

# NFL AND NIKE LOSE ON ANTI-SLAVE BILL

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on how the NFL and Nike came out on the losing side of an anti-slave labor bill:

On December 14, the House of Representatives voted unanimously to ban imports from the Xinjiang region in China that uses slave labor. However, on December 15, the bill was blocked in the Senate by Oregon Democrat Ron Wyden; given Senate rules, his objection was sufficient to prevent the bill from moving forward. Then some Democrats pushed back. Wyden folded on December 16, and the Senate unanimously passed the legislation.

For many years, the Uyghurs [pronounced Weegers], a Muslim minority, have been treated like slaves by the Communist Chinese government. That is why an anti-slave bill was needed.

Politico gave an accurate summary of the bill. “The Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act effectively bans all imports from China’s Xinjiang region, where the U.S. government has said that the Chinese Communist Party is perpetuating a genocide against the religious minority, including slave labor, forced sterilizations and concentration camps.”

The two most important U.S. organizations that are responsible for supporting slave labor in China are the National Football League and Nike. Nike practically owns Sen. Wyden—it has greased him with contributions totaling into more than \$60,000—but without the enabling role played by the NFL, the genocide and slave labor would not be flourishing.

NFL commissioner Roger Goodell is not shy about his enthusiasm for Communist China. Two years ago he said, “China is a priority market for the NFL. We believe that our game has a

great deal of potential to expand to grow and bring new fans into our game. We have had double-digit growth this past year in China in our fan base and people engaging with our game. So we are excited by it.”

John Donahoe, Nike’s CEO, is just as exuberant about working with the slavemasters in China. “Nike is a brand that is *of* China and *for* China.” (My italics.) Last year, a study by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute named Nike as one of the companies that uses slave labor to make its products.

The NFL and Nike are joined at the hip.

In 2018, the NFL issued the following press release: “The National Football League and Nike announced a long-term extension to their on-field rights partnership. Central to the extension, Nike will continue to provide all 32 NFL Clubs with uniforms and sideline apparel bearing the Nike brand for use during all games.”

The degree of oppression in China, especially among religious minorities, is not in dispute. On July 1, 2021, the U.S. State Department released a damning assessment of conditions there.

“Over the last four years, the People’s Republic of China (PRC) has carried out a mass detention and political indoctrination campaign against Uyghurs...Authorities use threats of physical violence, forcible drug intake, physical and sexual abuse, and torture to force detainees to work in adjacent or off-site factories or worksites producing garments, footwear...material for solar power equipment” and many other products. Garments and footwear are both Nike products.

It is not just a Muslim ethnic minority that is being oppressed.

Nina Shea, director of the Center for Religious Freedom at the Hudson Institute, offered an assessment of religious liberty

in China.

“China’s Christians, at 100 million strong and constituting that country’s largest religious minority, are facing a new government policy of severe religious repression and persecution.” Minors are barred from attending houses of worship, churches are being closed, desecrations are increasing, Bibles are limited in supply, and adults are subject to state surveillance. Those who disobey are imprisoned.

To show how politically corrupt the NFL is, and how desperate it is to please its Communist friends in China, consider that on December 16 it published a map on social media that depicted the sovereign nation of Taiwan as part of China. Taiwan is a free country; China is a slave state. The NFL is in bed with the Communists selling out our democratic allies in Taiwan.

President Biden will sign the bill, but no one should trust him. His special climate envoy, John Kerry, who is worth \$250 million, has come under fire for owning stakes in an investment group that funds companies linked to the slave labor camps in China. Moreover, in the aforementioned State Department study, “material for solar power equipment” was cited as a good that is produced by slave labor.

Last month, Kerry was asked by a reporter why he doesn’t speak to the issue of human rights in China. He said “that’s not my lane here.” No wonder Politico said that the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act “encountered obstacles from the White House and the private sector.” Kerry was the White House obstructionist, and the NFL and Nike played the same role in the private sector.

What makes this all the more disgusting is the “social justice” policies promoted by the NFL and Nike. They are quick to side with the likes of Black Lives Matter, condemning

America for being a racist country, yet they profit off of slave labor and genocide in China.

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