



## INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

### **ICT commends Senate report criticizing Chinese-funded Confucius Institutes at US schools**

<http://www.savetibet.org/ict-commends-senate-report-criticizing-chinese-funded-confucius-institutes-at-us-schools>

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The International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) today voiced support for a [US Senate report](#) criticizing Chinese government-funded Confucius Institutes for stifling discussion in American schools about Tibet and other topics that are banned in China.

The bipartisan report—released yesterday, Feb. 27, 2019, by the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs’ Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations—says the institutes demonstrate China’s lack of reciprocity with the US and calls for them to close down unless major changes are made.

“For too long, the government in Beijing has used its soft power as a Trojan Horse to spread its silencing of dissent to democratic countries,” ICT President Matteo Mecacci said. “After the [approval of the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act](#) by Congress at the end of last year—legislation that challenges China’s lack of reciprocity with the United States when it comes to access to Tibet—it is now time to denounce China’s lack of reciprocity also when it comes to academic freedom and other civil liberties.”

Mecacci added: “We applaud Chairman Rob Portman (R-Ohio), Ranking Member Tom Carper (D-Del.) and their colleagues on the Subcommittee for investigating China’s duplicitous use of Confucius Institutes and for producing this clarion report exposing China’s efforts to suppress discussion in the US about Tibet and other subjects that dispute Beijing’s one-sided narratives.”

#### **Shutting down discussion of Tibet**

According to the report, the US currently has more than 100 Confucius Institutes, which the Chinese government claims it funds and staffs in order to teach Chinese language classes at American colleges and universities.

In reality, the report notes several examples of China using Confucius Institutes to hide the truth about its brutal occupation of Tibet, a historically independent country that China invaded in 1949. Under Chinese rule, Tibet is now the site of major human rights violations and [the second least-free place on Earth](#), behind only Syria and worse than even North Korea, according to watchdog group Freedom House.

The Students for a Free Tibet and other Tibet groups have been launching a campaign to educate universities about the true nature of the Confucius Institutes and have been calling for their closure.

The Subcommittee report quotes Bill Priestap, assistant director of the FBI's counterintelligence division, who said, "there have been instances around the world in which [Confucius Institutes] have, say, quashed free speech, in particular, in regards to issues involving Tibet."

In addition, the report mentions a recent analysis by the Government Accountability Office, in which researchers said that schools with Confucius Institutes might choose not to host events on their campuses involving Tibet or other issues opposed by Chinese authorities.

### **Lack of reciprocity**

The report demonstrates how Confucius Institutes exemplify China's lack of reciprocity with the US.

In response to the popularity of Confucius Institutes, the US government began funding American Cultural Centers (ACCs) in China. However, the report notes that "the Chinese government stifled the establishment of the ACC program from the start" by interfering with the centers and refusing to let them operate freely. Funding for the program ended in 2018.

The report says that Confucius Institutes in the US should shut down barring "full transparency" from China and "full reciprocity for US cultural outreach efforts on college campuses in China."