

22/1/2020

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence & Trade  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

***Subject: Please support a Magnitsky Act in Australia***

Dear Committee Secretary,

I am a local resident living in an electorate of Warringah. I am writing to urge you to support the Parliament to pass a Magnitsky Act locally in Australia.

It has come to my attention that the Minister for Foreign Affairs has asked the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade to inquire into and report on whether Australia should enact legislation comparable to the United States *Magnitsky Act 2012*. I understand that the Committee is due to report on the matter early this year.


The Magnitsky sanction scheme in the US allows the US government to sanction or ban any mass human rights abuser from ever entering US soil. Since the scheme was implemented in US in 2012, similar legislation has been passed in multiple western democracies including Canada, Germany, Netherlands, Denmark, UK, France, Norway. The EU is also proceeding to adopting its own Magnitsky Act.

I believe it is in our national interest to join our western allies in this movement. As I understand it, the proposal to implement a Magnitsky sanction scheme in Australia has already received support from politicians from most major parties. It is a rare occasion that a legislative proposal has received bipartisan support. I believe this is a prime opportunity to pursue a meaningful reform that will strengthen our national interest and sovereignty. It also aligns with our international obligation to uphold fundamental human rights.

It is my concern that if we don't proceed with this reform, Australia would become a safe haven for mass human rights abusers and agents of authoritarian states. As these criminals face sanctions and becoming increasingly difficult to enter western democracies, they will turn to Australia and settle with their ill-gotten gains if we do not have an appropriate sanction scheme that is comparable to other western democracies. Our sovereignty would be jeopardized if agents of authoritarian states can freely settle in Australia and interfere with our domestic politics. They may also be willing to invest and take control of our vital infrastructures, including telecommunication and our privacy, thereby undermining our national security and threaten our fundamental freedoms and human rights.

I therefore urge you to support a Magnitsky sanction scheme to safeguard our national security, interests and values of the freeworld.

Yours sincerely,

  
Joseph Chen

