

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 4, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio,

We write with grave concern about recent reports that the Administration has blocked a transit through New York by Taiwan's President Lai Ching-te. This decision, whether formally conveyed or informally suggested to pre-empt a formal transit request, represents a stark departure from precedent, contradicts the spirit of official U.S. policy under the Taiwan Travel Act (Public Law 115–135), and sends a dangerous signal to Beijing about our willingness to make concessions with regard to our national strategic interests. As such, we call on you to approve any requested transit by President Lai and reaffirm the United States' longstanding policy regarding Taiwan.

According to at least five independent news outlets, the Administration denied permission for President Lai to transit through New York en route to Central America in August, after the People's Republic of China (PRC) objected to the visit.¹ And in June, the *Financial Times* reported that the Administration canceled meetings with Taiwan's Defense Minister at the last minute due to concerns that it would undermine tariff negotiations with the PRC.² Transits of high-ranking Taiwan officials are consistent with long-standing U.S. policy and our unofficial relationship with Taiwan. In fact, the Taiwan Travel Act, which became law in 2018 with broad bipartisan support, made it official U.S. policy to "allow high-level officials of Taiwan to enter the United States, under conditions which demonstrate appropriate respect for the dignity of such officials, and to meet with officials of the United States."³ Since then, Taiwan's Presidents Tsai Ing-wen and Lai Ching-te made five total transits through the United States.⁴ Each of these visits demonstrated the United States' steadfast support for Taiwan and its right to participate in global affairs.

In addition to the longstanding precedent of these visits, such transits have been a critical avenue for Congress to engage with Taiwan's leadership. In 2023, many members of Congress traveled to

¹ Demetri Sevastopulo and Kathrin Hille, "Trump blocks Taiwan's President Lai from New York stopover," *Financial Times*, July 28, 2025, <https://www.ft.com/content/21575bec-5cdd-47ee-9db2-3031c4ea7ca7>; Trevor Hunnicutt and Yimou Lee, "Exclusive: Taiwan's Lai set to push back U.S. stopover as U.S.-China trade talks continue, sources say," *Reuters*, July 28, 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/taiwans-lai-set-push-back-us-stopover-us-china-trade-talks-continue-sources-say-2025-07-28/>; Jenny Leonard and Yian Lee, "Taiwan Leader Calls Off US Stopover as Trump Seeks Xi Summit," *Bloomberg*, July 28, 2025, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2025-07-29/taiwan-president-calls-off-us-transit-as-trump-seeks-xi-summit>; Didi Tang and Matthew Lee, "As US grapples with China relations, Taiwan's president scraps stop on American soil," *Associated Press*, July 29, 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/taiwan-china-trump-lai-f8bae1421f9d55e240a50671e14ec23f>; Amy Chang Chien, Chris Buckley, and Edward Wong, "Trump Administration Told Taiwan's President to Avoid New York Stopover," *NY Times*, July 30, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/07/30/world/asia/trump-taiwan-china.html>.

² Demetri Sevastopulo and Kathrin Hille, "US cancelled military talks with Taiwan," *Financial Times*, July 30, 2025, <https://www.ft.com/content/baf4a261-1fce-4c38-b05f-ccd01d3be750>.

³ Public Law 115-135, Section 3(b)(2).

⁴ Susan V. Lawrence, "Taiwan Presidents' U.S. Transit Visits," *Congressional Research Service*, January 3, 2025, <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/IF12371>.

California to meet with former President Tsai on one such occasion.⁵ Such regular, high-level interactions demonstrate our consistent commitment to Taiwan, including certain commitments codified under the Taiwan Relations Act.

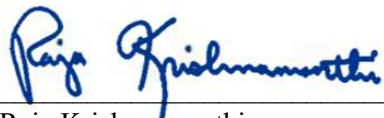
You met with former Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen in Florida during her transit through the United States in 2016, which raises questions as to what has changed that necessitated blocking President Lai's transit now.⁶ When we have traveled to Taiwan, Taiwan officials have always greeted us with immense respect and hospitality. This Administration's blocking of President Lai's proposed transit undermines the warmth, friendship, and mutual respect that Taiwan and the United States have shared for decades. It unnecessarily raises doubts about U.S. credibility and reliability among our allies and partners in the region and reinforce Chinese Communist Party (CCP) narratives that the United States will not live up to its commitments.

Even more concerning are reports that the U.S. blocked President Lai's transit at the request of the PRC. America's strategic relationships should not be concessions in trade talks, and Taiwan should be off the table in any negotiation with the PRC. Our policy toward Taiwan must remain rooted in our One-China Policy, which is informed in part by the Taiwan Relations Act and Six Assurances. The Administration's capitulation to PRC demands regarding Taiwan is illegal and dangerous.

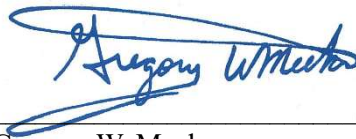
Therefore, we call on you to publicly reaffirm the longstanding practice of permitting senior Taiwan leaders to transit through our country and to facilitate any requested transit by President Lai expeditiously.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

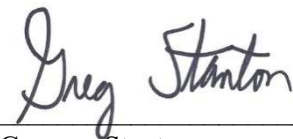
Sincerely,



Raja Krishnamoorthi
Ranking Member, Select Committee on the CCP



Gregory W. Meeks
Ranking Member, House Foreign Affairs Committee



Gregory Stanton
Congressional Taiwan Caucus Co-Chair

⁵ "U.S. House Select Committee Meets with Taiwan President at Reagan Library with Speaker McCarthy," U.S. House Select Committee on the Strategic Competition between the United States and Chinese Communist Party, April 5, 2023, <https://selectcommitteeontheccp.house.gov/media/videos/us-house-select-committee-meets-taiwan-president-reagan-library-speaker-mccarthy>.

⁶ "Tsai Makes Transit Stop in Miami," Taipei Times, June 26, 2016, <https://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2016/06/26/2003649502>