

# One-Step Passivation of Both Sulfur Vacancies and SiO<sub>2</sub> Interface Traps of MoS<sub>2</sub> Device

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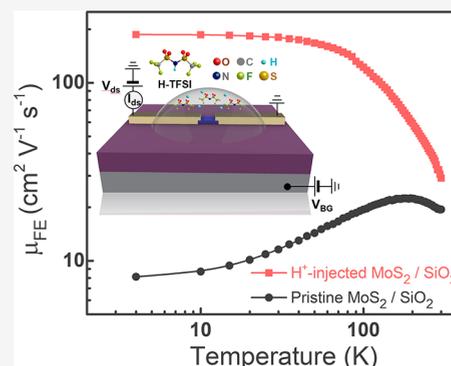
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Supporting Information

**ABSTRACT:** Transition metal dichalcogenides (TMDs) benefit electrical devices with spin–orbit coupling and valley- and topology-related properties. However, TMD-based devices suffer from traps arising from defect sites inside the channel and the gate oxide interface. Deactivating them requires independent treatments, because the origins are dissimilar. This study introduces a single treatment to passivate defects in a multilayer MoS<sub>2</sub> FET. By applying back-gate bias, protons from an H–TFSI droplet are injected into the MoS<sub>2</sub>, penetrating deeply enough to reach the SiO<sub>2</sub> gate oxide. The characterizations employing low-temperature transport and deep-level transient spectroscopy (DLTS) studies reveal that the trap density of S vacancies in MoS<sub>2</sub> drops to the lowest detection level. The temperature-dependent mobility plot on the SiO<sub>2</sub> substrate resembles that of the h-BN substrate, implying that dangling bonds in SiO<sub>2</sub> are passivated. The carrier mobility on the SiO<sub>2</sub> substrate is enhanced by approximately 2200% after the injection.

**KEYWORDS:** concurrent passivation, MoS<sub>2</sub>, proton injection, interface trap, sulfur vacancy, bulk trap



Recently, 2D layered semiconductors have received worldwide attention, because they are atomically thin and possess no dangling bonds at the surface. Hence, improved device performance is expected from them at the nanoscale.<sup>1</sup> Despite the structural advantages of these materials, the electrical characterization of MoS<sub>2</sub> reveals various problems. For instance, MoS<sub>2</sub> exhibits an n-type behavior attributed to S vacancies. Because of this, the Fermi level is pinned, which enables control of the barrier height of the junction between MoS<sub>2</sub> and the metal electrode.<sup>2</sup> The gap states originating from S vacancies provide nonradiative recombination centers and degrade the photoluminescence (PL) of MoS<sub>2</sub>.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, they contribute to hysteresis in the electrical measurements.<sup>4</sup> The vacancies detrimentally influence both the electrical and optical properties of MoS<sub>2</sub>. For these reasons, healing and passivating S defects have drawn considerable attention for achieving an enhanced device performance. For instance, trifluoromethanesulfonimide (H–TFSI) acid, providing S atoms, has been used as a healing agent.<sup>3,5</sup> Treatment with H–TFSI improved the PL intensity of monolayer MoS<sub>2</sub> by 190 times.<sup>5</sup> The electrostatic doping reduces the concentration of trions, consequently amplifying the PL intensity.<sup>6</sup> Treatment of thiol-based self-assembled monolayers (SAMs) on MoS<sub>2</sub> also enhanced carrier mobility.<sup>7–9</sup>

In addition to the S vacancies, devices made of various nanomaterials also suffer from extrinsic factors, including organic impurities, wrinkles, O<sub>2</sub> and H<sub>2</sub>O adsorbates, strain, and interface traps.<sup>10,11</sup> One of the most significant extrinsic

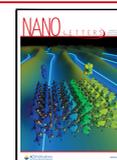
effects stems from the surface of SiO<sub>2</sub> gate oxide on the Si substrate. Various dangling bonds exist on the SiO<sub>2</sub> gate dielectric. They possess charged impurities that scatter nearby mobile carriers in 2D field-effect transistor (FET) channels, resulting in an inhomogeneous surface potential.<sup>12</sup> The dangling bonds also work as trap states, which cause carrier density and mobility fluctuations by capturing or releasing the channel carriers. Therefore, passivating them on the MoS<sub>2</sub>–SiO<sub>2</sub> interface is an important issue.

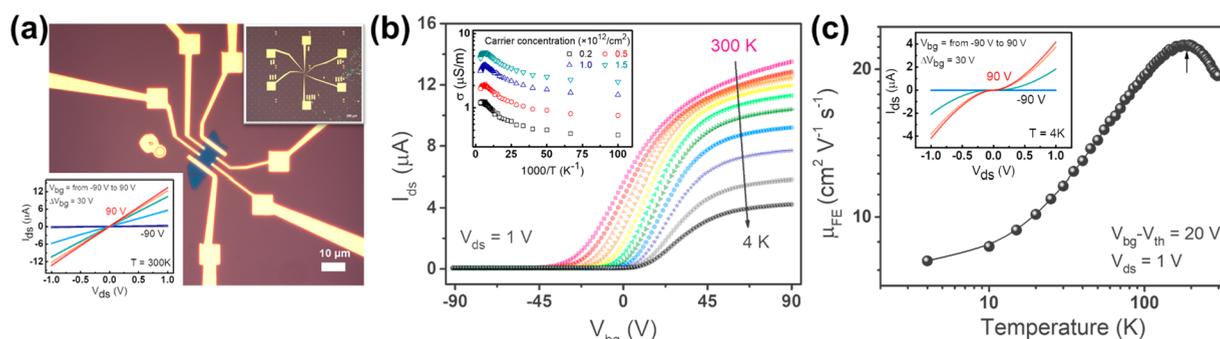
This study demonstrates a new method that disables scattering by both S vacancies inside bulk MoS<sub>2</sub> and charged impurities on the MoS<sub>2</sub>–SiO<sub>2</sub> interface. We introduced protons into a multilayer MoS<sub>2</sub> FET for device applications by applying a gate bias between the back gate and the H–TFSI solution covering the channel. The small hydrogen ions penetrate through both the MoS<sub>2</sub> channel and the MoS<sub>2</sub>–SiO<sub>2</sub> interface, and they passivate the S vacancies and ionized dangling bonds in the MoS<sub>2</sub>–SiO<sub>2</sub> interface. As a result, the density of S vacancy trap sites was reduced to our lowest detection level, which was confirmed by our deep-level transient spectroscopy (DLTS). Furthermore, the treatment

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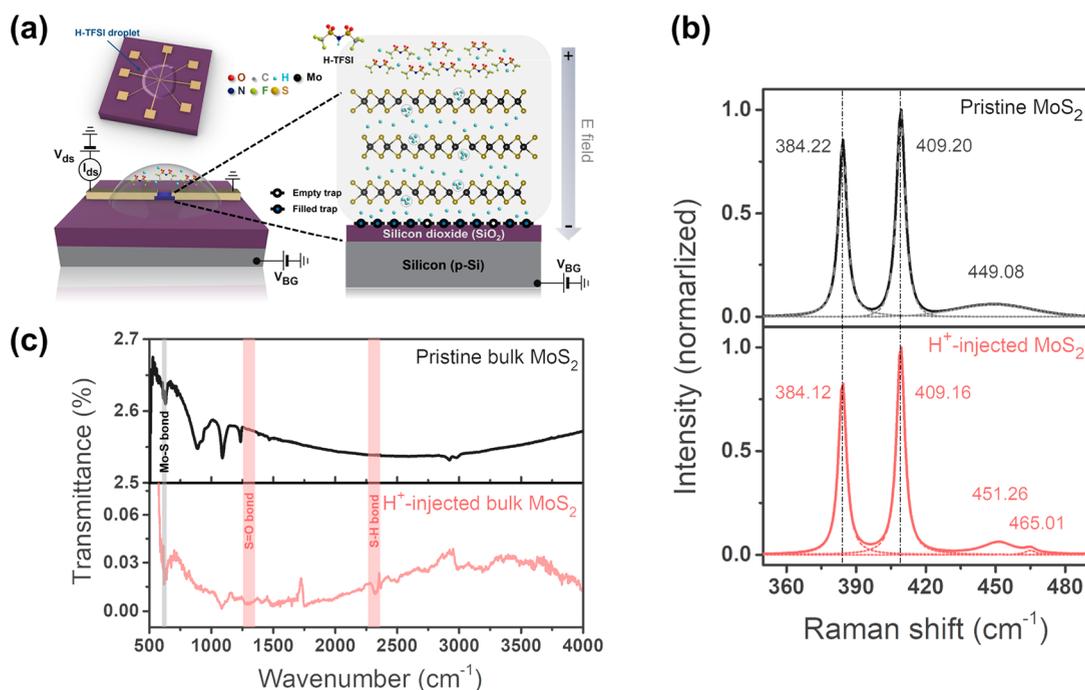
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**Figure 1.** (a) Optical image of a multilayer MoS<sub>2</sub> Hall bar device on a 300 nm-thick SiO<sub>2</sub>/Si substrate. The top and bottom insets are an overview of the device and output curves at different  $V_{bg}$  values, respectively. (b) Temperature-dependent transfer curves of multilayer MoS<sub>2</sub>. The inset is the conductivity ( $\sigma$ ) vs  $1/T$  plots of multilayer MoS<sub>2</sub> as a function of carrier concentration. (c) Temperature-dependent field effect mobility ( $\mu_{FE}$ ) of the multilayer MoS<sub>2</sub>. The inset shows output curves under various  $V_{bg}$  concentrations at 4 K.



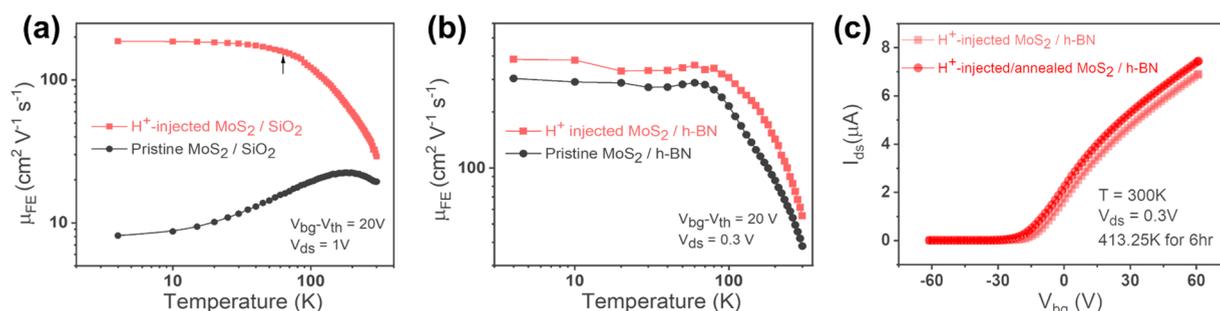
**Figure 2.** (a) Schematic of H<sup>+</sup> injection into a MoS<sub>2</sub> field-effect transistor (FET). (b) Raman and (c) Fourier transform infrared (FT-IR) spectroscopy analysis before and after H<sup>+</sup> injection into MoS<sub>2</sub>.

renders the transport behavior similar to that of the h-BN substrate, i.e., no ionic impurity scattering at low temperatures, even though the device was fabricated on a SiO<sub>2</sub>/Si substrate. Our approach is more beneficial compared to the conventional H-TFSI treatment,<sup>3</sup> whose effect relies on S atoms and is limited to only the top surface layer of multilayer MoS<sub>2</sub>. Therefore, the remaining MoS<sub>2</sub> layer is open to ionic impurities from the SiO<sub>2</sub>/Si substrate.

For the electrical characterization of multilayer MoS<sub>2</sub>, we fabricated a 6-bar Hall structure on a 300 nm-thick SiO<sub>2</sub>/Si substrate, as shown in Figure 1a [Supporting Information 1]. This device is termed a multilayer MoS<sub>2</sub>/SiO<sub>2</sub>. The inset of Figure 1a shows that the contact of Cr/Au-MoS<sub>2</sub> is ohmic, although it becomes slightly sublinear at 4 K, as shown in the inset of Figure 1c. Figure 1b presents the transfer curves of the devices measured at different temperatures. The device exhibits a metal-insulator transition (MIT). The conductivity ( $\sigma$ ) vs  $1/T$  plot, in the inset of Figure 1b, details the dependence of the metal-semiconductor transition on

both the temperature and carrier concentration. The carrier concentration was calculated using a parallel-capacitance model. At carrier concentrations above  $0.5 \times 10^{12} \text{ cm}^{-2}$ , multilayer MoS<sub>2</sub> exhibits a metallic behavior, where the conductivity decreases with temperature. The MIT became more pronounced as the carrier concentration increased, as shown in the inset of Figure 1b. This conductivity trend was reversed below 230 K, where the conductivity decreased as the temperature decreased. The turnover temperature coincides with the curves for higher carrier concentrations.

We measured the field-effect mobility  $\mu_{FE}$  at  $V_{ds} = 1 \text{ V}$  as a function of temperature. The trend of temperature-dependent  $\mu_{FE}$  is altered with respect to  $T \approx 190 \text{ K}$ , as marked by an upward arrow in Figure 1c. At  $T > 190 \text{ K}$ ,  $\mu_{FE}$  decreases with increasing temperature, indicating phonon-dominated carrier scattering. In contrast, at  $T < 190 \text{ K}$ ,  $\mu_{FE}$  increases with increasing temperature, signifying charged impurity scattering, which is attributed to SiO<sub>2</sub>/Si substrate possessing oxygen and Si atoms with unpaired valence electrons. As the temperature



**Figure 3.** (a)  $\log(\mu_{FE})-\log(T)$  of pristine and H<sup>+</sup>-injected MoS<sub>2</sub> on a SiO<sub>2</sub> substrate. (b)  $\log(\mu_{FE})-\log(T)$  of pristine and H<sup>+</sup>-injected MoS<sub>2</sub> on an h-BN substrate. (c) Transfer curve of the H<sup>+</sup>-injected MoS<sub>2</sub> device before and after annealing.

decreases, defect scattering gradually dominates over the optical phonon scattering below 190 K. The transition temperature in Figure 1c depends on the concentration of the impurities.<sup>13</sup> For this reason,  $\mu_{FE}$  is characterized at  $|V_{bg} - V_{th}| = 20$  V, at which the carrier concentration  $n = 1.445 \times 10^{12}$  cm<sup>-2</sup>, was obtained using a parallel capacitor model.<sup>14</sup>  $V_{th}$  is the threshold voltage.

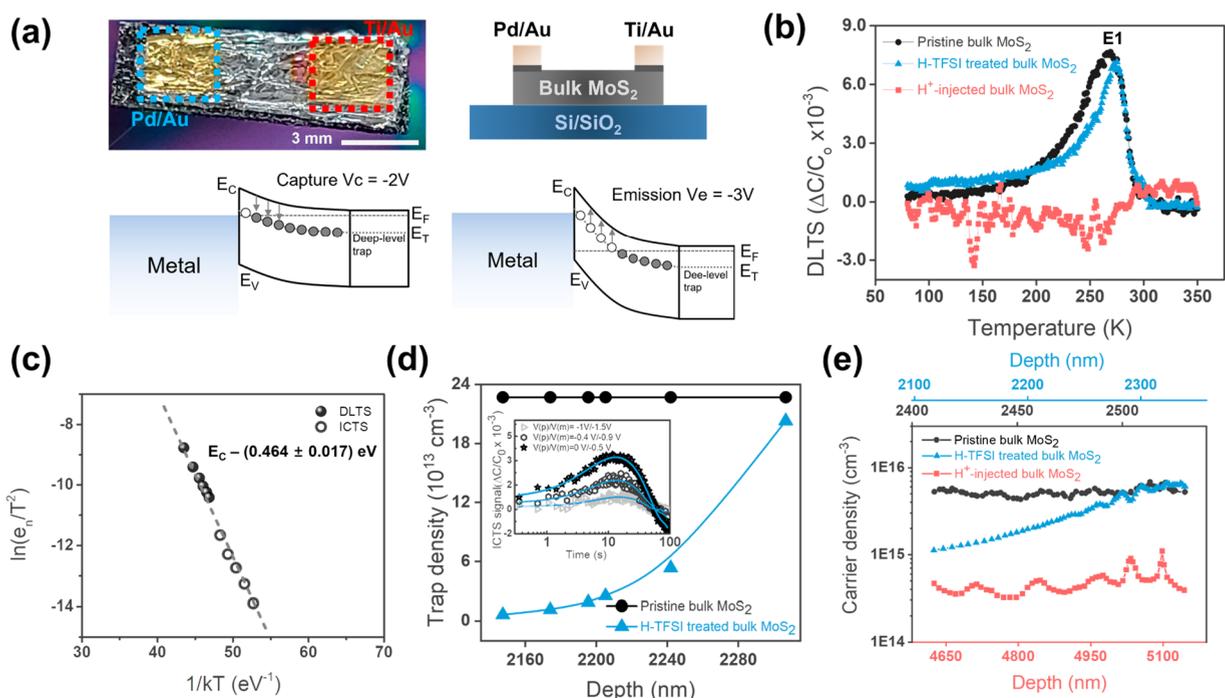
To passivate the charged impurities in both multilayer MoS<sub>2</sub> and SiO<sub>2</sub> gate dielectrics, we conducted H<sup>+</sup> injection by applying back-gate bias between the Si substrate and H-TFSI, which covers the MoS<sub>2</sub> channel, as shown in Figure 2a. In the H-TFSI solution at 300 K, H-TFSI molecules dissociate into hydrogen ions (H<sup>+</sup>) and TFSI<sup>-</sup> anions [Supporting Information 2].<sup>15</sup> We did not expect the existence of S ions in the solution. Defects involving S atoms are cured via the catalytic dissociation of TFSI anions near the S vacancy sites.<sup>5</sup> In addition, the decomposition temperature of TFSI is above 573 K.<sup>16</sup> Because all of the experiments were performed at room temperature, the generation of S atoms to restore the vacancy was highly unlikely in the present treatment. The protons in H-TFSI are expected to be attracted toward MoS<sub>2</sub> because of the back-gate bias. The effect of passivation is characterized by comparing the transport behaviors before and after H<sup>+</sup> injection. Our treatment of H-TFSI on a monolayer reproduced the results reported in previous optical studies,<sup>3</sup> which is shown in Supporting Information 3.

We conducted Raman spectroscopy to probe the presence of hydrogen atoms, as shown in Figure 2b. The pristine multilayer MoS<sub>2</sub> presents two characteristic modes at 384.22 and 409.20 cm<sup>-1</sup>, responsible for in-plane ( $E_{2g}^1$ ) and out-of-plane ( $A_{1g}$ ) phonon modes.<sup>17</sup> In addition to these main peaks, a second-order Raman resonant 2LA(M) mode invoked by the collective in-plane atoms is found at 449.08 cm<sup>-1</sup>. After applying the gate bias, the 2LA mode shifts to higher energy at approximately 451 cm<sup>-1</sup>, with a new shoulder peak at 465 cm<sup>-1</sup>, assigned to the  $A_{2u}$  mode.<sup>18,19</sup> In pristine MoS<sub>2</sub>, the mode is not active, owing to symmetry. However, the adsorption of atoms on the basal plane of MoS<sub>2</sub> can break its symmetry. This contributed to the development of the  $A_{2u}$  peak, as shown in Figure 2b. The Raman spectrum is a collection of signals from all of the layers of the multilayer MoS<sub>2</sub>, and not only the topmost layer. Therefore, the  $A_{2u}$  peak supports the existence of intercalated adatoms in the multilayer MoS<sub>2</sub>. Our chemical contains various ions. However, under a gate bias of  $V_{bg} = -90$  V, the substances that can be injected into the interlayer gap are limited. Furthermore, the ions passivate both the S vacancies of MoS<sub>2</sub> and the dangling bonds of the SiO<sub>2</sub> gate dielectrics. Therefore, it is proposed that the H<sup>+</sup> ions are responsible for the results shown in Figure 2b.

We cross-checked the injection of H<sup>+</sup> ions into bulk MoS<sub>2</sub> using Fourier transform infrared absorption (FT-IR), as shown in Figure 2c. From a pristine bulk MoS<sub>2</sub>, the absorption peak is characterized by Mo-S stretching at 630 cm<sup>-1</sup>.<sup>20</sup> In addition, absorption peaks arise from organic solvents such as acetone (1090 and 1237 cm<sup>-1</sup>) and IPA (2915 and 2980 cm<sup>-1</sup>; C-H stretching vibrational mode) residues,<sup>21</sup> which were used for sample cleaning before FT-IR. After H<sup>+</sup> injection using H-TFSI, the intensity of the organic solvent peaks became negligible [Supporting Information 4]. A key feature after H<sup>+</sup> injection is the presence of thiol (SH) functional groups at 2350 cm<sup>-1</sup>. The detection of a thiol group is an indication of H<sup>+</sup> ions between the layers inside the multilayer MoS<sub>2</sub> and does not imply substitution for S atoms.<sup>22</sup> The calculations predicted that interstitial H<sup>+</sup> ions could interact with perfect S atoms from the top and bottom layers. Therefore, S-H bonds are present in the interlayer spacing. In addition, the S vacancy site is expected to attract more H<sup>+</sup> ions than perfect S atoms.<sup>23</sup> Thus, the SH peak from MoS<sub>2</sub> injected with H<sup>+</sup> (Figure 2c) may be attributed to protons near the vacancy site with dangling S atoms. The S=O vibrational mode at 1287 cm<sup>-1</sup> originates from the TFSI molecule.<sup>24</sup> Deep in the multilayer MoS<sub>2</sub> channel is not expected due to the large diameter of the TFSI anions.<sup>24,25</sup>

In contrast to previous studies,<sup>3</sup> our room temperature treatment sustains the probability that TFSI molecules decompose and introduce S ions is low. Moreover, even if S ions are present in the solution, passivation of the sulfur vacancies ( $V_s$ ) embedded deep in the multilayer MoS<sub>2</sub> channel is not expected due to the large diameter of the TFSI anions.<sup>24</sup> For that reason, our injection method introduced H<sup>+</sup> ions, not S ions. Furthermore, the occupation of H<sup>+</sup> ions at the S vacancy sites can lead to the elimination of gap states.<sup>15</sup> The energy states of S vacancies are usually located 0.45 eV below the conduction band edge. Calculations indicate that the incorporation of H<sup>+</sup> ions shifts the energy states of the S vacancy,  $V_s$ , into the conduction band. Thus, no gap states exist in the bandgap.<sup>15</sup>

We analyzed the transport behavior of MoS<sub>2</sub>/SiO<sub>2</sub> treated with H<sup>+</sup> ions. Temperature-dependent threshold voltage ( $V_{th}$ ) curves demonstrate that proton injection caused p-type doping [Supporting Information 5]. In addition, the plots of  $\log(\mu_{FE})-\log(T)$  in Figure 3a reveal an enormous difference at low temperatures before and after H<sup>+</sup> injection. In Figure 1c, ionized impurity scattering dominates over its phononic counterpart below 190 K. However, in Figure 3a, at temperatures <70 K (marked by an upward arrow),  $\mu_{FE}$  saturates, which is attributed to neutral defects at low temperatures. The protonation of multilayer MoS<sub>2</sub> maybe



**Figure 4.** (a) Optical image of actual bulk MoS<sub>2</sub> and a schematic for deep-level transient and isothermal capacitance transient spectroscopy. (b) Deep-level transient spectroscopy (DLTS) signals of pristine/trifluoromethanesulfonimide (H-TFSI)-treated/H<sup>+</sup>-injected bulk MoS<sub>2</sub> as a function of temperature. (c) Trap activation energy from DLTS and isothermal capacitance transient spectroscopy (ICTS). Depth profiles of the (d) trap and (e) carrier concentration of bulk MoS<sub>2</sub>. The inset in Figure 4d shows ICTS as a function of the gate pulses.

leaves S vacancies in a neutral charge state.<sup>15</sup> At low temperatures, when the phonon population is sufficiently sparse, the collisions of the carriers with the neutral defects outrun those from optical phonons. However, the scattering rate does not depend on the temperature because the number of neutral defect sites does not change with temperature.<sup>26</sup> Whether the ionized defects are neutralized within the SiO<sub>2</sub> gate oxide is unclear.

To clarify the effect of proton injection on SiO<sub>2</sub>, we prepared MoS<sub>2</sub> devices on h-BN substrates without charged impurities. The device on h-BN is denoted as multilayer MoS<sub>2</sub>/h-BN. A comparison between the pristine and H<sup>+</sup>-injected MoS<sub>2</sub>/h-BN is shown in Figure 3b. The plots of  $\log(\mu_{FE}) - \log(T)$  of pristine MoS<sub>2</sub>/h-BN reveal no scattering by ionized impurities at low temperatures. Thus,  $\mu_{FE}$  nearly saturates at approximately 90 K. The comparison of  $\log(\mu_{FE}) - \log(T)$  between the H<sup>+</sup>-injected and pristine MoS<sub>2</sub>/h-BN devices indicates that the SiO<sub>2</sub> substrate significantly degrades the carrier mobility, owing to the charged impurities. On the MoS<sub>2</sub>/SiO<sub>2</sub> device, the low-temperature  $\mu_{FE}$  is enhanced by more than an order of magnitude after H<sup>+</sup> injection. Additionally, upon examination of the mobility curve of the MoS<sub>2</sub>/h-BN device before and after protonation, we found that the temperature at which mobility saturation occurs did not significantly change (approximately 80–90 K). However, the carrier mobility improved by approximately 30% over the entire temperature range after the H<sup>+</sup> injection. This mobility enhancement from the MoS<sub>2</sub>/h-BN device can be explained by passivation of S vacancies by the H<sup>+</sup> ions. Compared to the SiO<sub>2</sub> substrate, the h-BN substrate, which has no dangling bonds, is preferable for device performance. Nevertheless, the growth of large-scale h-BN is limited due to uneven layer thickness from chemical vapor deposition.<sup>27</sup> However, proton injection using gate bias can passivate dangling bonds in the

SiO<sub>2</sub> layer, transforming it into an h-BN-like substrate, as demonstrated in Figures 3a and 3b. The concentration of Si and O dangling bonds in the SiO<sub>2</sub> substrate was reduced under H<sup>+</sup>-ion-rich growth conditions during atomic layer deposition.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, the passivation of SiO<sub>2</sub> by H<sup>+</sup> injection is consistent with the previous observations.

To confirm the stability of the H<sup>+</sup> injection in multilayer MoS<sub>2</sub>, we annealed the device at 413 K for 6 h. Almost the same transfer curve was obtained after annealing, as shown in Figure 3c. The results indicate that the occupation of protons in the S vacancies is chemical rather than physical adsorption. Besides, the durability of the effect of proton injection was evaluated at 300 K. After preserving the proton-injected device within a vacuum chamber for a period of 3 weeks, our observations confirmed that the treatment applied to the MoS<sub>2</sub> device on SiO<sub>2</sub> substrate remained effective, as evidenced by Supporting Information 6.

To explore the effect of H<sup>+</sup> injection on the trap states of MoS<sub>2</sub>, we performed deep-level transient spectroscopy (DLTS) and isothermal capacitance transient spectroscopy (ICTS) of bulk MoS<sub>2</sub> samples. Bulk MoS<sub>2</sub> (with a diameter of a few millimeters) was used to probe the penetration depth of the H<sup>+</sup> ions. An asymmetric contact was established on the sample to build a depletion region by employing Pd/Au and Ti/Au electrode metals, as shown in the top panel of Figure 4a. Here, only the Pd/Au electrode on MoS<sub>2</sub> is expected to form a depletion region whose width is controlled using back-gate pulses.

For the DLTS measurements, we applied a pulse gate voltage with a width of 50 ms and a frequency of 10.9862 Hz. The voltage amplitude was modulated from −3 V for emission and −2 V for the capture of electrons by the trap sites, schematically presented in the bottom panel of Figure 4a [Supporting Information 7]. The DLTS signal from the

pristine bulk MoS<sub>2</sub> reveals a prominent peak, marked as E1 in Figure 4b, during the temperature sweep. The peak in Figure 4b indicates an electron trap state. The existence of electron trap states was double-checked using ICTS. The characteristics of the S vacancies in bulk MoS<sub>2</sub> were obtained by examining the emission rate  $e_n = \gamma_n \sigma_n \exp[-(E_C - E_T)/k_B T]$ .  $E_C$  is the conduction band edge,  $k_B$  is the Boltzmann constant,  $E_T$  is the trap energy,  $\gamma_n = 3.25 \times 10^{20} \text{ cm}^{-2} \cdot \text{s}^{-1} \cdot \text{K}^{-2} \cdot (m^*/m_0)$ , and  $\sigma_n$  is the capture cross-section. Here,  $m^*$  ( $0.574 m_0$ ) and  $m_0$  are the effective and free space mass of the electron, respectively.<sup>29</sup> The log plot of the emission rate, written as  $\ln(e_n/T^2) = \ln(\gamma_n \sigma_n) - (E_C - E_T)/k_B T$ , shows the trap energy from the slope in Figure 4c. The trap energy is approximately  $E_T = 0.464 \pm 0.017 \text{ eV}$ , which is similar to previous results.<sup>30</sup> The DLTS and ICTS produced consistent results, as shown in Figure 4c. In addition, we estimated the electron capture cross section  $\sigma_n$  using the y-intercept from the plot in Figure 4c.  $\sigma_n$  is approximately  $1.13 \times 10^{-16} \text{ cm}^2$ , which supports a single point defect. The trap characteristics were further controlled by H-TFSI treatment and H<sup>+</sup> injection, as shown in Figure 4b. When we dipped the pristine bulk MoS<sub>2</sub> into the H-TFSI solution, the DLTS signal was reduced. Surprisingly, after application of a back-gate bias to bulk MoS<sub>2</sub>, the DLTS signal was completely depleted, as shown in Figure 4b. Through the temperature sweep from 80 to 350 K, no peaks responsible for the S vacancy are observed in Figure 4b. Spectroscopy indicates that as a result of H<sup>+</sup> ion injection, the trap density is suppressed down to our instrument limit.

In addition to the trap energy, the trap concentration and depth profile of pristine bulk MoS<sub>2</sub> were estimated using the ICTS by changing the emission/capture pulse gate bias, as shown in the inset of Figure 4d. The trap concentration attributed to S vacancies inside pristine bulk MoS<sub>2</sub> is approximately  $2.2 \times 10^{14} \text{ cm}^{-3}$ , and the concentration is uniform, at least down to  $2.3 \mu\text{m}$  from the surface. Accordingly, the carrier concentration of the pristine bulk MoS<sub>2</sub> shows a consistent profile of approximately  $6.0 \times 10^{15} \text{ cm}^{-3}$ , as shown in Figure 4e. Here, we used a relative dielectric constant of 7.3 for MoS<sub>2</sub>.<sup>31</sup> Next, we scrutinized the trap profiles of bulk MoS<sub>2</sub> dipped in a H-TFSI solution. During dipping of MoS<sub>2</sub> in the solution for 1 h, protons diffused from the surface layer. After the sand was dipped, we observed a significant decrease in trap density, as shown in Figure 4d. Near the surface of bulk MoS<sub>2</sub>, the trap concentration reduces to  $6.4 \times 10^{12} \text{ cm}^{-3}$ , that is, 34 times smaller than the bulk concentration,  $2.2 \times 10^{14} \text{ cm}^{-3}$ , which is reinstated at  $2.3 \mu\text{m}$  below the surface in Figure 4d. Analogous to the trap concentration, the carrier concentration of bulk MoS<sub>2</sub> is approximately  $1.12 \times 10^{15} \text{ cm}^{-3}$  and gradually recovers a bulk concentration of  $6.0 \times 10^{15} \text{ cm}^{-3}$  in Figure 4e. Without biasing, H-TFSI can dope only bulk MoS<sub>2</sub> owing to the diffusion of H<sup>+</sup> ions but is ineffective for passivating the defects. The effects of doping and passivation by H-TFSI differed when a back-gate bias was applied. This effect was confirmed, as shown in Figure 4e, where the carrier density was reduced with depth. When H-TFSI was dropped onto bulk MoS<sub>2</sub>, the carrier concentration recovered to its intrinsic level of  $2.3 \mu\text{m}$  below the surface. However, when H<sup>+</sup> ions were injected, the carriers were completely depleted below the surface (Figure 4e). In addition to this hole-doping effect, simply drop-casting the H-TFSI on bulk MoS<sub>2</sub> did not passivate the trap sites, as shown in Figure 4b. After the gate bias was applied to H-TFSI, complete passivation of the trap sites was observed (Figure

4d). According to the theoretical prediction, the passivation of S vacancies with three H<sup>+</sup> ions is not feasible, which is consistent with our observation of the simple doping of bulk MoS<sub>2</sub> into H-TFSI. However, Figure 4b,e shows that the strong gate field facilitated the passivation of S vacancies due to occupation by three H<sup>+</sup> ions.

Recent theoretical calculations predict that the passivation of SiO<sub>2</sub> surfaces possessing -Si and -O dangling bonds is feasible with hydrogen atoms.<sup>12,32</sup> When a pristine SiO<sub>2</sub> surface is exposed to hydrogen atoms, the H atoms bind with the terminated O and Si atoms, resulting in fewer or no trap sites on the SiO<sub>2</sub> surface. In this case, charge transfer between the hydrogen-passivated SiO<sub>2</sub> and MoS<sub>2</sub> can be minimized, and the charge trapping/detrapping between SiO<sub>2</sub> and MoS<sub>2</sub> is relaxed. We conducted an interface trap analysis on MoS<sub>2</sub>/SiO<sub>2</sub> devices using 1/f noise, the method of which is described elsewhere.<sup>33</sup> The results in Figure S8 indicate that the interface trap density  $D_{it}$  on SiO<sub>2</sub> was significantly reduced after H<sup>+</sup> injection.

Herein, TFSI treatment of monolayer MoS<sub>2</sub> did not increase the carrier mobility due to scattering from the ionic impurities in TFSI [Supporting Information 9]. Therefore, the mobility enhancement in multilayer MoS<sub>2</sub> does not result from the surface layer but from the entire layer. TFSI anions cannot diffuse through the multilayer MoS<sub>2</sub>. Thus, the mobility enhancement is affected by ions that are much smaller than the TFSI anions. Therefore, these ions can even reach the SiO<sub>2</sub> substrates. It is plausible that other ions occupied the S vacancies. However, it is highly unlikely that the occupation of the vacancies by these ions passivated the trap sites, as predicted by theoretical calculations.<sup>15</sup> The DLTS results in Figures 4b–e show the absence of the gap state by the S vacancy after the injection of ions that are highly diffusive through the layers. In addition, TFSI is effective for passivating the Si surfaces.<sup>34</sup> The Raman and FT-IR spectroscopy and DLTS data strongly support the deep penetration of protons, which passivate the S vacancies and Si/O dangling bonds of the SiO<sub>2</sub> gate dielectric.

The devices fabricated with two-dimensional (2D) layered structures have shown promising properties that are not accessible with conventional Si devices. However, the lack of controllability in the growth and device fabrication processes leads to detrimental hysteresis during operation, which is attributed to defects in the channel and trap sites at the SiO<sub>2</sub> interface. Suppressing their influence on the channel was sought. In our MoS<sub>2</sub> FET, H<sup>+</sup> ions from H-TFSI penetrate the multilayer MoS<sub>2</sub> and inactivate the S vacancies in MoS<sub>2</sub> as well as the dangling bonds at the SiO<sub>2</sub> interface, both of which have been known to degrade the device performance and are technical and scientific targets to be overcome. SiO<sub>2</sub> substrates have been used as platforms for devices that employ diverse nanomaterials. However, eliminating the ionized functional groups of SiO<sub>2</sub> requires chemical treatment, which subsequently changes the surface states of SiO<sub>2</sub>, deteriorating the device fabrication. For this reason, h-BN is the material of choice for gate oxides. Despite the introduction of h-BN, the MoS<sub>2</sub> channel still contains sulfur vacancies. In our approach, the injection of H<sup>+</sup> suppresses the activity of trap sites from the channel and gate dielectric. Moreover, our protonation is more advantageous than hydrogen plasma, which can simultaneously blast S atoms away from the MoS<sub>2</sub>. We expect that our approach can be applied to various devices with 2D layered

materials to investigate the intrinsic electrical properties without any distortion by traps.

## ■ ASSOCIATED CONTENT

### SI Supporting Information

The Supporting Information is available free of charge at <https://pubs.acs.org/doi/10.1021/acs.nanolett.3c01753>.

Device fabrication of multilayer MoS<sub>2</sub>, preparation of H-TFSI solution and proton injection method, photoluminescence spectra and mapping images, Raman spectra, XPS spectra, FT-IR spectra, threshold voltage, durability test of H<sup>+</sup> injection, DLTS and ICTS analyses, interface trap density, and transport behavior of H-TFSI-treated monolayer MoS<sub>2</sub> (PDF)

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### Author Contributions

B.W.A fabricated, chemically treated, and conducted both electrical and optical characterizations of MoS<sub>2</sub> devices. Y.K.

conducted DLTS and analyzed data. M.K. and H.L. prepared H-TFSI solution. H.M.Y. took FT-IR spectra of MoS<sub>2</sub> before and after H-TFSI treatment. J.A. transferred MoS<sub>2</sub> and graphene flakes on SiO<sub>2</sub> substrate. E.S. and K.W.I. performed chemical analysis of monolayer MoS<sub>2</sub> using XPS. H.J. characterized the noise properties of the devices. H.Z.G. carried out electrical measurements. K.S.K. grew monolayer graphene for the electrodes. E.K.K. and S.C.L. orchestrated experiments, analyzed the data, and prepared the paper.

### Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

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