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September 10, 2019

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 25000

Dear Mr. President,

I am writing to express serious concerns about the Chinese government's threat to democracy and respect for human rights in Hong Kong, and to call on your administration to make clear that the United States supports the people of Hong Kong in their desire for fundamental rights. The United States should stand unequivocally with our allies in Canada and the European Union in pressing the government in Beijing on these issues.

Furthermore, as I have written with respect to the human rights abuses of the Uyghur and central Asian Muslim population in Xinjiang, China, I call on your administration to ensure that U.S. exports are not abused by the Chinese government to commit human rights abuses in Hong Kong.

As you know, the people of Hong Kong have mobilized to oppose an extradition bill that would have made them subject to prosecution on the Chinese mainland, where they justly feared an unfair process. I am pleased to see that their civic engagement forced a withdrawal of this bill, but this is not enough to provide to Hong Kong the right to a representative government that was intended under the one country two systems policy. That call for democracy – as well as a call for an independent and transparent investigation into the excessive use of police force against the demonstrators – are motivating new demonstrations. We must support these calls.

This is an opportunity for the United States to demonstrate leadership in a number of ways. First, as the Chinese delegation attends the United Nations General Assembly meetings, they must hear unequivocally from the U.S. as well as our allies that respect for democracy in Hong Kong is a test of China's global standing. Second, you must ensure that your administration closely examines U.S. exports of crowd control equipment to Hong Kong that has reportedly been used to quell protests, potentially banning devices used to commit human rights abuses. As I had noted in my letter regarding exports of U.S. technologies used against the Muslim Chinese communities, technologically advanced devices could even be modified by an adversary, and then pose a threat to both American values and our national security.

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I strongly urge you and your administration to uphold fundamental human rights by taking a strong stand in calling on the Chinese government to address Hong Kong's calls for democracy and justice, and directing a review of American crowd control tools used to repress the Hong Kong protesters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kirsten Gillibrand". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a thin horizontal line.

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator