

APA Justice Statement on Senate Committee Investigative Report on Abuse and Miconduct at DOC

On July 13, 2021, the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation (Senate Committee) released a 37-page investigative report, "[Abuse and Misconduct at the Commerce Department](#)." The investigation began after whistleblowers reported a variety of improper activities dating back to the mid-2000s involving abuses of authority, mismanagement, and reprisal against Department employees. Minority Staff conducted over 100 interviews and reviewed thousands of documents supporting allegations from over two dozen whistleblowers.

The report highlighted the targeting of individuals of Asian descent, opening frivolous investigations without probable cause, blocking the release of investigative files to the judicial system and documents to the public's Freedom of Information Act requests, and likely resulting in preventable violations of civil liberties and other constitutional rights, as well as a gross abuse of taxpayer funds, among other findings.

The report identified specifically [Sherry Chen](#) and [Dr. Chunzai Wang](#) who were subjected to criminal investigations by a Department of Commerce unit, without proper authority, and subsequent prosecutions by the Department of Justice. Sherry Chen courageously testified about her experience in the Congressional Roundtable "[Researching while Chinese American: Ethnic Profiling, Chinese American Scientists and a New American Brain Drain](#)" on June 30, 2021. The Sherry Chen Legal Defense Fund turned over a whistleblower letter to the Senate Committee as part of the investigation.

Sherry Chen and Dr. Chunzai Wang are not alone. The abuse and misconduct occur at multiple levels over many years in the Department of Commerce. The report further confirms the deep-rooted systemic discrimination faced by Asian American employees within our own federal agencies, which was exacerbated by xenophobic and reckless profiling policies and practices such as the "China Initiative" that target Chinese American scientists and researchers in recent years. The Senate Committee report comes on the heels of the mistrial of [Professor Anming Hu](#) where federal agents falsified information and made false accusations in the fog of searching for a spy in Knoxville, Tennessee.

On July 14, 2021, APA Justice received [a response from Mr. Jeremy Licht](#), Deputy General Counsel Strategic Initiatives, Department of Commerce, in response to the [June 1, 2021 APA Justice letter](#) to Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo.

Both Congress and the Biden-Harris Administration now have the responsibility to correct the wrongs in the Commerce Department immediately, as well as taking action to improve transparency, oversight, and accountability in federal agencies and to eliminate racial profiling and anti-Asian discrimination in the American society.

Except for Native Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders, the U.S. is a nation of immigrants. We, including Asian Americans, all belong to this nation in the pursuit of justice, fairness, and equality.

Additional APA Justice comments on the Senate Committee report are posted at <https://www.apajustice.org/>. They will be updated with new developments as APA Justice continues to raise awareness and mobilize the communities and the American public about the human and scientific costs of racial profiling.

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