

LaHood & Krishnamoorthi Praise Work – and Collegial Approach – of Select Committee on China

WASHINGTON, DC — In remarks this past Friday morning before a breakfast meeting of The Ripon Society and the Franklin Center for Global Policy Exchange, U.S. Reps. Darin LaHood (IL-16) and Raja Krishnamoorthi (IL-8) discussed their roles as members of the House Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party, and how the Committee’s bipartisan work over the past 12 months laid the foundation for the unanimous committee vote to ban TikTok last week on Capitol Hill.

“It may be the best thing this Congress has done in a bipartisan way,” LaHood stated to kick off the discussion. “If you look at the substance of what we’ve been able to do and if you watch a number of the hearings that we’ve had, sometimes you don’t know who is a Republican and who’s a Democrat on the committee in terms of the dialogue and discussion. And we’ve populated the committee with some really smart, bright members who care deeply about this issue.

“I’ve said this many times — I think the thing that the CCP fears most is bipartisan support against them, and working in a constructive way to figure out how we win the strategic competition against them. And so I’ve been thrilled to be a part of it.”

LaHood was elected to the House in 2015 and serves on the Committee on Ways & Means and the House Intelligence Committee. Appointed to the Select Committee on the CCP at the start of the 118th Congress last year, he praised the leadership of Congressman Mike Gallagher (WI-8), who serves as Chairman of the Select Committee, and his fellow Illinoisan, Congressman Krishnamoorthi, who serves as the panel’s Ranking Member.

LaHood also laid out what he said were two goals of the Select Committee moving forward this year.

“One goal is exposing the malign activities of the CCP both from a national security and economic standpoint,” he said. “Second, how do you win the strategic competition against the CCP? I think you do that on the economic front. And so how do we think about things differently, whether it’s with regard to supply chains or trade or other mechanisms? We have to be engaged on the economic front.”

To help achieve these goals, LaHood said the Select Committee issued a comprehensive report last December that was intended to help Congress chart a new course with regard to America’s relationship to China and the CCP. The report was built around three key pillars, including:

- To reset the terms of America’s economic relationship with the People’s Republic of China.
- To stem the flow of U.S. capital and technology fueling not only the People’s Republic of China’s Military modernization, but human rights abuses, as well.
- To invest in technological leadership and build collective economic resilience in concert with America’s allies.

“We didn’t agree on everything,” the Illinois Republican said of the report, “but it gave us kind of a roadmap for how we should move forward in a bipartisan way. Of course, we don’t have legislative jurisdiction on the select committee. And so, working with the Committees of jurisdiction — Ways & Means, Energy & Commerce, Financial Services, and Armed Services — we’ve been heavily focused on implementing these policies moving forward.



U.S. Reps. Darin LaHood & Raja Krishnamoorthi

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“I’m thrilled to be a part of it. We still have a lot of work left to do, but I think we’ve made a lot of progress and raised the bar a tremendous amount. When you saw the bill yesterday on TikTok get approved by a vote of 50-0, you don’t see stuff like that happening very often.”

Krishnamoorthi agreed.

“I think that this is the most bipartisan, thoughtful, serious committee and endeavor I’ve been part of,” he stated. “I feel we are actually doing something that is meaningful. It’s like an oasis of thoughtfulness, of intellectual curiosity mixed with civil debate.

There is not groupthink on this committee with regard to China. People have different opinions about how to approach the challenges ahead of us.

“However, what we try to do is identify those areas of commonality and work on those. And then on those areas where we might differ, we try to say, ‘Well, look, maybe

we need to do a little more fact-finding to figure out what the right answer is and come back to it.”

Krishnamoorthi was elected to the House in 2016 and serves on the Committee on Oversight and Reform and the House Intelligence Committee.

He was appointed Ranking Member of the Select Committee when it was established, and said one of the most important parts of the job has been traveling around the country to visit with both business and academia to get a better understanding of the threat posed by the CCP.

“We’ve had numerous hearings, numerous investigations, as well as a lot of field exercises,” Krishnamoorthi stated. “Darin and I were just in Boston to learn about biotech. It was fascinating. A day of learning from people in the industry as well as academics and so forth. We did that in Iowa. We did that in Wisconsin. We did it in Silicon Valley. We did it in LA, as well, and New York City with Wall Street. And we’re going to continue to do that, and I’m just really excited about what’s to come.”

Following their opening remarks, LaHood and Krishnamoorthi were asked a number of questions, including one about the agenda of the Select Committee in the weeks and months ahead and whether the work of the Committee would be extended into the 119th Congress next year.

“I think the TikTok bill is extremely important for various reasons,” Krishnamoorthi said, referring to the bill to ban the popular CCP-backed app that was approved by the Energy and Commerce Committee on Thursday. “We got a vote of 50-0. Fifty ‘ayes.’ I was shocked, although I did not hear a single ‘no’ in my whipping on the floor of my colleagues. I thought maybe there’s a chance of a really good outcome. But I think it’s because of the groundwork of my staff. The majority and minority staff are really excellent, and they have just worked their tails off trying to prepare the groundwork to involve all stakeholders. I think that’s how

I thought maybe there's a chance of a really good outcome. But I think it's because of the groundwork of my staff. The majority and minority staff are really excellent, and they have just worked their tails off trying to prepare the groundwork to involve all stakeholders. I think that's how we're going to approach things going forward. So I think this TikTok bill is a huge priority.

"The BIOSECURE Act is a big priority. It got marked up in Homeland Security in the Senate 11-1. It's going to pass out of the Senate, it's going to come to the House, and we're probably going to get it out. Most importantly, the White House is very interested in all these things. And the White House said, 'We want to see these bills on our desk.'

"I think there's going to be something with regard to outbound investment controls, as well. And I think that there's going to be some others where we can opportunistically join hands with different committees that are already working on things. The double taxation thing is huge, which Darin is helping to lead the way on in Ways and Means, because that's going to help us in attracting more investment from Taiwan here, especially as part of Chips and Science. There are others as well."

LaHood concurred, and expressed optimism that the work of the Select Committee would continue next year.

"My hope would be there would be a continuation of the Select Committee," he stated. "The interest from the leadership has been strong. I think they acknowledge the work that we've been doing in a positive way, and I would hope that would continue."

The lawmakers were also asked about the decision in Congress more than two decades ago to provide Permanent Normal Trade Relation status to China and whether that decision should be revoked.

"I think there was a bipartisan consensus," Krishnamoorthi said. "We're not revoking PNTR. However, we are acknowledging reality — which is that we are not in normal trade relations with the Chinese, because of their counterproductive approach to trade. We've had to take countermeasures.

"I personally think President Trump was right to impose tariffs, and that President Biden was right to continue them until we can see some change in their behavior."

LaHood echoed his colleague's remarks, and explained why the U.S.-China relationship is so critical to the people back home who he represents.

"I represent a heavy ag district," he noted. "Probably 30% of the corn and soybeans grown in my district go to China every year. My farmers directly rely on that relationship. And so when we were going through this debate and dialogue and discussion on PNTR, there was pushback from other members of the committee — Dusty Johnson, Jake Auchincloss, Ashley Hinson, myself — on making sure that we don't go too far here. And if you look at how we structured the report and our recommendations, there are a number of triggering mechanisms in place. If a number of these things don't happen, then maybe we would look at PNTR.

"The only other observation I would make, if you go back and look at when we allowed China into the World Trade Organization 22 or 23 years ago, the argument at the time was to bring China into the WTO. They would modernize their economy. They would become more like us. They would democratize. They would play in the sandbox with everybody else. And what we found is they don't play by the same rules and standards that every other industrialized country in the world has done. They've manipulated the World Trade Organization in many ways, and manipulated a lot of other, global entities too.

"And so, there's immense frustration with them not complying and not being observant of what everybody else does. So how do you hold them accountable? What are the mechanisms? What are the tools? Obviously, PNTR is one of those tools. But you have to thread that needle the right way and make sure we're not hurting our own industries in the process."

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