

## The DETERRENT Act Protects U.S. National Security

**Bottom Line Up Front:** U.S. institutions of higher education (IHEs) are increasingly accepting gifts and engaging in partnerships with foreign countries and entities that threaten the U.S. defense sector, emerging technologies, innovation, and intellectual property. Passed by the House, the **DETERRENT Act (H.R. 1048)** would require greater public disclosure by IHEs of foreign gifts and partnerships, providing the executive branch with timely information to assess if adversarial nations are compromising colleges and universities. The latest reporting period of data collected from universities shows that foreign sources pushed **\$5 billion** into U.S. higher education. This was the second-largest reported amount ever recorded, and it excludes swaths of additional financial data that the **DETERRENT Act** would uncover.

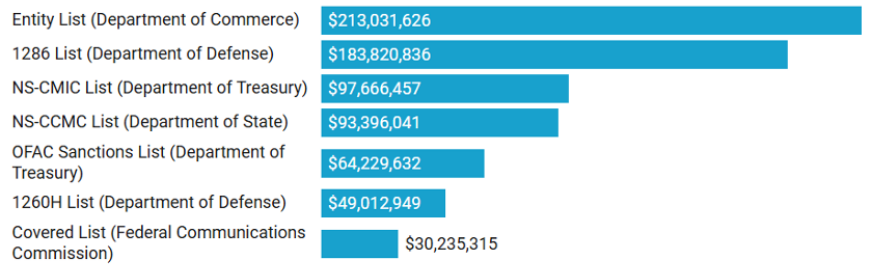
**New Data and Disclosures:** For the first time, the Department of Education is beginning a process of public disclosure of gifts, contracts, and partnerships that academic institutions have received or entered into with foreign entities. The [data](#) emerging from this effort underscores the need for transparency. Publicly available disclosures suggest that foreign countries financially engage across the U.S. education system on a massive scale. According to federal reporting data, **Qatar** has directed substantial funding to American universities in recent years, approximately **\$8.8 billion** in reported gifts and contracts. That is compared with roughly **\$6.8 billion** from **China**.

**This includes entities on USG watchlists.** Per the Department of Education’s portal, IHEs have reported roughly **\$405 million** in transactions involving counterparties that appear on U.S. government watchlists or restricted entity lists. These include approximately:

- **\$213 million** tied to entities appearing on the **Commerce Department’s Entity List**,
- **\$184 million** connected to institutions identified under **Sec. 1286 of the 2019 NDAA**, and
- **\$49 million** associated with firms appearing on the **Department of Defense’s Sec. 1260H list of Chinese military companies**.

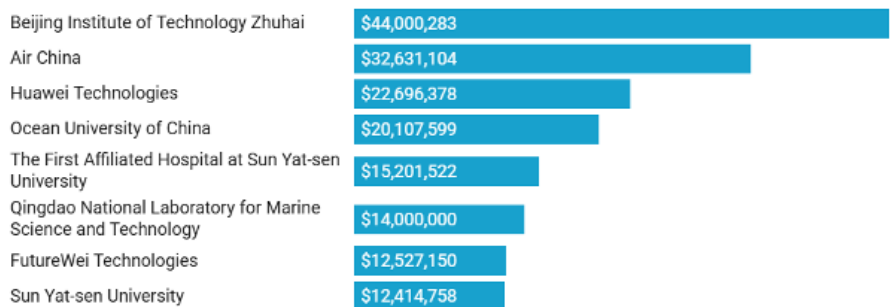
**Sanctioned entities are sending millions to U.S. IHEs.** First among them is the **Skolkovo Foundation**, which has sent over **\$50 million** in funding to American IHEs. According to the Treasury Department, the [Foundation](#) is a Russian state-managed innovation hub focused on military developments and supporting military-industrial factories to increase production. Second is the **Beijing Institute of Technology (BIT)**, which has contributed over **\$44 million** to IHEs. One of China’s top defense universities, BIT was [listed](#) on the Commerce Entity List because of its alleged efforts to procure U.S.-origin items to benefit the Chinese

### Listed Entities Contribute Significant Funding to U.S. Higher Education



Data collected by U.S. Department of Education (all-time collection records; all data is self-reported)

### Sanctioned Chinese Entities Have Major Financial Ties to U.S. Higher Education



Data collected by U.S. Department of Education (all-time collection records; data is self-reported)

military. It is also listed on the Sec. 1286 List, which lists foreign institutions engaging in problematic activity to prevent technology transfer to countries of concern. *America's foreign adversaries are heavily invested in U.S. higher education.*

### **DETERRENT Act Provisions Address Foreign Influence:**

It's important to note what the legislation **does not do**. The bill does not ban foreign money or foreign students from U.S. higher education.

- **Does not target foreign students.** The bill does not restrict international students from enrolling at or attending American colleges and universities.
- **Does not limit lawful study in the United States.** The bill focuses on transparency in foreign funding, not on reducing educational opportunities for international students.
- **Does not impose nationality-based restrictions.** The bill addresses disclosure and accountability for foreign gifts and contracts; it does not single out students based on citizenship or national origin.
- **Does not curtail legitimate academic exchange.** The bill is aimed at transparency in funding relationships, not at blocking lawful collaboration or student mobility.

**What the Bill Does:** The legislation would provide additional data and contract information to the Department of Education and the State Department, which would be shared with the Departments of Defense, Commerce, and Treasury to form a holistic picture of foreign influence in education. These university-foreign entity partnerships and contracts would provide details on financial partners and foundations used by foreign governments to obfuscate their investment decisions. The contract information will also provide transparency on what terms and conditions foreign governments are requesting of IHEs, including curriculum, staff decisions, areas of research, and joint usage and intellectual property arrangements.

**Institutional Transparency and Accountability:** The *DETERRENT Act* passed the House of Representatives in March of 2025, with a bipartisan vote of 241–169. The legislation is supported by a diverse group of allies, including transparency groups, national security experts, and education and religious freedom associations.

**The legislation builds on existing efforts at the agency level.** This includes President Trump's April 2025 [E.O. 14282](#), "Transparency Regarding Foreign Influence at American Universities," as well as the U.S. Department of Education's foreign funding portal "[Foreign Funding Higher Education Database](#)," [launched](#) in January 2026. The legislation would also complement the Department of Education and the Department of State [Section 117 partnership](#) by allowing for information sharing to evaluate potential national security risks of foreign entities in higher education. The *DETERRENT Act* would also help the Department of Defense meet its risk mitigation goals set forth in [guidance released in March of 2026](#). This additional IHE reporting will ensure schools are held accountable for foreign partnerships and gifts by providing the federal government with the data necessary to evaluate government grants to those institutions.

## **China Has Targeted U.S. Higher Education in Espionage Operations**

Date	Academic Espionage Case
September 2019	Zhongsan Liu was arrested for J-1 visa fraud in an effort to conduct academic espionage
January 2020	Two Chinese nationals, Yanqing Ye and Zaosong Zheng, were arrested for stealing biological research conducted at Harvard University
July 2020	Several Chinese nationals connected to the PLA were arrested for visa fraud in an attempt to steal academic research and lab designs
August 2020	Chengdong Cheng, a professor at Texas A&M conducting research for NASA, was charged with wire fraud for hiding his affiliation with Chinese universities
February 2021	Chen Song was indicted for obstruction, alteration of records, visa fraud charges and false statements regarding her status as a PLA member while conducting brain research at Stanford University
June 2025	Three Chinese nationals are charged with aiding and abetting the smuggling of biological samples into a laboratory at the University of Michigan

Data collected by the Center for Strategic and International Studies and U.S. Department of Justice