

Crapo Statement at Hearing on Forced Labor

March 18, 2021

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Mike Crapo (R-Idaho), Ranking Member of the U.S. Senate Finance Committee, delivered the following remarks at a hearing entitled, “Fighting Forced Labor: Closing Loopholes and Improving Customs Enforcement to Mandate Clean Supply Chains and Protect Workers.”

The text of Ranking Member Crapo’s remarks, as prepared, is below.

“Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a very important hearing.

“The International Labor Organization estimates nearly 25 million people in the world are victims of forced labor.

“The criminals behind this tragedy reap nearly \$150 billion in profits every year.

“As horrifying as that is, nearly 30 percent of the victims are also victims of forced sexual exploitation—and generate \$99 billion—or 2/3 of the profits I just referenced.

“The fight against forced labor is not a Democrat issue or a Republican issue; it is an issue that unites all Americans.

“That is critical to remember.

“Americans, including consumers, workers and businesses, are all committed to this fight—and doing everything possible to combat this scourge.

“The problem lies not with them, but with foreign autocrats, and individuals who lack all sense of basic humanity. Our fight is with them.

“For example, China’s government has pressed nearly 100,000 Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities into forced labor, while euphemistically calling it ‘poverty alleviation.’

“As the Newlines Institute for Strategy and Policy explained in a report last week, China’s treatment of the Uyghurs meets every criteria of genocide under the United Nations’ Genocide Convention.

“That report’s findings join declarations by foreign legislatures, including Canada and the Netherlands, and track with a similar determination made by the State Department during the Trump Administration.

“Accordingly, Senators like Marco Rubio and Jeff Merkely, and many others, are showing leadership on this issue through their proposed Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act.

“Their efforts should be matched by the current Administration.

“The U.S. Secretary of State and National Security Advisor are meeting today in Alaska with their Chinese counterparts.

“Forced labor is among the human rights issues they need to press with them.

“Critically, this all reinforces we need to broadly empower Americans and other good citizens of the world to be able to more effectively respond to this challenge.

“This includes effectively utilizing technology to identify where goods made with forced labor can enter the supply chain.

“It means our laws and regulations must be transparent and provide informative and thoughtful guidance so Americans know how to avoid importing such goods.

“It means we need to know the ongoing efforts of our businesses so that the government can help leverage them in the fight against forced labor.

“Many of them have developed best practices to stamp out forced labor from their supply chains.

“We need to leverage their experience and expertise.

“Finally, it means we must partner with civil society to raise awareness on this important issue.

“The witnesses we have today can speak to each of these points.

“Their expertise and knowledge will help this Committee address this important matter.

“Mr. Chairman, I am glad this is an issue we both care about deeply.

“Thank you for organizing this hearing. I look forward to the testimony from our witnesses.”

###