

CONGRESSIONAL-EXECUTIVE COMMISSION ON CHINA  
STOP ORGAN HARVESTING ACT  
03/20/2024

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- Good afternoon Chairs Smith and Chair Merkley and members of the Commission. My name is Tom Oliverson, and I serve as a state representative in Texas, where I chair the Insurance Committee. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to be here today to speak about the horrific practice of forced organ harvesting.
- I first became aware of forced organ harvesting through the advocacy work of the Southern USA Falun Dafa Association.
- There is a sizeable number of Falun Gong practitioners in the Houston area where I live and represent, many of whom are political and religious refugees of China.
- Later, I was introduced to the Minaret Foundation and learned about their advocacy work on behalf of the Chinese Uyghur population.
- I have worked with both of these groups for several years to honor the victims of communism and recognize the horrors of forced organ harvesting, but our most significant victory came during the most recent Texas legislative session, when we passed SB 1040.
- Senate Bill 1040 is an attempt to prevent Texans from becoming unknowingly complacent in the act of forced organ harvesting. Senate Bill 1040 prohibits health benefit plan issuers from covering human organ transplants that are performed in China or in another country known to participate in forced organ harvesting and allows the commissioner of the Texas Department of State Health Services to designate additional countries who are known to participate in organ harvesting.

- Each bill and resolution that the Texas Legislature has passed addressing this extreme violation of human rights did so with overwhelming bipartisan support.
- To the extent we faced barriers in passing this legislation, they came from unexpected sources. For instance, we faced a decent amount of opposition from church groups who send missionaries to countries like China. They were fearful that their volunteers would need to undergo surgery during their missions and be unable to be reimbursed by their insurance companies. We were able to overcome this opposition, pass the bill, and send it to Governor Abbott.
- As Senate Bill 1040 was working its way through the legislative process, we were able to hold a press conference to allow those impacted by forced organ harvesting to share their stories. I believe these first hand accounts were the reason we were able to pass this bill with the overwhelming majority that we did.
- We had several survivors of Chinese detention camps share their powerful stories with us. They told us about the daily horrors of being a religious and political prisoner and about how often those in the camps would suddenly disappear—never to be seen again. They spoke of the horror of knowing what was happening to those that vanished and being unable to do anything to stop us. They shared that, because of their healthy lifestyles and abstinence from alcohol, Falun Gong practitioners and Uyghurs were most often targeted.
- I am confident that their bravery in sharing their stories helped us to pass this bill, which has now become a model for other states.
- Bills modeled after Senate Bill 1040 have already been heard in the Arizona House and the Utah Senate, where they successfully passed the committees. A similar bill in the Missouri House recently received a hearing, and Idaho and Illinois are also in the process of passing legislation.

- I am proud that the work we started in Texas is being modeled in other states, and I am so thankful for the work that is being done by the Commission to force this conversation at the national level.