

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 29, 2026

The Honorable Marco Rubio  
Secretary of State  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio,

We write to express deep concern regarding the People's Republic of China's (PRC) new "Law on Promoting Ethnic Unity and Progress," adopted by the National People's Congress on March 12, 2026, and which goes into effect on July 1, 2026. Far from promoting genuine equality among ethnic groups, this law codifies and expands the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) majoritarian campaign of forced assimilation against Tibetans, Uyghurs, Southern Mongolians, and other non-Han Chinese communities.<sup>1</sup>

In 2020, as a U.S. senator, you referred to similar "ethnic unity" regulations imposed in the Tibet Autonomous Region as amounting to "an explicit statement of the Chinese Communist Party's remaking of Tibetan culture."<sup>2</sup> The new national law applies that same model across the PRC, giving legal force to policies that subordinate distinct ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural identities to a vision of the Chinese nation defined solely by the ruling party.

The first article of the law states that its central purpose is to "forge a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation."<sup>3</sup> It represents a view of the nation defined by, of, and for the ruling elites, reflecting a hierarchy in which the ethnicity, culture, and views on religion of this elite are assigned as the national identity to which people of other ethnicities, cultures, and views on religion are coerced to submit. This is forced assimilationism.

In practice, this means placing minority languages, cultures, histories, and identities beneath a singular, Han Chinese-dominated national identity. The law does not merely represent a political slogan. It mobilizes schools, textbooks, museums, media platforms, families, cadres, budgets, security organs, and diaspora-facing institutions to carry out ideological conformity. Unity is no longer treated as a social condition to be preserved but as an administrative outcome to be engineered, monitored, and enforced.

For Tibetans, the law threatens the survival of native language education, Tibetan Buddhist religious practice, and the ability of families and communities to transmit their identity to future generations. It contradicts and undermines the PRC's own constitutional and legal guarantees of regional ethnic autonomy, including constitutional protections for the preservation and promotion of ethnic-minority language, culture, religion, and way of life, and the 1984 Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law. Its emphasis on Mandarin education and ideological loyalty further accelerates the erosion of mother-tongue education and cultural self-determination.

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<sup>1</sup> Lily Kuo, "China Wants Its Ethnic Minorities to Blend In. Now It's the Law," March 12, 2026, *New York Times*, <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/03/12/world/asia/china-minorities-xinjiang-tibet.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Finney, "New Law Requiring 'Ethnic Unity' in Tibet Raises Concerns," January 15, 2020, *Radio Free Asia*, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/law-01152020145441.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Jonah Reisboard, "Ethnic Unity Law Codifies 'Chinese' Identity," March 27, 2026, *Jamestown*, <https://jamestown.org/ethnic-unity-law-codifies-chinese-identity/>.

The law also has grave implications for Uyghurs, Southern Mongolians, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, and other communities subjected to forced assimilation. In Xinjiang, the CCP has taken the same logic of “ethnic unity” to its logical extreme, using it and an expansive definition of national security to justify mass surveillance, arbitrary detention, forced labor transfers, family separation, and the erasure of Uyghur religion, language, and culture. Last year, you rightfully described the PRC’s actions in Xinjiang as constituting “genocide and crimes against humanity.”<sup>4</sup> In the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, similar policies have restricted Mongolian-language education and suppressed peaceful protest. This new law gives such policies a validating national legal architecture.

Particularly alarming is the law’s extraterritorial reach. Article 10 rejects so-called “external forces” that criticize the PRC “in the name of ethnicity, religion, or human rights,” while Article 63 states that “organizations and individuals outside the People’s Republic of China” who allegedly undermine “national unity and progress” or “create ethnic division” may be prosecuted.<sup>5</sup> This language gives PRC authorities a claimed legal basis to target Tibetans, Uyghurs, Southern Mongolians, Hong Kongers, democracy advocates, and others living outside the PRC, including in the United States. It should be understood as part of the PRC government’s broader pattern of transnational repression and as a direct threat to the rights and safety of diaspora communities and human rights advocates, including American civil society organizations and lawmakers.

We respectfully urge the Department of State to respond publicly and forcefully to this law before it goes into effect on July 1, 2026, and to make clear that the United States rejects the CCP’s attempt to disguise forced assimilation as “ethnic unity.” Specifically, we ask that you:

1. Publicly condemn the Law on Promoting Ethnic Unity and Progress as a tool of forced assimilation, ideological control, and transnational repression;
2. Raise the law directly with PRC officials and coordinate with like-minded governments to address it in bilateral dialogues, at the United Nations Human Rights Council, and through relevant UN treaty bodies and Special Procedures;
3. Prioritize the protection of Tibetan, Uyghur, Mongolian, and other minority-language education, religious freedom, and cultural preservation in U.S. human rights diplomacy with the PRC and through programming and support for independent broadcast services; and
4. Strengthen U.S. efforts to counter PRC transnational repression, including threats, surveillance, harassment, and intimidation targeting diaspora communities in the United States and abroad, work toward a common definition of transnational repression, and consider appropriate targeted sanctions against officials responsible for implementing forced assimilation policies.
5. Strengthen enforcement of the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act and expand efforts to induce like-minded allies and partners of the United States to establish and enforce their own legal prohibitions against forced labor from the PRC.

The CCP’s new “ethnic unity” law should not be treated as a neutral domestic administrative measure. It is part of a broader campaign to erase any semblance of accommodation of ethnic differences. The United

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<sup>4</sup> Marco Rubio, “On Thailand’s Forced Return of Uyghurs to China,” February 27, 2025, *United States Department of State*, <https://www.state.gov/on-thailands-forced-return-of-uyghurs-to-china/>.

<sup>5</sup> “New PRC Ethnic Unity and Progress Law Enforces Assimilation of Tibetans, Contradicts National and International Law,” March 13, 2026, *International Campaign for Tibet*, <https://savetibet.org/new-prc-ethnic-unity-and-progress-law/>.

States has long stood for the right of oppressed peoples to preserve their language, religion, culture, and identity. We urge you to ensure that this principle remains central to U.S. policy toward the PRC.

Thank you for your leadership and attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress



Christopher H. Smith  
Member of Congress



Ro Khanna  
Member of Congress



Michael T. McCaul  
Member of Congress



Yassamin Ansari  
Member of Congress



Jim Costa  
Member of Congress



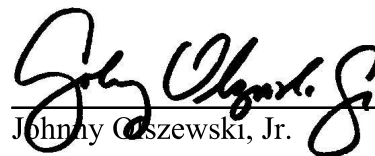
Veronica Escobar  
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Member of Congress



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Ilhan Omar  
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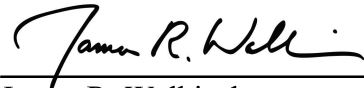


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