

U.S. Attorney Rollins statement on dropping of charges in Massachusetts Institute of technology professor Gang Chen case

3 years ago the U.S. Government enacted the China Initiative, which is intended to prevent China from stealing U.S.-funded research. Critics of the initiative say it is a case of racial profiling which drags innocent people through legal battles and threat of criminal punishment.

MIT mechanical engineering professor Gang Chen was charged with lying to the Department of Energy on a 2017 grant application, failing to report a foreign bank account, and making a false statement on his tax return and was indicted in January 2021.

Yesterday, U.S. Department of Justice prosecutors asked District Court Judge Patti Saris to dismiss charges against Professor Chen based on new information in the case.

Rob Fisher, Chen's attorney said of the dismissal "Today is a great day. The government finally acknowledged what we have said all along: Professor Gang Chen is an innocent man. He was never an overseas scientist for Beijing. He disclosed everything he was supposed to disclose, and he never lied to the government or anyone else."

U.S. Attorney Rachael Rollins' officials statement:

"Today's dismissal of the criminal charges against Gang Chen is a result of our continued investigation into this matter.

Through that effort, we recently obtained additional information pertaining to the materiality of Professor Chen's alleged omissions in the context of the grant review process at issue in this case. After a careful assessment of this new information in the context of all the evidence, our office has concluded that we can no longer meet our burden of proof at trial.

As prosecutors, we have an obligation in every matter we pursue to continually examine the facts while being open to receiving and uncovering new information. We understand that our charging decisions deeply impact people's lives.

As United States Attorney, I will always encourage the prosecutors in our office to engage in this type of rigorous and continued review at every stage of a proceeding. Today's dismissal is a result of that process and is in the interests of justice."