

New Legislation Looks to Expose Foreign Influence in American Schools

Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, and Sen. Cynthia Lummis, R-Wyo., have reintroduced legislation in Congress aimed at exposing foreign influence in America's public schools. The TRACE Act would require public K-12 schools receiving federal funds to disclose any ties to foreign governments or entities of concern.

The Transparency in Reporting of Adversarial Contributions to Education (TRACE) Act amends the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. It mandates that local education agencies inform parents about any curriculum or professional training materials funded by foreign governments or entities designated as adversarial, such as China, Iran, Russia, and North Korea.

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Schools would also be required to report to the U.S. Department of Education any employees paid by such entities, as well as any financial transactions with foreign adversaries. The law does not ban these relationships or impose penalties but focuses solely on mandatory public disclosure.

The U.S. State Department lists countries of foreign concern for gross violations of human rights and religious freedom, including China, Cuba, Iran, North Korea, and Russia—all of which have recently seen large numbers of nationals entering the U.S. illegally under the Biden administration.



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Sen. Cruz warned about the threat of Chinese Communist Party (CCP) propaganda infiltrating American education. "Our foreign adversaries are actively targeting American educational institutions," Cruz stated. He emphasized that transparency would allow parents to see who is shaping the content taught in their children's schools.

Sen. Lummis echoed the concerns, stating, "The Chinese Communist Party has spread its influence across American life... Parents deserve peace of mind knowing their children are learning American values, not propaganda from our foreign adversaries."

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Rep. Aaron Bean, R-Florida, who introduced companion legislation in the House, emphasized the urgency. "American schools are for education, not espionage," Bean said. "We cannot allow our students... to be corrupted by foreign adversaries."

The TRACE Act does not compel schools to sever ties with foreign entities, nor does it enforce consequences for maintaining those ties. The lawmakers contend that transparency alone will empower parents to take action. However, the bill does not include requirements to disclose the number of students enrolled from countries of concern.

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This marks Sen. Cruz's second attempt to pass the TRACE Act, as he continues to spotlight foreign infiltration, especially from China, across various American institutions.

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