

House Committee on Foreign Affairs
Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Human Rights

Testimony of Chai Ling
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May 15, 2012

MR. CHAIRMAN and Ranking Members of Congress, thank you for giving me the chance to share today about the cause that Chen Guangcheng has fought to uphold.

By now, you have heard much about Chen Guangcheng's miraculous escape. As the media firestorm surrounded him last week, you probably read details about his journey to Beijing; you learned about twists and turns in the diplomatic saga that followed.

Incredibly, U.S. officials fretted about the timing of Chen's arrival at the Embassy. After he left, they downplayed his concerns for his family's safety. Several days ago, an American official casually told the *New York Times*: "The days of blowing up the relationship [with China] over a single guy are over."¹

Seeking genuine protections for Chen and his family should hardly have "blown up the relationship." But more to the point, it grieves me to hear Chen dismissively referred to as "a single guy." He *is* one man; it is true. But he is a symbol—a hero—in the eyes of women, children, and the poor in China.

Why? Because he defended them when it was costly, and when no one else would. He has lived out the words of the prophet Isaiah, who said:

*Learn to do right; seek justice.
Defend the oppressed.
Take up the cause of the fatherless;
plead the case of the widow.*²

Often missing from last week's news stories was the cause that defined Chen Guangcheng's work, and led to his imprisonment. It explains why he is a hero to so many in China. Today, I want to highlight this cause. It is one that I share with Chen through my work at All Girls Allowed.

The One-Child Policy formally sanctions violence against women. Chen knew this. Chinese authorities jailed him in 2006 after he filed a class action lawsuit on behalf of women who had undergone forced abortions and sterilizations because of the Policy.

¹ Steven Lee Myers and Mark Landler. "Behind Twists of Diplomacy in the Case of a Chinese Dissident." *The New York Times*, May 9, 2012.

² Isaiah 1:17, *Today's New International Version*.

I would like to share some stories and images that will show you what is happening in China right now, even as I speak. I should warn you: these stories are disturbing. They will give you a personal glimpse at the “gendercide,” or systematic elimination of girls, taking place in China, where men outnumber women by 40 million. They show the brutality of forced abortion. They show why Chinese women face a climate so oppressive that a woman takes her life every three seconds.

The first story illustrates how severely the One-Child Policy can affect a single family. This is Deng Lourong, who lives in Anhui Province. She is a second daughter of two parents who violated the One-Child Policy because they desperately wanted a boy. After Lourong’s birth, officials demolished the family home and confiscated their belongings. Two years later, Lourong’s mother again gave birth to a girl—and disappeared three days later. Her father fled from Family Planning officials and left the three girls in the care of their grandmother.

Undeterred, officials detained the girls’ grandmother in 2002 and left them without a guardian. During the night, a man broke into their room and raped 12-year-old Lourong. Her sisters managed to obtain the release of their grandmother after this, but the elderly woman died a month after returning home. The rapist, meanwhile, was sentenced to a mere 5 days in administrative detention.

Within three years, Lourong was sold as a child bride to a man more than twice her age. Her sisters were also sold by traffickers and have not been found. When a German reporter and Chinese volunteers found Lourong’s father last November, he told them that Lourong’s husband had turned her into a prostitute to earn income for him. He sold her body to bachelors in their area. She was in a poor mental state and would roam the mountains for over a week sometimes before returning to the house.

Remember, all of this was set into motion by the enforcement of the One-Child Policy upon this family—and the lack of value assigned to girls and women.

A second story is Ma Jihong’s. Last October, officials dragged Ma into a van when she was heavily pregnant with her third child. She died during the forced abortion procedure, and her family did not know for hours afterward. Her husband and daughters have no real recourse to take.

A final story came out less than two months ago on Weibo, a Chinese version of Twitter. It is just an image, but a chilling one: A 9-month-old baby is dropped into a bucket of water following a forced abortion. According to the source, the infant’s parents did not have a permit for their second child.

I wish I could tell you that these stories were rare, but they are not. They are mere glimpses into the dark environment that the One-Child Policy creates for women. *This* is the darkness into which Chen Guangcheng tried to shine a light.

I want to challenge you, Honorable Members of Congress, to view your calling as servants of the people in light of these words from Isaiah:

*If you do away with the yoke of oppression,
with the pointing finger and malicious talk,
and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the oppressed,
then your light will rise in the darkness,*

*and your night will become like the noonday.*³

It is my fervent prayer that your light will rise in the present darkness that consumes many, at this very moment, in China. Please continue to press for Chen Guangcheng's freedom and the assurance of safety for his family and supporters. Their freedom is not secure yet, and you are in a position to act. I urge you to compel China to honor its word and its own laws.

If you are concerned that such a course is not realistic or pragmatic enough, I humbly ask you to do what is *right*. It was not economically pragmatic for William Wilberforce to seek an end to the British slave trade. It was not expedient for Martin Luther King to speak out against injustice and then land in a Birmingham jail. I can think of many instances in history where men and women sacrificed pragmatism for the sake of higher principle. Somehow they invariably ended up on the right side of history.

I hope that you will stand on the right side of history in confronting the injustices of our time.

Finally, though we are sitting here in the halls of power, we can take heart in the fact that our power is weakness when compared to the strength of our God. We can face injustice without fear because we serve a God who is just, hears our prayers, and can overcome any power. Jesus said: "You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it."⁴

He can, and will, end the injustice of gendercide and the One-Child Policy. May it be our generation's privilege to carry out the task.

Allow me to close in prayer for you:

Heavenly Father,

*You, Lord, hear the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry.*⁵

You hear the cries of people in China, calling for your justice and mercy. You hear *our* cries as we, too, plead for your justice to roll down like a mighty river.

I lift up to you these leaders here—these servants of the people. I praise you for raising them up and bringing them here today. I ask that you move their hearts and inspire them to assist the family and friends of our brave brother Chen Guangcheng.

Lord, please protect us all from being indifferent when we see suffering. You say that if a single sparrow falls, you notice. How much more do you notice the plight of your daughters Ma Jihong and Deng Luroung, and the millions of other women oppressed by the One-Child Policy?

Please inspire the men and women here today to use their authority in a way that serves the 'least of these' in the world you created.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations,

³ Isaiah 58:9b-10, TNIV.

⁴ John 14:14, TNIV.

⁵ Psalm 10:17, TNIV.

*for ever and ever! Amen.*⁶

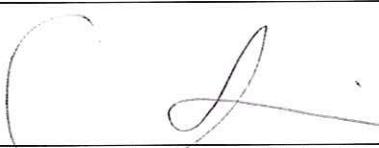
Thank you.

⁶ Ephesians 3:20-21, TNIV.

United States House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Affairs

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Clause 2(g) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives and the Rules of the Committee require the disclosure of the following information. A copy of this form should be attached to your written testimony and will be made publicly available in electronic format, per House Rules.

1. Name:	2. Organization or organizations you are representing:		
Ling Chai	All Girls Allowed		
3. Date of Committee hearing:			
05/15/2012			
4. Have <u>you</u> received any Federal grants or contracts (including any subgrants and subcontracts) since October 1, 2008 related to the subject on which you have been invited to testify?	5. Have any of the <u>organizations you are representing</u> received any Federal grants or contracts (including any subgrants and subcontracts) since October 1, 2008 related to the subject on which you have been invited to testify?		
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
6. If you answered yes to either item 4 or 5, please list the source and amount of each grant or contract, and indicate whether the recipient of such grant was you or the organization(s) you are representing. You may list additional grants or contracts on additional sheets.			
7. Signature: 			

Please attach a copy of this form to your written testimony.