

that this bill that we are promoting, which just passed the House unanimously on a bipartisan basis, also protects the 6,700 students here in the United States with student visas from being forced to return to Hong Kong when our State Department is warning Americans it is unsafe for them to travel to Hong Kong? Is that not true?

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. The Senator from Illinois is absolutely right, and I was just going to, as a matter of fact, make that point because I think it is central to the objection that has been raised.

In fact, the people in danger here are already here. They are in danger if they are sent back, as they would be without that temporary protected status. So that point, I think, refutes, essentially, the argument that has just been made by our colleague from Texas.

Mr. DURBIN. If the Senator would yield further for a question—and this notion that the Chinese in the United States are all suspect spies, is it really—is that the point you want to make? Is that really the point you want to make? Do we have background checks involved here? Do we have screening involved here?

We are all intent on keeping America safe, but to categorize a group of people as all potential spies—and, therefore, they are going to all be fed to the lions of Beijing if they are returned—seems to me to be fundamentally unfair and not consistent with what America has learned about immigration. There were suspicions in World War II about all those people coming from Europe, and they were turned away, many of them to their death. We can't make that mistake again. If there is any suspect person, there is a way to determine that with screening, criminal background checks, and the like.

So the 6,700 who are here, we were told at the hearing—I think you were there; it may have been a minute or two before you arrived—one of them is a student of Georgetown, for example, who now has a price on his head from the Chinese Communist Party, and the question is whether we are going to force him to return into imprisonment. I don't think we want anyone who is suspected of spying on the United States at all, but to dismiss all of these people as possible spies doesn't sound to me—does it sound to you?—as consistent with who we are as a people.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. To answer the Senator from Illinois very directly, it is totally antithetical to the principles of democracy in the United States of America. It is totally abhorrent to the values of our constitutional Nation, and it is, frankly, absurd.

Here we are, according to my colleague from Texas, standing up and being tough on China, and we are doing what? We are sending back their opponents so they can imprison them and kill them? That is the notion of being tough on China—to enable them to im-

prison and kill their political opponents?

I ask my colleague from Texas to rethink the practical implications of this measure and to consider why the House of Representatives unanimously passed this. It doesn't lower the standards for political refugees coming to this country. It doesn't eliminate any security checks. It takes people, many of them living here already—not spies, by any means—and sends them back to the meat grinder of the repressive Chinese Communist Party. It may sound like good rhetoric to oppose this bill, but my colleague from Texas heard the testimony of these freedom fighters and why they need temporary protected status and why they support a safe harbor.

So I continue to insist that this bill, like the Rubio-Menendez bill, protects essential American values, and I ask him to reconsider his objection.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 3835

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, my colleague from Connecticut just said that they were being tough on China. As I explained, this bill is not being tough on China.

But a bit of good news: They will have the opportunity, moments from now, to in fact be tough on China. I have introduced, roughly, a dozen separate pieces of legislation designed to do exactly that, to stand up to the Chinese Communist Government. I am glad also to see my Democratic colleagues discovering the human rights travesties that are playing out in China.

Look, my family knows the oppression of Communist governments. My father was imprisoned and tortured in Cuba. My aunt, my Tia Sonia, was imprisoned and tortured by Fidel Castro's thugs. So, when it comes for standing for dissidents, there is a reason why, for 8 years, I have gone to the Senate floor over and over and over again speaking up for dissidents who are being tortured and oppressed by Communists. Here is a chance for the Democrats to join us in that regard.

Mr. President, there are two separate bills that I have introduced that I am going to discuss. The first is a bill called the SCRIPT Act.

For years, we have known that China's surveillance state and censorship practices are used to maintain its human rights violations. And what this devastating pandemic has shown us is that China's surveillance state and its censorship practices are also profound threats to our national security, to our public health, and to our public debate, as the Chinese Government hid information about the COVID-19 pandemic that began in Wuhan, China, hid it for months on end and allowed millions across the globe to be threatened—their lives and health and safety to be threatened.

In addition to their espionage activities, the Chinese Communist Party in-

vests billions into spreading propaganda, even using American media outlets, telecommunication infrastructure, movies, and sports teams to spread their propaganda, from buying media outlets so that they broadcast propaganda into America to coercing Hollywood studios and sports leagues to self-censor by threatening to cut off access to one of the world's largest markets. The Chinese Communist Party spends billions and billions of dollars to mislead Americans about China and to try to shape what we see, what we hear and think.

All of these activities are part of China's whole-of-state approach to amass influence around the world through information warfare, and we need to stand together to stop it.

That is why I will be momentarily asking for unanimous consent on the SCRIPT Act, which would cut off Hollywood studios from the assistance they currently receive from the U.S. Federal Government if those studios allow the Chinese Communist Government to censor what they are producing.

We have seen this pattern over and over and over again—Hollywood being complicit in China's censorship and propaganda in the name of bigger profit. "Bohemian Rhapsody," a wonderful biography of Freddie Mercury and story of the band Queen—well, the Chinese Government was upset that Freddie Mercury was homosexual and demanded that Hollywood censor scenes that showed that Freddie Mercury was homosexual. And Hollywood—those great, woke social warriors that they are—compliantly said: We are more interested in the money than in artistic integrity, than in telling Freddie Mercury's story, so the Chinese Government will happily edit out those scenes.

"Doctor Strange," another movie—comic book movie—in "Doctor Strange," they changed the Ancient One's character from being from Tibet, which is how it is portrayed in the comic book, to Celtic because, you know, the Chinese Communist censors, they don't want to recognize Tibet—another area that has been subject to persecution and oppression from China—and Hollywood meekly complied.

In the sequel to "Top Gun," the back of Maverick's jacket—if you remember the first "Top Gun," maybe the greatest Navy recruiting film ever made—you find the Taiwanese flag and the Japanese flag. The Chinese censors didn't like that, and so Hollywood meekly removed the flags. What does it say to the world when Maverick is scared of the Chinese Communists?

I would point out, unfortunately, the Chinese censorship is being carried out by Hollywood billionaires who are getting richer in the process.

In recent days, it has been reported that one of Joe Biden's top potential choices to be Ambassador to China is the former CEO of Disney, who happens

to be a major Democratic donor. Disney just came out with the movie “Mulan.” In the movie “Mulan,” which the director described as “a love letter to China”—well, this love letter wasn’t subtle because right in the credits at the end of “Mulan,” they thanked oppressive government forces that are running concentration camps right now, with over 1 million Uighurs imprisoned. Disney gleefully thanked the jackbooted thugs who are carrying out torture and murder, and apparently the leader of that effort is one of the top candidates to be America’s Ambassador to China.

The Senator from Illinois and the Senator from Connecticut said: “We need to stand with people who are oppressed.” I agree.

Look, Hollywood could say whatever they want, but there is no reason the Federal Government should facilitate their censorship on behalf of the Chinese Communists. The SCRIPT Act says: If you are going to let the Chinese Communists censor your movies, you are not going to get access to the jet planes and to the ships and all the different material of the Federal Government that are used in movies.

Moments ago, the Senator from Connecticut said they want to be tough on China. Well, we are about to see how tough they are on China.

Mr. DURBIN. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. CRUZ. I will happily yield for a question.

Mr. DURBIN. Can you tell me, if you are successful and if you hit Hollywood hard, how that provides any solace to the 6,700 Hong Kong students in America who are facing deportation back to prison in China?

Mr. CRUZ. The Senator from Illinois asked a question. Let me tell you how it provides solace—because people who are in hell holes, they listen to what we are saying. People who are in hell holes, they hear the voice—you know, some time ago, I had the chance to sit down with Natan Sharansky, the famed Soviet dissident. He and I sat down and visited in Jerusalem. Natan told me about how, when he was in a Soviet gulag, that in the cells, from cell to cell, they would pass notes: Did you hear what Ronald Reagan said? The Soviet Union is an evil empire. Marxism-Leninism will end up on the ash heap of history. “Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall.”

And I will tell you how people here—because if the Senator from Illinois will remember, I introduced legislation to rename the street in front of the Chinese Embassy in the United States “Liu Xiaobo Plaza,” after Liu Xiaobo, the Nobel Peace laureate who was—let me finish answering your question. If you want to propound a second one, I am happy to answer that one too. Liu Xiaobo was the Nobel Peace laureate wrongfully imprisoned in China. And the strategy of renaming the street in front of the Embassy is the strategy Reagan employed renaming the street

in front of the Soviet Embassy “Sakharov Plaza.”

Twice I stood on this floor seeking unanimous consent, and twice a Democrat—the senior Senator from California—stood up and objected. At one point, the senior Senator from California said: Well, if we do this, it will embarrass the Chinese Government.

I responded: You are understanding correctly. And that is not a bug; it is a feature. That is the purpose.

Let me tell you what happened to that. Twice, Democrats objected to the legislation. I then placed a hold on President Obama’s nominees to the State Department.

The Obama administration came to me and said: How could we move these nominees forward? How could we move them forward?

I said: It is very simple. Pass my legislation, and I will lift the hold.

The Democratic caucus didn’t like that, but they ultimately agreed. So the legislation I introduced to rename the street in front of the Chinese Embassy “Liu Xiaobo Plaza” passed this body unanimously.

Ultimately, the House didn’t take it up and pass it, but I will tell you how that story ends. That story ends in 2017 when I was sitting down with Rex Tillerson for breakfast in Foggy Bottom—the new U.S. Secretary of State. When he spoke to his Chinese counterparts, he said: They have come back and said that among their top three diplomatic objectives with us is to stop your bill to rename the street in front of the Embassy. They are terrified by the sunlight and sunshine on the dissidents.

At the time, Liu Xiaobo had passed, but his widow, Liu Xia, was still in China, still wrongfully held back. I told Secretary of State Tillerson: I will tell you what. You tell the Chinese that if they release Liu Xia, if they let her get out, I will stop pressing this particular bill. If they don’t, I will keep pressing it, and we will pass it again because we have already done it.

Within weeks, China released Liu Xia.

So you ask, how does this help the people in prison? By not having Hollywood media moguls spreading Chinese propaganda.

But let me give you a second choice, very directly. Do you want to know how people are helped? It is a second bill called the SHAME Act, which, if our Democratic colleagues want to be tough on China, we could pass right now.

What does the SHAME Act do? The SHAME Act focuses in particular on human rights atrocities. It focuses on over 1 million Uighurs in concentration camps and other religious minorities and the Falun Gong practitioners who are captured and murdered and whose organs are harvested. And the Chinese Communist Party engages in yet another horror.

My Democratic colleagues like to say on the question of abortion that they

are pro-choice. Well, the Chinese Communist government right now is engaging in forced sterilizations and forced abortions, taking Uighur mothers and forcing them to abort their children against their will.

Whatever the Democrats’ views on abortion in the United States as a matter of a woman’s choice, surely they must be united in saying that a government forcing a woman to abort her child, to take the life of her unborn child, is an unspeakable atrocity.

So the SHAME Act does something very simple: It imposes sanctions on the Chinese Communist government leaders responsible for implementing this horrific, 1984-style policy of forced sterilizations and forced abortions.

I had intended to seek unanimous consent for the SHAME Act as well, but my Democratic colleagues have said they are not yet able to find a Democrat to object, although my understanding is they intend to. I hope they reconsider that.

A terrific ending for today’s debate would be passing the SHAME Act and saying: We are all standing together against forced abortions and grotesque human rights violations. Maybe that will happen. Maybe it won’t. But let’s find out where we are on the question of the SCRIPT Act.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President. The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HAWLEY). The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I think we have gone a little bit far afield from the six pro-democracy activists living abroad.

Mr. CRUZ. If the Senator from Connecticut—I have not yet yielded the floor. I am about to ask unanimous consent, so—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be discharged from further consideration of S. 3835 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; further, that this bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, reserving the right to object on the SCRIPT Act, which I understand is the only measure so far on which the Senator from Texas is seeking unanimous consent, very simply, he knows, I know, we all know that measure will never reach the President’s desk. There is simply no way it can pass both Houses of Congress in the next few days before the end of this Congress.

The only way we can do something for the freedom fighters and democracy

advocates in Communist China is to pass this measure that he has objected to, which has unanimously passed the House of Representatives. Only H.R. 8428 offers that opportunity, and frankly, only this measure that he has objected to does anything for the dissidents or the democracy advocates or the freedom fighters directly.

He is talking about movies; we are talking about human lives. He can draw all the kinds of hypothetical connections between the so-called movie moguls in Hollywood and China, but I think his SCRIPT Act actually works against the goal that he is advocating.

Censorship in China is a legitimate concern, no question about it, and I would welcome the opportunity to work with him on a bill that does something about it. But actually his bill not only takes away the support for the movies that may be made; it takes away support for documentaries about the repressive regime in China, and it takes away classification and other security screening that are necessary for those kinds of movies to be shown in this country. I think that kind of obstacle may be inadvertent on his part. But I welcome the chance to work with him on a bipartisan bill, a truly bipartisan bill that, in fact, in the next Congress could reach the President's desk. This one that he is offering, the SCRIPT Act, goes nowhere.

But I just want to bring us back to the reality that really is at issue here. Just last Wednesday afternoon of this week, two of the activists among the six pro-democracy fighters living abroad, charged under China's new national security law, were before our committee. I am wondering what they are thinking when they hear my colleague from Texas pounding the table about being tough on China but objecting to a bill that guarantees them protection. As I say, I am talking about their lives and tens of thousands of others. I am not talking about movies. I am not talking about Hollywood moguls.

Let's stand up for the lives of those Chinese Hong Kong freedom fighters now in this country seeking protection through a bill passed unanimously by the House of Representatives—the only bill that will go to the President's desk if we approve it.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Three brief observations: No. 1, the Senator from Connecticut said multiple times that the House bill in question passed the House unanimously. I am sure this is inadvertent, but what the Senator from Connecticut said is simply wrong. It passed the House by voice vote, which is a very different thing from passing unanimously. It simply means the vote tally was not recorded.

Secondly, the Senator from Connecticut said the SCRIPT Act is not going to pass this Congress. Well, that appears to be correct, but that is for one reason and one reason only, which is the final two words uttered by the Senator from Connecticut: "I object."

Quite literally by doing nothing, quite literally by giving the identical speech he had just given and then closing his mouth before those final two words—had that occurred, the SCRIPT Act would have passed this body unanimously.

So the only reason the SCRIPT Act isn't passing is because the Senate Democrats are objecting. And it should not be lost on anybody that the Hollywood billionaires who are enriching themselves with this Chinese propaganda are among the biggest political donors to today's Democratic Party in the entire country.

The Senator from Connecticut said: Well, the SCRIPT Act might make it possible to have documentaries on the human rights abuses in China. Oh, really. That argument staggers the mind. It so defies reality because—you know what—Hollywood doesn't make movies about the human rights abuses in China.

Earlier this year, I had the opportunity to meet Richard Gear. Now, Richard Gear is not someone you would ordinarily imagine palling around with a conservative Republican from Texas, but Richard Gear was up here. He was up here actually standing up against Chinese abuses and urging anyone who would listen—Republican or Democrat—to stand with him.

Do you know Richard Gear has not made a single major Hollywood movie in a decade? Why? Because he dared stand with Tibet, and the Hollywood billionaires blackballed Richard Gear. If you speak out for Tibet, if you do what the Senator from Connecticut just suggested and discuss the Chinese human rights abuses—it doesn't matter that Richard Gear used to be an A-list Hollywood blockbuster actor—boom—his career is dead because no studio will produce a movie with him because he spoke the truth.

By the way, my bill presents zero barriers to someone actually making a documentary on the human rights abuses in China because, presumably, if you are making that documentary, you wouldn't allow the Chinese Communist Government to censor it.

I don't know what kind of documentaries the Senator from Connecticut is familiar with, but I am not familiar with documentaries done on tyrants and concentration camps where you let the concentration camp guards edit out the stuff they don't like. That ain't a documentary.

The Senator from Connecticut said perhaps we can work together in a bipartisan manner to address this. I hope so. Standing together against the oppression of the Chinese Communists would be a very good thing for the U.S. Senate. It would be a very good thing

for our country. Unfortunately, at least today, that hasn't yet happened.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, the only ones happy with the outcome of today's debate are the Chinese Government. I regret this outcome because there probably was a time when we would have cooperated in a bipartisan way on both of these matters.

It may not have been unanimous. There may have been a few contrary votes in the House, but clearly it came here with bipartisan support, and I regret that the outcome today is not bipartisan agreement to protect those freedom fighters who came before the Judiciary Committee and who have risked their lives.

This issue is not going away. We will be back because, fortunately, the activists from Hong Kong will persist in their fight, and we ought to do everything we can to make sure they have a safe haven in this country and that they are protected here.

So my closing plea to my colleague from Texas is that maybe there remains time, even in this setting, but, if not, we need to take a stand as a nation against Chinese censorship, against repression by the Chinese, and come together and work together. I thank the chairman.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, the first thing I want to do is comment on the discussions we just had.

I have been up here a little less than 2 years, and the thing that surprises me is, invariably, the Democrats won't stand up against the Communist Party in China.

The case that we are dealing with now is they are going to stand up for Hollywood rather than rights, rights that we have here that I am going to talk about in a second.

We ought to be standing up against Communist China stealing our jobs, our technology. We ought to be attacking the Communist Party for what they have done to Uighurs, for organ harvesting, for taking away the basic rights of Hong Kong citizens.

Invariably, I watch my Democratic colleagues; they won't stand up against Communist China. I don't understand it. This is a party that clearly wants to dominate our society, our way of life. They completely disagree with our way of life.

I want to thank Senator TED CRUZ for his continued fight for rights, for all the rights that we have in this country but fighting for those rights so people, whether in Hong Kong or in Communist China or in Taiwan, have the same freedoms that we have.

So I want to thank Senator TED CRUZ for showing up today and doing this.

Mr. CRUZ. Thank you.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. RES. 806

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, today what I want to talk about is religious freedom. Religious liberty is our