

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 9, 2020

The Honorable Chad Wolf
Acting Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
245 Murray Lane, SW
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Acting Secretary Wolf:

We are writing to express our concern regarding the recent modifications to the Student and Exchange Visitor Program that will end temporary exemptions for nonimmigrant students on F-1 and M-1 visas taking classes online for the fall 2020 semester. With many universities transitioning to online learning, this policy will potentially require many international students to leave the country during the COVID-19 pandemic rather than continue their studies this fall. This will pose a threat to our nation's leadership in higher education and will have significant human costs if not promptly rescinded.

According to State Department data, there are nearly 400,000 holders of F visas and nearly 10,000 holders of M visas in the United States as of last year. These students play a key role in academic life in universities across the country by supporting cutting-edge research, enriching campus life, and helping the United States maintain its leadership role in higher education. Their presence is not only fundamental to academic life, but also support hundreds of thousands of jobs across the country each academic year.

Given that many universities are planning on temporarily transitioning to online-only learning for the fall 2020 semester, this new policy puts many of these students at risk of deportation if they attempt to continue their education in the United States this fall. This disruption will threaten university communities and have a chilling effect on international students' willingness to study in the United States moving forward.

International students both enrich the higher education experience for all students and are a key part of the higher education ecosystem. The modifications to the Student and Exchange Visitor Program are needlessly punitive and fundamentally threaten a cornerstone of our nation's higher education system. With this mind, we urge you to rescind these changes to the Student and Exchange Visitor Program.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress

Adam Smith
Member of Congress

Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress

Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

André Carson
Member of Congress

Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress

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Stephanie Murphy
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Donald M. Payne, Jr.
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John Garamendi
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Ron Kind
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Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress

Ann Kirkpatrick
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Peter A. DeFazio
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Jamie Raskin
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Eliot L. Engel
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Mike Quigley
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Member of Congress

Lauren Underwood
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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José E. Serrano
Member of Congress

Nydia M. Velázquez
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Frank Pallone, Jr.
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Brian Higgins
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Albio Sires
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Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress

Ed Case
Member of Congress

Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
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Madeleine Dean
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Alcee L. Hastings
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Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
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Daniel T. Kildee
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Julia Brownley
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