

Federal Hiring, Foreign Nationals, the Maine CBP Case, and Newegg

There is a difference between healthy compassion and unhealthy-harming compassion. A lesson for many Americans as we face serious challenges within our borders.

The Question

A recent case involving a U.S. Customs and Border Protection supervisor in Maine raises several questions about federal hiring, citizenship requirements, foreign-born employees, federal oversight, and the security of government computer systems.

The individual involved is Terry “Jiajia” Liu, a CBP supervisor assigned to the Calais, Maine, Port of Entry, with responsibilities that also extended to the Ferry Point and Milltown facilities. Liu, 39, was arrested in September 2026 and charged with theft of government property and destruction of government property. These are allegations, and he has not been convicted.

The case has also drawn attention because reporting describes Liu as originally from Guangzhou, China, and because some of the allegedly removed computer components were exchanged through Newegg's trade-in program. The available criminal allegations examine potential involvement by the Chinese government, a foreign intelligence service, and the company Newegg.

Federal Employment and Citizenship

The federal government generally requires U.S. citizenship or nationality for federal employment, although there are limited exceptions.

USAJOBS explains that, in general, a person must be a U.S. citizen or national to work for the federal government. There are exceptions that can allow certain non-U.S. citizens to be employed under specific circumstances, including certain excepted-service positions and other situations authorized under federal personnel rules. Therefore, it is important to distinguish between a person being **foreign-born**, being a **lawful permanent resident**, being a **U.S. citizen**, and being a **foreign national**. These terms do not mean the same thing.

For CBP Officer positions specifically, CBP's published career requirements state that applicants must be U.S. citizens. This means that simply being born in another country does not tell us whether a person was legally eligible for the position. We would need the individual's citizenship and employment records to establish that.

Foreign-Born Does Not Automatically Mean Foreign National

One important distinction in this case is the difference between **foreign-born** and **foreign national**.

A person can be born in China, India, Canada, Mexico, or another country and later become a U.S. citizen. A U.S. citizen who was born overseas is still a U.S. citizen and can qualify for federal employment when otherwise eligible.

Likewise, a person can be a lawful permanent resident without being a U.S. citizen. Federal employment rules generally restrict federal employment by noncitizens, but there are limited exceptions.

Therefore, reports describing Liu as originally from Guangzhou do not by themselves establish his citizenship status at the time he was hired by CBP. His actual immigration and citizenship records would be needed to answer that question conclusively.

The Maine CBP Computer Case

According to the FBI affidavit and reporting on the federal case, investigators discovered unauthorized modifications to government computers at three Maine border facilities.

The investigation ultimately identified **46 computers** that had allegedly been altered:

- **38 computers** at the Calais Port of Entry
- **6 computers** at Ferry Point
- **2 computers** at Milltown

The FBI says the computers had government components removed and replaced with older or inferior components. The identified changes included **39 processors, 6 memory modules, and 8 hard drives**, with some computers receiving more than one type of modification.

Many of the computers were reportedly reconnected to the CBP network after the modifications.

The government estimated that restoring the original components would cost approximately **\$20,460**. Replacing all 46 computers was estimated at approximately **\$105,800**, before additional costs associated with configuring the replacement computers for government use.

The Warning From the Port Director

The FBI affidavit reportedly states that on **March 18, 2025**, Calais Port Director Theodore Cummings sent Liu an email instructing him not to move computers or computer parts.

Cummings reportedly wrote:

“Please do not move any computers or computer parts.”

The email directed CBP personnel to use the agency's information-technology work-ticket process rather than independently moving or modifying equipment.

This is important because it establishes that, according to the affidavit, Liu had been specifically told not to move or modify the computers before investigators later alleged that he continued doing so.

Cummings was the port director and Liu's supervisor in this period. However, the publicly available information does **not** establish that Cummings personally hired Liu or approved his original federal appointment.

What Investigators Allegedly Found

Investigators reportedly installed surveillance cameras after discovering the unauthorized computer modifications.

According to the FBI affidavit as reported, surveillance footage allegedly showed Liu working on government computers during overnight shifts. Investigators allege that he removed higher-value components and installed older or inferior components in their place.

The computers originally contained newer Intel processors, including 14th-generation processors. Investigators reportedly found that some had been replaced with substantially older processors, including Intel Pentium models. Other computers had reduced memory or storage.

The affidavit reportedly states that Liu eventually acknowledged replacing the components and using government components for trade-in credit. Investigators allege that he understood that some of the replacements degraded the computers' performance.

Newegg and the Missing Computer Parts

Investigators reportedly traced some of the removed components to **Newegg's trade-in program**.

According to reporting based on the FBI affidavit, Liu allegedly exchanged government computer components for Newegg store credit. Records reportedly showed **16 processor trade-ins between May 2025 and July 2026**, with individual offers reportedly around \$200 to \$210.

This is how the alleged chain of events has been described:

CBP government computers → removal of original components → replacement with older components → original components allegedly taken from government property → components allegedly submitted to Newegg's trade-in program → store credit received.

Who Hired Terry Liu?

This is one of the important unanswered questions.

The publicly available reporting and court information identify Liu as a CBP supervisor and identify Theodore Cummings as the Calais port director who supervised him during the period in which the alleged computer activity occurred. However, the sources currently available do **not** identify the individual who originally hired Liu or provide a definitive original CBP appointment date.

Therefore, it would be inaccurate to say that Theodore Cummings hired Liu simply because Cummings was his port director in 2025.

The records that would answer the hiring question more precisely would include Liu's federal personnel record, his original SF-50 or appointment documentation, the applicable CBP vacancy announcement, and the selecting/appointing authority for his position.

Was Liu Hired by the Biden Administration?

The current evidence does not establish this.

The alleged computer activity occurred primarily during **2025 and 2026**, but that does not tell us when Liu originally entered federal service. A person working for CBP in 2025 could have been hired years earlier, including before the Biden administration.

Likewise, the fact that Liu is reportedly originally from China does not establish that he was a foreign national when he entered federal employment.

To establish whether Biden-era hiring was involved, we would need Liu's actual federal appointment date.

Biden Administration vs. Trump Administration

How many foreign nationals are being hired?

Federal workforce totals measure the size of the workforce. They do **not** tell us how many employees were foreign-born, how many were naturalized citizens, how many were noncitizens, or how many were foreign nationals.

Official federal workforce data show approximately:

- **September 2016:** 2,097,038
- **September 2017:** 2,087,747
- **September 2018:** 2,100,802
- **September 2019:** 2,132,812
- **September 2020:** 2,181,106

The second Trump administration has produced a much more substantial workforce reduction. OPM has reported a large reduction in federal employment since January 20, 2025, along with a hiring freeze and restrictions emphasizing mission-critical hiring.

What Would Establish Whether Foreign Nationals Were Hired?

To answer that question accurately, the government would need to provide citizenship-related hiring information for the relevant agencies and years.

The most useful records would include:

1. **CBP hiring records**
2. **DHS personnel statistics**
3. **Federal appointment dates**
4. **Citizenship status at appointment**
5. **The type of federal appointment**
6. **The authority used if a noncitizen was employed**
7. **The position's security requirements**

8. The agency or official responsible for the appointment

Without those records, it is not possible to conclude from the Maine case alone that the Biden administration hired foreign nationals into CBP positions.

Newegg: Ownership and Location

The connection to Newegg is worth documenting separately because Newegg is a U.S.-based operating company but has a Chinese majority owner.

According to Newegg's SEC filings, **Hangzhou Liaison Interactive Information Technology Co., Limited**, commonly called **Hangzhou Lianluo**, is a publicly traded company in China and is the majority owner of Newegg Commerce, Inc. Hangzhou Lianluo owns its interest through its wholly owned subsidiary, **Digital Grid (Hong Kong) Technology Co., Limited**.

The ownership structure can therefore be shown as:

Hangzhou Lianluo — China-listed company

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Digital Grid (Hong Kong) — wholly owned subsidiary

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Newegg Commerce, Inc. — U.S. company

Newegg's current principal executive office is:

**21688 Gateway Center Drive, Suite 300
Diamond Bar, California 91765**

The company was originally founded in California and continues to operate from the United States, while its majority ownership is held through the Chinese corporate structure described above.

Newegg's SEC filings also identify Zhitao “Tom” He as chairman of Newegg and chairman of Hangzhou Lianluo.

The important distinction is that **Chinese majority ownership does not by itself mean that Newegg is owned by the Chinese government**. Hangzhou Lianluo is a publicly traded Chinese company; that is different from establishing government ownership or control.

The Newegg Connection to the Maine Case

The factual connection currently established is relatively narrow:

1. Government computers at Maine CBP facilities were allegedly modified.

2. Government computer components were allegedly removed.
3. Investigators reportedly traced some of those components to Newegg's trade-in program.
4. Newegg allegedly provided trade-in credit for some of the components.
5. Newegg is majority-owned by a publicly traded Chinese company through a Hong Kong subsidiary.

These facts can be documented separately.

What We Know and What We Do Not Know

Established or publicly reported

- Terry “Jiajia” Liu was a CBP supervisor assigned to the Calais Port of Entry.
- His responsibilities extended to Ferry Point and Milltown.
- He was arrested in September 2026.
- He faces federal charges involving theft and destruction of government property.
- Investigators identified 46 allegedly modified government computers.
- Components allegedly removed included processors, RAM, and hard drives.
- Some original components were allegedly exchanged through Newegg's trade-in program.
- A March 2025 email from Port Director Theodore Cummings instructed Liu not to move computers or computer parts.
- Investigators allegedly obtained surveillance footage of Liu working on government computers.
- Liu reportedly admitted to replacing components and using government components for trade-in credit.
- Newegg is headquartered in Diamond Bar, California.
- Newegg Commerce, Inc. is majority-owned by Hangzhou Lianluo through Digital Grid, a Hong Kong subsidiary.

Not established by the currently available evidence

- The exact date Liu was originally hired by CBP.
- The identity of the person who originally approved his federal appointment.

- Liu's citizenship status when he was hired.
 - That Liu was a foreign national at the time of his appointment.
 - That the Biden administration hired him.
 - That the Trump administration hired him.
 - That the Chinese government was involved in the alleged computer activity.
 - That Liu was acting as a Chinese intelligence operative.
 - That Newegg knew the computer components were allegedly stolen government property.
 - That Newegg participated in the alleged theft or computer modifications.
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Bottom Line

The Maine case raises legitimate questions about federal hiring, employee access to government computer systems, internal controls, and how government equipment was allowed to be removed and altered.

At the same time, the available evidence needs to be separated from assumptions. Being born in China does not establish that Liu was a foreign national when hired, and his current employment does not establish when he entered federal service or who approved his appointment.

The Newegg connection is also a documented part of the alleged property trail, but Newegg's Chinese majority ownership is a separate corporate fact. The current criminal allegations do not establish that Newegg or the Chinese government participated in the alleged conduct.

The most important unanswered question concerning the hiring issue remains: **When did Terry Liu first enter federal service, what was his citizenship status at that time, and what federal authority approved his appointment?**

Those records would be necessary to determine whether his employment began during the Biden administration, the Trump administration, or an earlier administration, and whether any special noncitizen hiring authority was involved.

There was an increase in overall federal hiring during the Biden years

During the Trump administration OPM reports that in 2025 approximately **68,000 people were hired while about 317,000 left federal service**, producing a very large net reduction.

4.7 departures for every new hire, exceeding Trump's stated 4-to-1 reduction target.

The **317,000 departures** are not all firings. They include different types of separations, including resignations, retirements and other departures. OPM specifically reports that

139,963 employees participated in the Deferred Resignation Program, which was introduced in 2025.

However, there were **historic** enlistments in the United State's military as many Americans expressed patriotism during this period of modern war. CBP also reported historic surges with a 44% increase.

Demographic	DHS permanent workforce
White	58.3%
Hispanic/Latino	20.3%
Black	14.3%
Asian	4.6%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.3%
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.8%
Two or more races	1.5%
Men	68.0%
Women	32.0%