

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 13, 2020

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

In light of the new Student and Exchange Visitor Program guidance issued by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), we are writing to request that you rescind that policy announcement and that, in the future, you consult with schools, states and public health officials before you implement any changes to visa and travel restrictions affecting international students, scholars, and educators ahead of the upcoming Fall semester. In order to ensure the health of our economy and the health of Americans, it is critical that we implement sensible public health policies during the COVID-19 pandemic as our nation faces new spikes in infections and weighs appropriate steps toward safely reopening schools and resuming travel to the United States.

The worldwide COVID-19 pandemic presents extraordinary challenges to our nation's public health, safety and the economy. Despite many uncertainties, international students have made significant contributions in our fight against the coronavirus through scientific research and service on the front lines. Needless to say, these visiting students provide tremendous academic and cultural value to American schools and students alike.

However, in response to the worldwide threat presented by the coronavirus, on March 20, 2020, the Department of State suspended all routine visa services to ensure safety of the applicants and staff at US embassies. Additionally, international students enrolled in schools offering online classes and those who are traveling from or transiting through a country affected by a Presidential Proclamation on Coronavirus (China, Iran, Schengen Zone countries, United Kingdom, Ireland, and Brazil) face further travel restrictions.

To further exacerbate the uncertainty for these students, their families, and schools, on July 6th, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) issued a new order that would require international students to leave the United States if they take online courses offered by their school during the COVID-19 crisis. The ability of international students to enter and remain in the United States should not be hindered by an academic institution's shift to online only-curriculum in response to the ongoing pandemic and to ensure the continued safety of students. Before any further restrictions are implemented, the Administration should roll back the decision to not issue visas to students at schools that go to online-only education this fall and should work with our academic institutions, states, and public health officials to determine urgent needs and consult on the best way forward as our schools prepare for the upcoming school year.

In May, Acting Secretary of Homeland Security Chad F. Wolf issued an exemption for foreign professional athletes, allowing them to travel into the United States due to the economic contribution of

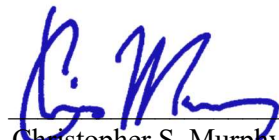
professional sports. Considering the fact that many international students pay full tuition, their enrollment in our colleges and universities contributes nearly \$41 billion to our economy and supports over 450,000 jobs, it would be appropriate for your administration to give equal consideration to international student travel. If student visa processing is not sufficiently addressed before classes resume this summer, loss of international enrollment would not only hurt our academic and research programs across 3,000 schools, but it would also jeopardize financial aid for many domestic students and could lead to an estimated loss of 114,000 jobs in the United States.

As our nation continues to fight this pandemic, we cannot afford to jeopardize our qualitative edge against COVID-19. The new school year is quickly approaching, and we must ensure a level of certainty for international students and their families planning travel and making arrangements with thousands of schools around the United States. The interruption of student travel could have long-term impacts on our STEM programs and the economy as our schools compete to attract the world's best and brightest. Therefore, we strongly urge you to properly address international student travel to the United States and we look forward to working with you to resolve this matter.

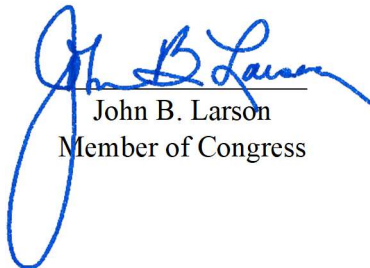
Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senate



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senate



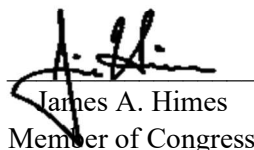
John B. Larson
Member of Congress




Rosa DeLauro
Member of Congress



Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



James A. Himes
Member of Congress



Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress

CC: The Honorable Mike Pompeo, Secretary of State
The Honorable Chad F. Wolf, Acting Secretary of Homeland Security