucius Institutes around the country. Again, they conducted only two site reviews. They have to do more, and they said they will. We are going to follow up on that.

As with all of our investigations, we are developing legislation aimed at addressing the problems identified here today. I want to call attention, as I conclude, to a news report that came out just a couple of days ago. The Chinese Communist Party's central committee and the Cabinet published a document stating that the Confucius Institutes will remain "a key government policy." Specifically, the news report plans to "optimize" the spread of Confucius Institutes. While it is unclear what "optimize" means at this point, any legislation must try to anticipate the potential rebranding of Confucius Institutes or other efforts that may seek to avoid the transparency, disclosure, and reciprocity that is needed if these programs are to continue on our campuses.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

TRIBUTE TO BRUCE KING

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I know my good friend from Georgia has to get somewhere, and I have to get somewhere. I will be very brief.

I want to take a moment to pay tribute. We have staffers here who are just unsung heroes. They work day in and day out. Because of their diligent work, the world and the country is a better place.

One of these people who works in quiet dignity and gets so much done and is so well respected is Bruce King. He has been indispensable at my office, and today, this afternoon, it is my unfortunate duty to say farewell to Bruce.

He has worked in the Senate in some capacity since 1984. He has worked for Judiciary, Senator Lautenberg, the Budget Committee, and as the senior

counsel for multiple Democratic leaders on the Federal budget, stretching from Leader Daschle to Leader Reid to me. In that short time, Bruce wasn't short of legislative achievement, from negotiating the balanced budget agreement of 1997 to blocking the privatization of Social Security in 2006, from shepherding health reform through the Senate to passing the financial rescue bill after the crisis in 2008.

One of our most distinguished Senators would be proud of that record. Their name would be in lights. Bruce did all of that and much more in his, as I said, quiet, steadfast, brilliant dignity.

I have never sat on the Budget or Appropriations Committees, so when I became leader, having his experience and wisdom was incredible. I have met no one who could take these complex issues and put them in terms that even someone like myself could understand, not being an expert on those things. He was able to understand the big picture and never get caught in the minutia, although he knew the minutia extremely well.

When you ask Bruce's opinion on a matter, he presents it so succinctly and persuasively that you know it is the right answer in a matter of minutes, until he decides to play devil's advocate against his first opinion and convinces you of the opposite because he is one of those staffers who has never had an ax to grind. He said: Let my Senators know both sides, and let them decide.

But we knew both sides so well and so lucidly because of Bruce's ability to take these issues and help us understand them.

He can juggle so many variables in his head at once. He can weigh the pros and cons. He has an instinctive knowledge of how to deal with the tradeoffs, and he can keep it all in a simple way.

He is a modest man. He has sat at the same desk in the Capitol for 14 years. Every day, he brings his lunch—peanut butter and jelly sandwiches—and he leaves the office at almost the same time every night to have dinner at home with Janis, his beloved wife.

Senators get the spotlight and the credit when our initiatives succeed, but so many initiatives would never have succeeded without Bruce King. Bruce, through the years, deserves an ocean of credit for his work. He would never claim a drop of it because he is a humble man.

For all his expertise, he is humble, kindhearted, and thoughtful. Everyone likes him. In all the years he has worked here, I never heard a single person say a single bad thing about him. That is a pretty good tribute in a place like the Senate.

Bruce's departure will be a loss to his friends and colleagues and to the Senate as a whole and, of course, to my office.

There is only one bad thing I can say about him. He switched his allegiance from the New York Mets to the Nation-

als. The good news is that he will be able to catch some more games with Janis, his son Aaron, and his daughter Liana.

Bruce, you are a blessing to our office, to the Senate, and to the country. We wish you the best.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, to the Democratic leader and Bruce, who is on the floor, congratulations on behalf of all the Republicans in the room.

Come down to Atlanta and watch the Braves play the Mets. We would be happy to have you anytime. Thank you for your time here.

DISASTER RELIEF

Mr. President, I will be very brief. Two things happen at this time of day every day in the Senate and only two. The first is that the last person having their say finally gets up and says it, which means that you all have to listen to me for a minute. When the last person speaks, they don't tell you anything new. They tell you what everybody else said in a different way. You get to hear a small speech about that.

The other thing that happens is that SHELDON WHITEHOUSE comes to the floor and talks about global warming. That happens every day. SHELDON hasn't been down here. I don't know if he is sick. I don't know where he is. I am going to replace SHELDON for a minute.

Every day goes by, and we ought to talk about climate change and things like that. I am going to talk about disaster relief, which ties right into climate change. I am not a global warming guy, except to say I think it is going on. It has been going on since the planet was created. It will be going on long since we are gone. How tough it is depends on our dealing with it—how we sequester carbon, how we manage carbon, and how we have businesses and industries find new ways to fuel their industries and fuel their mechanisms, and things like that.

Tell SHELDON when you see him that I came down to talk about how we do need to address these things. It is all of our responsibility. We can address it in a positive way, just like we did in the Montreal Protocol, where 25 years ago we got rid of fluorocarbons that were drilling a hole in the atmosphere and causing us to have terrible cancer of the skin.

Tell SHELDON I have listened to him. I heard some of his great speeches. Mine is not nearly as close to how good his are. I wanted to make sure a day didn't go by without our saying what SHELDON says.

I want to talk about the disaster bill that Senator LEAHY, only a few minutes ago on the floor, talked about, and I want to talk about the urgent job we need to do in the Senate.

We had terrible disasters in the South and Southeast 3 years ago. We had hurricanes, floods, and tornadoes. Billions of dollars were lost in South

Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Tennessee, and other locations. We failed to meet the disaster demands that we have to help those farmers and ag producers and business and industries to get back on their feet.

We now have a dire crisis. We have an emergency in the Southeast. It is time we got the disaster bill that we have been trying to pass for a year passed. We had it as a rider twice. We had it as a rider on the bill that was going to end the shutdown. At the last minute, it got negotiated out of the picture, not because it was a bad bill but because nobody would leave it in there and it did free up some money.

We have until March 15 to get it done. If we don't, there are going to be farmers in most of the Southeast who are going out of business. Industries that this Nation depends on will be terrible. You will pay way too much for your food. I don't know about you, but if you don't have nutrition to go with the energy you need, you don't have anything.

I am here to plead with every Democrat and every Republican that when we get the bill to the floor—and it will be some time before March 15—to support the disaster relief bill for the Southeastern United States and for Puerto Rico. The Democrats wanted so badly to add Puerto Rico to it, and the President signed off on that part. So we don't have a problem with the executive branch. I ask you to support all of the other provisions in it to see that those who were so badly damaged get their relief.

Let me tell you what that relief is. I am not talking about a handout. As an example, I am talking about the pecan industry that is housed in my State of Georgia. It is a tremendous industry in Asia. It is a tremendous export in the United States, with a tremendous balance of payments which contribute to our country. Well, 70 percent was wiped out. It takes 15 to 20 years to replace a pecan orchard. They have to start growth from a seedling to be a full, maturing tree to produce the crops to get to the marketplace.

Some of our crops are annual crops. A lot of them are long-term longevity crops. It is very important that we get them back on their feet. We will reclaim our place in the marketplace, but if we don't, somebody will take it away from us. Maybe it is Egypt, maybe it is India, or maybe it is somebody else.

I am down here to say that climate does change and we can do something about it by addressing carbon. And the economy changes. We can do something about it by helping industries.

When disasters come, if they are not responded to quickly and resolutely, they end up causing big losses to everybody in business, in productivity, and in our industries.

I want to ask everybody on the floor to please join me—hopefully, before the 15th or at least by the 14th of March—