



# COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Subcommittee Hearing Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS)**

## ***Exploitation and Enforcement: Evaluating the Department of Homeland Security's Efforts to Counter Uyghur Forced Labor***

**January 11, 2024**

I am pleased that we are holding this Subcommittee hearing to discuss the Biden Administration's efforts to implement the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (UFLPA).

The Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities in the Xinjiang region of China have been systematically targeted by the Chinese government, repressed for their religious beliefs, and exploited for their labor. The State Department noted in its most recent human rights report that the Chinese government has subjected the predominately Muslim Uyghur population to arbitrary imprisonment, forced sterilization, coerced abortions, rape, torture, and forced labor. UFLPA is an important means of combatting and addressing the genocide of the Uyghur people.

The bipartisan law—signed by President Biden two years ago—represents an ambitious new mandate to prohibit goods from entering the United States that were made wholly or in part using forced labor from the Xinjiang region of China. UFLPA provided the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) just six months to establish new policies and procedures, hire critical personnel, and begin enforcement.

I look forward to hearing about how DHS and its partners—including the Department of Labor—have carried out this important work in the 18 months since the law went into effect. As with all new efforts, there are likely lessons to learn and areas to improve. However, what I don't doubt is DHS's commitment to fully enforcing UFLPA, as its efforts to date show.

Consistent with the law, DHS has developed a strategy to prevent the importation of goods made with forced labor from China and provided an annual update to this strategy. DHS also publicly identifies businesses that benefit from Uyghur forced labor on its "Entity List." To date, DHS has listed 30 such businesses and continues to add more. These businesses are prohibited from importing goods into the United States absent compelling evidence that they have undertaken efforts to remove forced labor from their supply chain.

Finally, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has stopped over 6,300 shipments—valued at over \$2 billion—to examine compliance with the law. CBP has denied entry to more than 2,500 of these shipments, valued at over \$500 million. But DHS has not done this work alone. DHS relies on a number of Federal partners through the Forced Labor Enforcement Task Force, including the Department of Labor.

The Department of Labor's Bureau of International Labor Affairs provides subject matter expertise on forced labor, supply chain tracing, and due diligence to support UFLPA's implementation. The Bureau also serves as co-chair of the UFLPA Entity List Subcommittee to help identify businesses associated with Uyghur forced labor.

Additionally, the Bureau plays a key role in ensuring that goods made with forced labor do not enter the United States from Mexico and Canada by monitoring for adherence to the terms of our collective trade agreement. Ultimately, importers are responsible for knowing their supply chain, avoiding forced labor, and following the law.

However, today, I hope to learn what else Congress can do to support DHS, the Department of Labor, and the rest of the Federal government in their efforts to ensure that importers fulfill their responsibilities under UFLPA.

In closing, I thank the Chairman and Ranking Member Ivey for holding this hearing on a topic of bipartisan interest. We all recognize the success of UFLPA is vital to upholding our nation's commitment to the Uyghur people and standing against forced labor in China.

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