



NEWS RELEASE
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Updated: U. S. Commission on Civil Rights Requests Department of Justice Investigation Into Recent Questionable Prosecution of Chinese American Scientists

Washington, DC — The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, by majority vote, has issued a [letter](#) to Attorney General Loretta Lynch concerning targeting of Chinese American scientists for alleged spying and espionage. The Commission’s letter expresses concern that the government may be failing to exercise sufficient due diligence when targeting Chinese Americans. The Commission letter requests that the Department of Justice increase training and oversight in ongoing and future investigations and prosecutions.

According to a recent article in *Science* magazine, in the past year, five Chinese-born scientists have been accused of trade secret theft or economic espionage, only for the federal government to drop the charges after recognizing mistakes and insufficient or nonexistent evidence. In the case of Temple University professor Xi Xiaoxing, prosecutors arrested Dr. Xi for sharing confidential laboratory equipment schematics but dropped the charges after scientists informed the government the plans he shared were for a different technology. Although charges were dropped, the accused were left with tarnished reputations and legal bills to pay.

These prosecutions have harmed the individual scientists and their families and caused concern in the Asian American community about unfair treatment and racial profiling.

Commission Chairman Martin R. Castro on behalf of a majority of the Commission stated, “While combating spying and economic espionage is vital to our national security, just as important are the protections of our civil rights and civil liberties. American citizens are entitled to due process and should not be targeted on the basis of their race or ethnicity—that is un-American.”

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The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is an independent, bipartisan agency charged with advising the President and Congress on civil rights matters and issuing a federal civil rights enforcement report. For information about Commission's reports and meetings, visit <http://www.usccr.gov>.