



December 3, 2021

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken,

I am writing today to express my profound concerns about recent reports that the White House and members of the State Department are actively working to slow down and dilute the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act in Congress.

I am grateful that this Administration has rightly declared what is happening to the Uyghur people as genocide. In June, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) unanimously passed a resolution rightly calling what's happening to the Uyghurs a genocide. The SBC was the first denomination to pass such a resolution. Now is the time for actionable steps to counter China morally. What we have seen thus far is not nearly enough. Human rights cannot be overshadowed by climate change, corporate interests, or other issues.

The Uyghur people are forced to produce goods that are then sold around the world. Currently, any brand sourcing apparel, textiles, yarn, or cotton from the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) is almost certainly profiting from forced Uyghur labor. This despicable practice is a clear vio-



lation of human rights, and the United States must hold China accountable for these atrocities.

The Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act passed the U.S. Senate by unanimous consent and prohibits goods made with forced labor in the XUAR or by entities using Uyghur labor forcibly transferred from the XUAR from entering the U.S. market. This legislation also instructs the U.S. government to impose sanctions against any foreign person who knowingly engages in the forced labor of Uyghurs and other Muslim minority groups in the XUAR.

Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL) has a proposed amendment to the NDAA to include the language of the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act. While some have raised concerns about the amendment, that should not be an excuse for inaction or slowing down the passage of these requirements. Instead, the Administration should be insisting that Congressional Leadership work to overcome any procedural hurdles about this language and request it be fast-tracked to the President's desk.

The United States must send a strong message to the Chinese Communist Party that products made through forced labor will not be accepted because these egregious inhumane practices will not be tolerated. It is unconscionable for the United States to ultimately be accomplices in profiting from slave labor. In holding the CCP accountable for the horrors that occur on a daily basis in the labor camps of Xinjiang, the United States has the opportunity to send a clear message that total disregard for human dignity will not be tolerated.



I am deeply concerned with reports from outlets such as the Washington Post, Associated Press and Real Clear Politics that Deputy Secretary of State Wendy R. Sherman and U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, John F. Kerry are interfering with the passage of this legislation.

The Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act is a necessary step for the United States to rightly prioritize human dignity in China. It is unacceptable that members of this Administration would allow other concerns to supersede that of human rights and would work against this bill. Mr. Secretary, it should not be difficult to summon the courage necessary to do the right thing in this instance. Please direct your staff to do everything necessary to work with Congress to hasten the passage of this Act and get it to President Biden for his signature.

Respectfully,

Brent Leatherwood

Acting President

Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission