



The Honorable Bill Cassidy
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
U.S. Senate
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building,
Washington, DC, 20510

Dear Ranking Member Cassidy,

An investigation conducted by our partner organization, Parents Defending Education (PDE), exposed how millions of dollars of China-linked funding has flowed into America's K-12 classrooms. Through records requests and publicly available information, it was discovered that 143 school districts across the United States have engaged in contracts to establish Confucius Institutes and Classrooms, including in three of the nation's top science and technology high schools.

Considering China's adversarial relationship with the United States, this poses significant security risks that warrant immediate attention from your committee. The Chinese government has long touted their Confucius programming to advance their strategic goals around the world. In 2009, former Chinese Communist Party Senior Chairman Li Changchun admitted that Confucius Institutes were an "important part of China's overseas propaganda set-up" and in 2017 Chinese government officials lauded the programs as a way to push China's Belt and Road initiative.

Security concerns with these China-led courses in America's schools are well documented. In 2020, Confucius Institutes were deemed a "foreign mission" by the State Department. The Chinese Communist Party has been exploiting these connections to America's education system to shape Americans' perception of China. This access also presents vulnerabilities that could compromise student information and give unfettered access to our curriculums. Through these established programming, in some instances China was also given access to vet and oversee the classes taking place in our classrooms.

Below are a few examples of the alarming relationships China's government has established with American K-12 classrooms:

- The Simpson County Board of Education in Kentucky entered into an agreement with the North China Electric Power University to develop the Confucius Institute of Western Kentucky. The [North China Electric Power University](#) works directly with the Chinese government's energy sector to push China's global energy initiatives. The Chinese International Education Foundation (CIEF) tasked the university with selecting more than 34 Chinese teachers to send to Simpson County Public Schools for the 2020-2021 school year.
- Two Chinese nationals taught Mandarin at Appoquinimink School District in Delaware during the 2012-2013 school year. According to a district webpage, these teachers underwent a "rigorous selection process" in China. This includes interviews with Chinese government officials "at the national level."

- While CIEF sponsored some Confucius Classroom initiatives, like Tulsa Public School's Chinese language and culture program, other districts, like Fulton County Schools in Georgia, paid tens of thousands of dollars to host Chinese teachers.

We find these programs deeply concerning and believe American families deserve full transparency on foreign resources used to fund their children's education. We urge the committee to investigate this issue further, specifically to conduct oversight, hold hearings, and call on the Department of Education to implement necessary measures to protect children and American curriculums from foreign influence. We look forward to working with you on this important matter.

Respectfully,

Michele P. Exner
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Senior Advisor, Parents Defending Education