

October 8, 2024

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hakeem S. Jeffries
Democratic Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker Johnson, and Democratic Leader Jeffries,

We, faculty members at Stanford University, are writing this open letter to strongly oppose legislation that would reinstate the Department of Justice's (DOJ) China Initiative and to communicate the reasons why. In particular, we urge members of Congress to (1) oppose H.R. 1398 "Protect America's Innovation and Economic Security from CCP Act," that would re-instate the China Initiative in all but name, and (2) as Congress resolves differences between House and Senate appropriations bills, strike language from the House CJS Report ([Report 118-582](#)) accompanying H.R. 9026 "Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2025" that directs the DOJ to reinstate the National Security Division (NSD)'s "China Initiative."

Many of us signed a letter to Attorney General Garland two years ago urging the Department of Justice to terminate the China Initiative – and similar letters followed from faculty at many universities around the country. We are sure that, as was the case then, we are expressing an opinion that is widely shared by faculty, particularly STEM faculty, at universities in all states of the Union. In February 2022 when the DOJ terminated the China Initiative, Assistant Attorney General for National Security Matthew Olson [announced](#) the DOJ NSD's new Strategy for Countering Nation-State Threats. There was acknowledgement "that this [China] initiative is not the right approach to meet the threat in the coming years, Olsen [said](#). "Instead, the current threats demand a broader approach." The China Initiative was not the right approach then and it is not the right approach now.

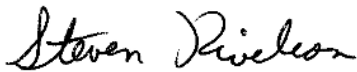
We must protect the country from espionage, illicit technology transfer and intellectual property theft. However, whatever the good intentions of the China Initiative were, its actual effect on U.S. science and technology has been much more harmful than constructive, and this would be the case for the revived versions of it in current legislation. Between 2012 and 2018, the U.S. gained in the net flow of scientific talent, including from China. As noted in the 2024 National Academy of Sciences' (NAS) Consensus Study Report, [International Talent Programs in the Changing Global Environment](#), this influx of valuable personnel has dropped since 2018, "indicating that the United States is losing talent and that other OECD countries and China have surpassed the United States." The NAS consensus report concluded that the China Initiative was "highly problematic, especially in its disproportionate focus on fundamental research in academia" and that "The passage of such a bill [H.R. 1398] would likely have substantial consequences, especially for Asian American scholars, and a significant influence on the U.S. global talent competition."

Actions that substantially discourage the flow of exceptional talent to our country and discourage those that are here from remaining, risk far greater damage than any plausible loss due to espionage or intellectual property theft. Indeed, it is in our national interest to continue to provide excellent educational opportunities to international students from China, including those who may ultimately return to China. We should not underestimate the impact that exposure to our free and open society has upon brilliant and dedicated students that come to our country from repressive and inward-looking nations. The vast majority of international students who have studied at our universities and return to their home countries, including China, have developed a deep affection for the United States and a profound appreciation of the benefits of freedom. Let us not needlessly jeopardize that.

We are in a global competition for talent. We can and must win this competition. We urge Congress not to reinstate the China Initiative or initiatives that resemble it by passage of H.R. 1398 and strike the House CJS report language in the section entitled *Countering Espionage by the People's Republic of China* in the final joint explanatory statement to accompany the FY25 CJS Appropriations Bill.

We should strive – consistent with our history and our beliefs – to be the “shining city upon a hill” that welcomes the brightest, most ambitious and dedicated students, scientists, and engineers from around the world. We should not be driven by fear and inadvertently push these talented people towards our rivals. If there is to be a “China Initiative”, let it be one designed to make clear how much we appreciate the influx of STEM talent from China and our dedication to their success in the United States. And for all, we must insist on the responsible and ethical conduct of research.

Sincerely yours,



Steven A. Kivelson
Prabhu Goel Family Professor
Professor of Physics



Peter F. Michelson
Luke Blossom Professor in the School of Humanities & Sciences
Professor of Physics

on behalf of the following Stanford faculty members who have endorsed this letter (names listed on next pages)

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this open letter are our own and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of Stanford University.

First Name	Last Name	Title	Department(s)
Cecile	Alduy	Professor	French and Italian Department
Michael	Allen	Assistant Professor	Political Science
Zhenan	Bao	Professor	Chemical Engineering
Clark	Barrett	Professor (Research)	Computer Science
Dominique	Bergmann	Professor	Biology
Arthur	Bienenstock	Professor, emeritus	Photon Science
Roger	Blandford	Luke Blossom Professor in School of Humanities and Sciences	Physics
Steven	Block	S.W. Ascherman Professor of Sciences, emeritus	Applied Physics
Steven	Boxer	Professor	Chemistry
Mark	Brongersma	Professor	Materials Science and Engineering
Axel	Brunger	Professor	Molecular and Cellular Physiology
Philip	Bucksbaum	Professor	Physics, Applied Physics
Wei	Cai	Professor	Mechanical Engineering
Howard	Chang	Virginia and D.K. Ludwig Professor of Cancer Research	Dermatology and Genetics
Gordon	Chang	Professor	History
Emilee	Chapman	Assistant Professor	Political Science
Xiaoke	Chen	Associate Professor	biology
Lu	Chen	Professor	Neurosurgery
Joonhee	Choi	Assistant Professor	Electrical Engineering
Steven	Chu	Professor	Physics
Thomas	Clandinin	The Shooter Family Professor	Neurobiology
Susan	Clark	Professor	Physics
Gary	Cox	Professor	Political Science
Bianxiao	Cui	Professor	Chemistry
Yi	Cui	Fortinet Founders Professor	Materials Science and Engineering
Trithep	Devakul	Assistant Professor	Physics
Thomas	Devereaux	Professor	Materials Science and Engineering
Jun	Ding	Associate Professor	Neurosurgery
Jose	Dinneny	Professor of Biology, Investigator of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute	Biology
Rodolfo	Dirzo	Professor	Biology, Earth Systems Science
Leora	Dresselhaus-Marais	Assistant Professor	Materials Science and Engineering
Darrell	Duffie	Professor	Graduate School of Business

Karen	Eggleston	Senior Fellow	Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies
John	Etchemendy	Provost Emeritus and Suppes Family Professor of Humanities and Sciences	Institute for Human-Centered AI
Shanhui	Fan	The Joseph and Hon Mai Goodman Professor of the School of Engineering	Electrical Engineering
Joyce	Farrell	Executive Director	Stanford Center for Image Systems Engineering
Michael	Fayer	Ehrsam and Franklin Professor of Chemistry	Chemistry
James	Fearon	Professor	Political Science
Marcus Wiliiam	Feldman	Professor	Biology
Ben	Feldman	Assistant Professor	Physics
Thomas	Fingar	Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center Fellow	Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies
Andrew	Fire	Professor	Pathology and Genetics
Ian	Fisher	Professor and Chair	Applied Physics
Shelley	Fishkin	Joseph S. Atha Professor of Humanities, Professor of English	English
Polly	Fordyce	Associate Professor	Bioengineering, Genetics
Vasiliki	Fouka	Associate Professor	Political Science
Hunter	Fraser	Professor	Biology
Gerald	Fuller	Professor	Chemical Engineering
Xiaojing	Gao	Assistant Professor	Chemical Engineering
David	Goldhaber-Gordon	Professor	Physics
Miriam	Goodman	Mrs. George A. Winzer Professor of Cell Biology	Molecular and Cellular Physiology
Deborah	Gordon	Professor	Biology
Peter	Graham	Professor	Physics
Giorgio	Gratta	Ray Lyman Wilbur Professor	Physics
Wendy	Gu	Assistant Professor	Mechanical Engineering
Jeongwan	Haah	Associate Professor	Physics
Patrick	Hayden	Professor	Physics
Tony	Heinz	Professor	Applied Physics
Horace	Heller	Lorry Lokey/Business Wire Professor of Biology and Human Biology	Biology
Leo	Hollberg	Professor (research)	Physics, Geophysics
Yang	Hu	Professor	Ophthalmology
Serena	Hu	Professor and Vice Chair	Department of Orthopedic Surgery
Zhirong	Huang	Professor	Photon Science

Szu-chi	Huang	Associate Professor of Marketing	Graduate School of Business
Matthias	Ihme	Professor	Mechanical Engineering; Photon Science (SLAC), Energy Science & Engineering (courtesy)
Kent	Irwin	Professor	Physics
Felipe	Jornada	Assistant Professor	Materials Science and Engineering
Dan	Jurafsky	Professor	Linguistics, Computer Science
Shamit	Kachru	Professor, emeritus	Physics
Michael	Kapiloff	Reinhard Family Professor	Ophthalmology
Aharon	Kapitulnik	Professor	Applied Physics & Physics
Mark	Kay	Professor	Pediatrics, Genetics
Amanda	Kennard	Assistant Professor	Political Science
Vedika	Khemani	Associate Professor	Physics
Chaitan	Khosla	Professor	Chemistry, Chemical Engineering
Brian	Kobilka	Professor	Molecular and Cellular Physiology
Matthew	Kohrman	Associate Professor	Anthropology
Ron	Kopito	Professor	Biology
Jeffrey	Koseff	William Alden Campbell and Martha Campbell Professor of Engineering	Civil and Environmental Engineering, Oceans
Anshul	Kundaje	Associate Professor	Genetics, Computer Science
Monica	Lam	Professor	Computer Science
James	Landay	Professor	Computer Science
Haiyan	Lee	Walter A. Haas Professor	East Asian Languages and Cultures
Benjamin	Lev	Professor	Applied Physics, Physics
Jonathan	Levav	Professor of Marketing	Stanford GSB
Marc	Levenston	Associate Professor	Mechanical Engineering
Richard	Lewis	Professor, emeritus	Molecular & Cellular Physiology
Jin Billy	Li	Professor	Genetics
Hongbin	Li	Senior Fellow	Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research
Aaron	Lindenberg	Professor	Materials Science and Engineering
Joseph	Lipsick	Professor	Pathology, Genetics, and Biology
Fang	Liu	Assistant Professor	Chemistry
Karen	Liu	Professor	Computer Science
Sharon	Long	Professor	Biology
Liqun	Luo	Ann and Bill Swindells Professor	Biology

Merritt	Maduke	Professor	Molecular and Cellular Physiology
Beatriz	Magaloni	Graham H. Stuart Professor	Political Science
Arun	Majumdar	Professor	Mechanical Engineering, Energy Science and Engineering
Christopher	Manning	Thomas M. Siebel Professor of Machine Learning, Professor of Linguistics, of Computer Science, and Senior Fellow at the Stanford Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence	Linguistics, Computer Science
Rafe	Mazzeo	Cassius Lamb Kirk Professor	Mathematics
Susan	McConnell	Professor, emerita	Biology
William	Moerner	Harry S. Mosher Professor and Professor by courtesy of Applied Physics	Chemistry, Applied Physics
Stephen	Monismith	Obayashi Professor in the School of Engineering	Civil and Environmental Engineering, Oceans
Stephen	Montgomery	Stanford Medicine Endowed Professor of Pathology, Professor of Genetics, Professor of Biomedical Data Science	Pathology
Mary Beth	Mudgett	Senior Associate Dean for the Natural Sciences, School of Humanities and Sciences	Biology
William	Newsome	Professor	Neurobiology
Lucy	O'Brien	Assoc Prof of Molecular & Cellular Physiology	MCP
Josiah	Ober	Professor	Political Science
Jean	Oi	William Haas Professor of Chinese Politics	Political Science
David	Palumbo-Liu	Louise Hewlett Nixon Professor	Comparative Literature
Jennifer	Pan	Sir Robert Ho Tung Professor of Chinese Studies, Professor of Communication, Senior Fellow at Freeman Spogli Institute	Communication, Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies
Michael	Peskin	Professor	Particle Physics and Astrophysics, SLAC
Soledad	Prillaman	Assistant Professor	Political Science
Stanley	Qi	Associate Professor	Bioengineering
Xiaoliang	Qi	Professor	Physics
Jian	Qin	Assistant Professor	Chemical Engineering
Srinivas	Raghu	Professor	Physics
Bernard	Roth	Rodney H. Adams Professor, emeritus	Mechanical Engineering

Scott	Rozelle	Senior Fellow	Freeman Spogli Institute
Amir	Safavi-Naeini	Associate Professor	Applied Physics
Alberto	Salleo	Professor	Materials Science
Monika	Schleier-Smith	Associate Professor	Physics
Mark	Schnitzer	Professor	Applied Physics
David	Schuster	Professor of Applied Physics	Applied Physics
Kang	Shen	Professor	Biology
Zhi-xun	Shen	Paul Pigott Professor of Physical Sciences	Physics, Applied Physics
Stephen	Shenker	Richard Herschel Weiland Professor	Physics
Linda Dairiki	Shortliffe	Stanley McCormick Memorial Professor, emerita	Urology
Eva	Silverstein	Professor	Physics
Jan	Skotheim	Professor	Biology
C. Matthew	Snipp	Professor and Vice Provost	Sociology
Michael	Snyder	Ascherman Professor of Genetics and Director of the Center for Genomics and Personalized Medicine	Genetics
Edward I.	Solomon	Monroe E. Spaght Prof. of Chemistry	Chemistry
Andrew	Spakowitz	Tang Family Foundation Chair of the Department of Chemical Engineering, Professor of Chemical Engineering and of Materials Science and Engineering	Chemical Engineering, Materials Science and Engineering
Douglas	Stanford	Associate Professor	Physics
Thomas	Sudhof	Professor	Molecular and Cellular Physiology
Yang	Sun	Professor	Ophthalmology
Leonard	Susskind	Professor	Physics
Hua	Tang	Professor	Genetics
Alice	Ting	Professor	Genetics, Biology, and by courtesy, Chemistry
Lauren	Tompkins	Associate Professor	Physics
Richard	Tsien	George D. Smith Professor, emeritus	Molecular and Cellular Physiology
Shripad	Tuljapurkar	Morrison Professor of Population Studies	Biology
Barbara	Voss	Professor	Anthropology
Andrew	Walder	Professor	Sociology
Brian	Wandell	Professor	Psychology
Ban	Wang	William Haas Professor in Chinese Studies	East Asian Languages and Cultures
Bo	Wang	Assistant Professor	Bioengineering

Yuyan	Wang	Assistant Professor of Marketing	Graduate School of Business
Shan	Wang	L. T. Edwards Professor in School of Engineering	Materials Science, Electrical Engineering
H. S. Philip	Wong	Willard R. and Inez Kerr Bell Professor	Electrical Engineering
Wing Hung	Wong	Stephen R. Pierce Family Goldman Sachs Professor	Statistics
Joy	Wu	Professor of Medicine (Endocrinology)	Medicine
Sean	Wu	Professor of Medicine and by courtesy Pediatrics	Medicine
Jiajun	Wu	Assistant Professor	Computer Science
Yiqing	Xu	Assistant Professor	Political Science
Kuang	Xu	Associate Professor	Graduate School of Business
Yunzhi	Yang	Professor	Orthopedic Surgery
Yinyu	Ye	K. T. Li Professor of Engineering	Management Science and Engineering
Lexing	Ying	Professor	Mathematics
Renee	Zhao	Assistant Professor	Mechanical Engineering
Xiaolin	Zheng	Professor	Mechanical Engineering, Energy Science Engineering
Xueguang	Zhou	Professor	Sociology
Alfred	Zong	Assistant Professor	Physics, Applied Physics