



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1403

July 24, 2020

Governor Eric Holcomb
Statehouse Room 206
200 West Washington Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2797

Dear Governor Holcomb,

I'm writing out of concern with the Indiana government's use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) produced by Dà-Jiāng Innovations—a commercial drone manufacturer based in China. On April 1, 2020, DJI announced that it was donating “100 drones to 45 police, fire and public safety organizations in 22 states,” to help states respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although DJI did not list the specific agencies which it donated drones to, it published a map of states that received drones that included Indiana.

On May 3, 2018 the Department of Defense (DoD) banned the purchase and use of DJI drones because of “cybersecurity risks” associated with their use. In January this year, the Interior Department grounded its entire fleet of UAV's because of concern over security risks posed by DJI.

These decisions were based off of multiple previous reports from federal agencies on the potential for DJI drones to be used as espionage tools by the Chinese Communist Party. According to a 2017 memo from the Los Angeles office of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, that agency had “moderate confidence that DJI was providing critical “infrastructure and law enforcement data to the Chinese government.” The memo specified that, “much of the information collected includes proprietary and sensitive critical infrastructure data, such as detailed imagery of power control panels, security measures for critical infrastructure sites, or materials used in bridge construction.”

On Thursday, July 22, two cybersecurity research firms, Synackti and GRIMM, released a report claiming that an Android application used to operate DJI drones collects and transmits large amounts of users' personal information to the firm. This is especially concerning because the Chinese Communist Party requires DJI, and all other technology companies based in China, to provide it with any and all data it requests.

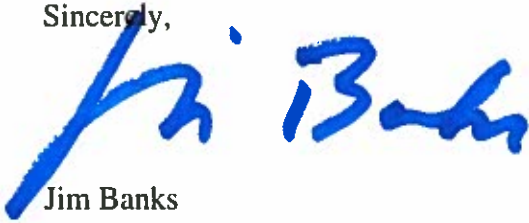
As you know, in early February Secretary Pompeo gave a speech to the National Governor's Association in which he warned that the Communist Party is increasingly focused on local and state government in its attempt to influence and infiltrate U.S. politics. This is a natural pivot, because thanks to President Trump, the federal government is less susceptible than ever to

Chinese influence operations. DJI's decision to donate drones to local governments after being blacklisted from most federal agencies is especially suspicious when viewed in this light.

As Co-Chair of the House Armed Services Committee Future of Defense Task Force and a member of the House of Representatives China Task Force, I am regularly briefed on the grave dangers of using drones and other surveillance technologies that may be sharing data with the Chinese Communist Party. I would request that you lead an executive order prohibiting DJI drones and other drone companies with significant ties to the Chinese Communist Party from being used in support of state or local government operations.

I am happy to discuss this issue with you further and would encourage your counterparts in other state government to take the same action. I look forward to working with you on this issue for the security and privacy of Hoosiers throughout the state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jim Banks". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Jim Banks
Member of Congress