

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 955

By Daniel

A RESOLUTION relative to Confucius Institutes and the public higher education institutions of Tennessee.

WHEREAS, approximately 100 American universities, including the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, the University of Memphis, and Middle Tennessee State University, host Confucius Institutes, which are centers of Chinese language and cultural education funded by a Chinese government entity; and

WHEREAS, several federal officials have voiced concerns that these institutes are involved in efforts to "covertly influence public opinion and to teach half-truths designed to present Chinese history, government, or official policy in the most favorable light"; and

WHEREAS, concerns have also been expressed that Confucius Institutes are a possible Chinese tool for foreign espionage, targeting the vulnerability of academic research at American universities to steal technological information for military or commercial purposes; and

WHEREAS, recently, the University of Texas at Austin rejected a proposal to accept money to fund its center from the China United States Exchange Foundation (CUSEF), which has been closely linked to the branch of the Chinese Communist Party that manages influence operations abroad; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, the University of Memphis, and Middle Tennessee State University shall refuse any money proffered by the China United States Exchange Foundation (CUSEF).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, the University of Memphis, and Middle Tennessee State University promptly conduct an investigation of the character and background of persons affiliated with the Confucius Institutes operating on their campuses to determine whether any of these persons is engaged in efforts to influence public opinion or to teach half-truths concerning Chinese history, government policy, or attitudes concerning human rights.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the investigations shall also determine if sufficient safeguards are in place to prevent the disclosure, theft, or misappropriation of intellectual property to foreign interests.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, the University of Memphis, and Middle Tennessee State University shall report the findings and conclusions of their investigations to the General Assembly within ninety (90) days of the date on which the governor signs this resolution.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that certified copies of this resolution be prepared and transmitted to the chancellor of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and the presidents of the University of Memphis and Middle Tennessee State University.