



Testimony in Support of SB 528 - prohibiting receiving compensation for lobbying on behalf of a foreign adversary.

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Chairman Hunt and members of the Committee:

I am grateful for the opportunity to submit this testimony in support of SB 528 on behalf of State Shield. We are a nonprofit founded in 2023 by Joe Gebbia and created to educate state legislators, governors, attorneys general, and thought leaders on the real threat that the People's Republic of China, the Chinese Communist Party, and their allied nations represent to the security not only of the United States but also to the security of each individual state and its citizens.

I want to highlight the very real threat that foreign influence from China and other hostile foreign nations represents to the citizens of New Hampshire.

First, in its quest to build its international power, China's Communist government has worked to cultivate thought leaders and government officials at every level: local, state, and federal. "Its agents cultivate aspiring politicians, business elites, and academics early in their careers and use these relationships to influence policymaking decades later, largely unbeknownst to their victims."¹ As a result, State legislators and officials are increasingly being pressured by those working on behalf of foreign adversaries hostile to the interests of the American people: especially China. China actively recruits state and local government officials to do its bidding, as demonstrated recently by the case of a high-ranking aide to the Governor of New York.²

Second, lobbying by companies, individuals, and other entities controlled by China and other autocratic governments is not "business as usual." In 2017, China passed a national law requiring that its citizens and businesses provide the government with assistance in its espionage activities.³ Thus, if a Chinese company has proprietary information acquired through its US work that the government wants, there is little opportunity to say "no." China's government and military have used their influence over companies based in or controlled by China to build "back doors" in technology products sold in the US, allowing Chinese authorities to use these products for espionage and create "kill switches." To advance these efforts, China has heavily subsidized certain industries with the goal of driving out manufacturing based in free-market economies so that Chinese products, many with built-in "back doors," are the only option. We've seen this

¹ Heritage Foundation, "Why State Legislatures Must Confront Chinese Infiltration" (2022), available at https://www.heritage.org/sites/default/files/2022-07/SR259_0.pdf

² <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/11/12/nyregion/linda-sun-china-trial.html>

³ <https://www.axios.com/2024/03/15/tiktok-ban-security-china-laws>

with electrical grid systems, drones, cars, cranes, and other devices often purchased by governments. As a result, there is a compelling state interest in limiting the influence of individuals, companies, and other entities that are under the control of China or its autocratic allies.

This bill is designed to fulfill this compelling interest of the State in barring “foreign citizens from activities intimately related to the process of democratic self-government.” It does so not by limiting the free speech rights of Americans, but rather by ensuring that hostile foreign governments and entities are barred from hiring paid lobbyists to advocate for their interests before elected and appointed public servants here in New Hampshire.⁴ If we can agree that representatives of a hostile foreign government have no right to come to this building and lobby legislators, then neither should they have the right to pay someone else to do their bidding..

I encourage New Hampshire to join the many other states that have already or are in the process of protecting our precious democratic process from foreign influence.

⁴ See “Can Congress Limit the Ability of China (or other Foreign Nations) to Lobby U.S. Officials? Statutory and Constitutional Considerations.” July 18, 2022 (Heritage Foundation), available at <https://www.heritage.org/the-constitution/report/can-congress-limit-the-ability-china-or-other-foreign-nations-lobby-us>

