

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2509

November 29, 2022

Mr. Tim Cook  
Chief Executive Officer  
Apple Inc.  
1 Apple Park Way  
Cupertino, CA 95014

Dear Mr. Cook,

I write regarding Apple's ongoing collaboration with the totalitarian Chinese government. Your continued dependency on Chinese labor not only undermines the interests of the American economy and its workers, but has once again led your company to crack down on speech at the Chinese Communist Party's behest. Apple's activities in China are unconscionable and present substantial material risks to your stakeholders. I urge you to take meaningful steps to end operations in China and to reshore production to the United States.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, the Chinese Communist Party has subjected the Chinese people to draconian public health measures. During the past week, dissatisfaction with the nation's so-called zero-COVID policy came to a head: from Beijing to Shanghai and Urumqi, citizens took to the streets to protest and voice their dissent.<sup>1</sup> This included demonstrations at a Foxconn factory in the city of Zhengzhou, one of the largest manufacturers of Apple's iPhone. After enduring weeks of stringent pandemic mitigation measures, workers protested and clashed with Chinese law enforcement. Videos of these confrontations, including shocking images of workers being beaten and kicked by officials in hazmat suits, were widely circulated on social media and in the press.<sup>2</sup>

Since Apple makes more than 95 percent of its iPhones in China, these disruptions pose substantial material risks to Apple's stakeholders. To make matters worse, your company appears to be actively supporting the Chinese government's brutal crackdown. For example, public reports indicate that Apple, through a recent software update for iPhones in China, has modified the AirDrop function to make it more difficult for protestors to use this function to evade censorship and surveillance.<sup>3</sup> Unconscionable though this decision may be, it is not surprising: under your leadership, Apple has time and again assisted the Chinese Communist Party in surveilling and suppressing the basic human rights of the Chinese people.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, it appears that Apple might be importing this model of speech control to the United States: reports indicate that your company might deplatform Twitter from the App Store as a consequence of the free speech policies implemented by new ownership.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.wsj.com/articles/chinese-protests-spread-over-governments-covid-restrictions-11669516403>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.wsj.com/articles/iphone-factory-workers-clash-with-police-at-covid-hit-plant-in-china-11669193001>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-11-10/apple-limits-iphone-file-sharing-tool-used-for-protests-in-china?>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9592467/Apple-allows-state-officials-process-personal-data-Chinese-users.html>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.wsj.com/articles/elon-musk-attacks-apple-tim-cook-over-advertising-and-censorship-11669662024>

You have been called the architect of Apple's strategy to outsource production to China.<sup>6</sup> While this strategy has yielded short-term profits for you and your shareholders, cracks are beginning to emerge in the aftermath of the pandemic and in the face of intensifying geopolitical tensions. It is time for Apple to chart a new path forward. I therefore urge you to take meaningful steps to reduce your dependence on Chinese labor, especially by reshoring production in the United States. So that Congress may consider remedial legislation, please respond to the following questions by December 6, 2022:

1. Apple has not condemned the treatment of workers who manufacture its products in China, including the physical violence inflicted upon them by Chinese law enforcement in Zhengzhou. When will Apple issue a statement condemning this treatment? And why has it not done so already?
2. Given the Chinese Communist Party's commitment to a zero-COVID policy, please detail the material risks associated with Apple's continued dependency on China for the manufacture of its products. How does Apple communicate these risks to its stakeholders?
3. If China were to invade Taiwan, what impact would this have on Apple's ability to manufacture and sell its products? How does Apple communicate these risks to its stakeholders?
4. Please detail Apple's plan to diversify its supply chain and production networks, including any plans to expand manufacturing of its products in the United States with American workers.
5. Why did Apple modify the AirDrop feature in China in a manner that makes it more difficult for Chinese protesters to communicate amongst themselves? Please provide all communication between Apple and Chinese Communist Party officials concerning the AirDrop feature in the iOS 16.1.1 update.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Josh Hawley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Josh Hawley  
United States Senator

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2021-02-09/this-is-how-tim-cook-transformed-apple-aapl-after-steve-jobs?leadSource=verify%20wall>