

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 28, 2025

The Honorable Kristi Noem
Secretary of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr Ave SE
Washington, D.C. 20528

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Mr. Todd Lyons
Acting Director
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
500 12th St. NW
Washington, D.C. 20536

Dear Secretary Noem, Secretary Rubio, and Acting Director Lyons:

As members of the Massachusetts congressional delegation, we are gravely concerned about the Trump Administration's attacks on international students. Last week, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) attempted to terminate Harvard University's ability to enroll international students on F-1 and J-1 visas¹ — the latest in a string of actions targeting international students across the country. This trend has been particularly damaging for Massachusetts, which is home to one of the largest concentrations of higher education institutions and hosts over 80,000 international students, who contribute almost \$4 billion to the state's economy and support over 35,000 jobs in the state.²

On May 22, 2025, DHS revoked Harvard's certification in the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP), the system that allows the university to admit international students.³ The revocation purported to block not only Harvard's ability to enroll new international students but also current international students' ability to legally remain at Harvard.⁴ DHS gave Harvard the

¹ Letter from Department of Homeland Secretary Kristi Noem to Harvard University, May 22, 2025, https://www.harvard.edu/research-funding/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2025/05/S1-Ltr-to-Harvard-05222025_Redacted.pdf.

² Boston Globe, "Higher ed leaders fear international students will stop coming amid detainments and research cuts," Hilary Burns and Camilo Fonseca, March 27, 2025, <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/03/27/metro/higher-ed-leaders-fear-international-students-will-stop-coming-amid-detainments-research-cuts/>; The World, "Universities stand to lose big bucks as international students quit the US," Kirk Carapezza, May 13, 2025, <https://theworld.org/stories/2025/05/13/universities-stand-to-lose-big-bucks-as-international-students-quit-the-us>; Bloomberg, "The Reality of America's College Towns," Richard Florida, September 8, 2016, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-09-08/america-s-biggest-college-towns>.

³ CNN, "DHS threatens to revoke Harvard's eligibility to host foreign students amid broader battle over universities' autonomy," Taylor Romine, Nouran Salahieh, Hanna Park, and Andy Rose, April 18, 2025, <https://www.cnn.com/2025/04/16/us/harvard-kristi-noem-international-students>.

⁴ Letter from Department of Education, Department of Health, and General Services Administration to Harvard University, April 11, 2025, <https://www.harvard.edu/research-funding/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2025/04/Letter-Sent-to-Harvard-2025-04-11.pdf>.

impossible — and arguably illegal — task of submitting within 72 hours “[a]ny and all records” of international students’ protest activity, threats against classmates, “dangerous or violent activity,” and more, in order to regain the university’s SEVP certification.⁵ In effect, the revocation would allow DHS to arrest, detain, and deport international students who remain enrolled at Harvard.⁶ On May 23, 2025, a federal judge temporarily enjoined DHS from enforcing the revocation.⁷ This attack on Harvard and its international students appears to be an attempt to punish the university for not agreeing to the Trump Administration’s April 2025 demands.⁸

This development came after months of threats to international students nationwide. Beginning in March 2025, the Trump Administration effectively terminated the legal status of over 4,700 international students across at least 48 states and 160 colleges.⁹ Often without notice to students or universities,¹⁰ Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) terminated students’ records in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) — records that are “functionally equivalent to having lawful student status” — which exposed students to the “risk of arrest, detention, or removal.”¹¹ The State Department also revoked many students’ visas (F-1, M-1, or

⁵ Letter from Department of Homeland Secretary Kristi Noem to Harvard University, May 22, 2025, p. 2, https://www.harvard.edu/research-funding/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2025/05/S1-Ltr-to-Harvard-05222025_Redacted.pdf.

⁶ PennState Dickinson Law Center for Immigrants’ Rights Clinic, Presidents’ Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration, “FAQ For International Students and Campus Stakeholders: What You Need to Know,” April 7, 2025, <https://www.presidentsalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/FACTSHEET-International-Students.pdf>.

⁷ President & Fellows of Harvard Coll. v. Dep’t of Homeland Sec., Order Granting Plaintiff’s Motion for a Temporary Restraining Order, No. 1:25-cv-11472 (D. Mass. May 24, 2025), <https://www.law360.com/articles/2344325/attachments/1>.

⁸ Letter from General Services Administration, U.S. Department of Education, and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to Harvard University, April 11, 2025, <https://www.harvard.edu/research-funding/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2025/04/Letter-Sent-to-Harvard-2025-04-11.pdf>.

⁹ Washington Post, “The US is reinstating records for international students. For some, it’s too late,” Makiya Seminera, Annie Ma, and Janie Har, May 19, 2025, https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/2025/05/19/international-students-visas-terminated-trump-sevis/76453c9c-3468-11f0-9c9e-0db2d748bea7_story.html; NAFSA, Massachusetts, State Report, 2023, <https://www.nafsa.org/isev/reports/state?state=MA&year=2023>; Associated Press News, “More than 1,000 international students have had visas or legal status revoked,” Annie Ma, April 18, 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/f1-visa-international-college-student-trump-9d4d900d328a0c205503c1178e70f1d5>; Presidents’ All. on Higher Educ. & Immigr. v. Bondi, Complaint for Declaratory and Injunctive Relief at 15, No. 1:25-cv-11109 (D. Mass. Apr. 24, 2025), <https://www.presidentsalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/SEVIS-Litigation.pdf>.

¹⁰ American Immigration Lawyers Association, “Policy Brief: The Scope of Immigration Enforcement Actions Against International Students” P.2, April 17, 2025, <https://www.aila.org/library/policy-brief-the-scope-of-immigration-enforcement-actions-against-international-students>; Washington Post, “Feds are revoking student visas without notifying colleges,” Susan Svrluga, April 7, 2025, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2025/04/07/student-visas-revoked/>; Boston.com, “Visas revoked for Berklee, Emerson students,” Beth Treffeisen, April 8, 2025, <https://www.boston.com/news/local-news/2025/04/08/visas-revoked-for-berklee-emerson-students/>; WBUR, “Feds revoke visas of students at BU, Harvard, Tufts, Berklee, UMass and more,” Emily Piper-Vallillo and Carrie Jung, April 8, 2025, <https://www.wbur.org/news/2025/04/07/international-student-visa-bu-harvard-tufts-umass>.

¹¹ Presidents’ Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration v. Bondi, Complaint for Declaratory and Injunctive Relief at 3, 11 (D. Mass. April 24, 2025), <https://www.presidentsalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/SEVIS-Litigation.pdf>; Doe v. Trump, Order Granting Motions For Preliminary Injunctions And Setting Case Management Conferences at 11 (N.D. Cal. May 22, 2025),

J-1 visas) — though it is “unclear whether every visa revocation resulted in a SEVIS record being terminated,” adding to widespread confusion about students’ legal status.¹²

The visa revocations and SEVIS terminations impacted more than just the Trump Administration’s purported targets. While DHS and the State Department claimed to target those with a criminal history or history of engaging in campus protests,¹³ some of the impacted students had neither, and in many cases, there was “no obvious cause for the revocations.”¹⁴

The Trump Administration’s terminations of student visas and SEVIS records were met with a flood of lawsuits across the country,¹⁵ many of which resulted in temporary restraining orders requiring the restoration of students’ legal status.¹⁶ In response, on April 25, 2025, ICE announced that it would reactivate students’ SEVIS records while the agency develops a new SEVIS termination policy.¹⁷

While the Administration may have temporarily restored many SEVIS records — apparently in an attempt to moot ongoing lawsuits and deflate public focus on this issue¹⁸ — international students in Massachusetts and nationwide continue to face serious threats, even beyond Harvard’s campus:

- ***Expanded grounds for terminating SEVIS records:*** On April 26, 2025, ICE issued an internal policy memo that “vastly expand[s]” its authority to unilaterally terminate SEVIS records. The new policy allows ICE to terminate SEVIS records based on the State Department’s revocation of a visa,¹⁹ whereas previously, “if a student’s visa was revoked,

<https://storage.courtlistener.com/recap/gov.uscourts.cand.447861/gov.uscourts.cand.447861.50.0.pdf>.

¹² NAFSA, “5 Things to Know About the Current SEVIS Record Termination Situation,” Erica L. Stewart and Steve Springer, May 2, 2025, <https://www.nafsa.org/blog/5-things-know-about-current-sevis-record-termination-situation>.

¹³ BBC News, “Anxiety at US colleges as foreign students are detained and visas revoked,” Brandon Drenon and Robin Levinson-King, April 18, 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c20xq5nd8jeo>.

¹⁴ New York Times, “U.S. Restores Legal Status for Many International Students, but Warns of Removals to Come,” Zach Montague and Hamed Aleaziz, April 25, 2025,

<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/04/25/us/politics/trump-student-visa-cancellations.html>; Presidents’ Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration v. Bondi, Complaint for Declaratory and Injunctive Relief at 18-19 (D. Mass. April 24, 2025), <https://www.presidentsalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/SEVIS-Litigation.pdf>; American Immigration Lawyers Association, “Policy Brief: The Scope of Immigration Enforcement Actions Against International Students” P.2, April 17, 2025, <https://www.aila.org/library/policy-brief-the-scope-of-immigration-enforcement-actions-against-international-students>.

¹⁵ Associated Press News, “International students stripped of legal status in the US are piling up wins in court,” Kate Brumback, April 23, 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/international-student-visa-status-restraining-order-64a97b4fab5264ed20b179952cdabff>; Inside Higher Ed, “International Student Visas Revoked,” Ashley Mowreader, April 7, 2025, <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/global/international-students-us/2025/04/07/where-students-have-had-their-visas-revoked>.

¹⁶ Fox News, “Federal judge orders ICE to reinstate legal status of 133 foreign students,” Michael Dorgan, April 22, 2025, <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/federal-judge-orders-ice-reinstate-legal-status-133-foreign-students>.

¹⁷ WBUR, “ICE reverses termination of legal status for international students, lawyer says,” Janie Har and Kate Brunback, April 25, 2025, <https://www.wbur.org/news/2025/04/25/ice-student-visas-deportation>.

¹⁸ Doe v. Trump, Order Granting Motions For Preliminary Injunctions And Setting Case Management Conferences at 12 (N.D. Cal. May 22, 2025),

<https://storage.courtlistener.com/recap/gov.uscourts.cand.447861/gov.uscourts.cand.447861.50.0.pdf>.

¹⁹ U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, “SEVIS Notice – Policy Regarding Termination of Records,” April 26, 2025, <https://admin.smc.edu/administration/campus-counsel/documents/ICE-Internal-Memo-4-28-2025.pdf>; NAFSA, “5 Things to Know About the Current SEVIS Record Termination Situation,” Erica L. Stewart and Steve Springer, May 2, 2025, <https://www.nafsa.org/blog/5-things-know-about-current-sevis-record-termination-situation>.

they generally could stay in the U.S. to finish school.”²⁰ Meanwhile, the State Department has expanded its grounds for revoking visas, including based on protest activity,²¹ and Secretary of State Marco Rubio believes the number of student visas revoked by this Administration to be in the thousands.²²

- **Legal status not restored or re-terminated:** Some terminated SEVIS records still have not been restored. When announcing the restoration of SEVIS records, ICE stated that it would *not* reactivate SEVIS records for students whose visas had also been revoked.²³ ICE also made clear that the Administration has “not reversed course on a single visa revocation,” and students have noted that there is “no evidence ICE has asked the State Department to restore revoked visas.”²⁴ Thus, many students remain without visas, active SEVIS records, or both — and still others simply do not know the status of their student visas. Furthermore, some students’ SEVIS records that were terminated and reactivated have reportedly been *re-terminated* without explanation.
- **Gap in status:** SEVIS may now show a gap in status for the period when the record was inactive, at no fault of the student. Students have argued that, because “there are no public-facing entries that would explain the gap between the termination date and the restoration date,” they could still face adverse action in the future, including arrest or deportation.²⁵ Depending on how DHS and the State Department interpret such gaps in SEVIS status in the future, the gaps could have long-term implications for students’ immigration situations.²⁶
- **Hurdles to returning:** Some students departed the United States after their visas or SEVIS records were suspended this spring, and they now face significant hurdles to

²⁰ Associated Press, “US government expands grounds for canceling international students’ legal status,” Moriah Balingit, April 30, 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/international-student-visa-fl-sevis-status-716ce8e67e2c3093eba4092e57ba1612>.

²¹ BBC News, “Anxiety at US colleges as foreign students are detained and visas revoked,” Brandon Drenon and Robin Levinson-King, April 18, 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c20xq5nd8jeo>; BBC News, “Marco Rubio says US revoked at least 300 foreign students’ visas,” Madeline Halpert, March 27, 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c75720q9d7lo>.

²² Reuters, “Rubio may have revoked thousands of visas as crackdown continues,” Daphne Psaledakis, Patricia Zengerle, and Simon Lewis, May 20, 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/rubio-may-have-revoked-thousands-visas-crackdown-continues-2025-05-20/>.

²³ ABC News, “Trump administration restores status of international students after abrupt terminations,” Armando Garcia, Soo Rin Kim, and Deena Zaru, April 26, 2025, <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/trump-administration-restores-status-international-students-after-abrupt/story?id=121197087>.

²⁴ Washington Post, “The US is reinstating records for international students. For some, it’s too late,” Makiya Seminera, Annie Ma, and Janie Har, May 19, 2025, https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/2025/05/19/international-students-visas-terminated-trump-sevis/76453c9c-3468-11f0-9c9e-0db2d748bea7_story.html.

²⁵ Courthouse News Service, “Judge poised to block student visa terminations after record purge,” Matt Simons, May 13, 2025, <https://www.courthousenews.com/judge-poised-to-block-student-visa-terminations-after-record-purge/>; Doe v. Trump, Notice of Tentative Ruling and Questions for Hearing (N.D. Cal. May 13, 2025), <https://www.courthousenews.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/doe-vs-trump-tentative-ruling-preliminary-injunction.pdf>.

²⁶ Inside Higher Ed, “ICE Expands Student Deportation Powers,” Liam Knox, May 2, 2025, <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/global/international-students-us/2025/05/02/new-ice-policy-puts-international-students-greater>.

returning.²⁷ Some describe feeling stranded as they attempt to navigate the potentially multi-year process of obtaining a new visa.²⁸

- ***Student visa interviews:*** This week, the State Department reportedly ordered its overseas embassies and consulates to stop scheduling any international student visa interviews, while the Department considers whether to subject all foreign student applicants to a social media vetting process.²⁹ This plan is expected to severely delay the international student visa application process.³⁰

The Administration's apparent hostility to international students contributes to an overall climate of fear on campuses. This trend creates a chilling effect that discourages the best and brightest students from around the world from coming to study in the United States — which harms not only current and prospective international students, but also American universities, U.S. citizen students on campuses, and, in the long term, the nation's prosperity and economic growth.³¹ We ask that DHS and the State Department answer the following questions by June 12, 2025:

1. How many international student SEVIS records that have been terminated since January 20, 2025 have *not* been reactivated?
2. For international students whose SEVIS records have been terminated and reactivated since January 20, 2025:
 - a. How many of those students have has their visas revoked by the State Department?
 - b. How many of those SEVIS records have been re-terminated?
3. What impact (if any) will SEVIS terminations have on eligibility for visas in the future?
4. How will your agencies ensure that gaps in SEVIS records from the Administration's actions in March-April 2025 will not result in adverse immigration consequences for international students in the future?
5. How will your agencies ensure prompt communication with international students and universities about any changes going forward?
6. Please provide the following data:
 - a. The total number of international students in Massachusetts whose visas have been revoked since January 20, 2025;

²⁷ Washington Post, "The US is reinstating records for international students. For some, it's too late," Makiya Seminera, Annie Ma, and Janie Har, May 19, 2025, https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/2025/05/19/international-students-visas-terminated-trump-sevis/76453c9c-3468-11f0-9c9e-0db2d748bea7_story.html.

²⁸ WPRI, "Some international students say it's 'too late' to return to US," Makiya Seminera, Annie Ma, and Janie Har, May 20, 2025, <https://www.wpri.com/news/education/some-international-students-say-its-too-late-to-return-to-us/>.

²⁹ Politico, "Trump team pauses new student visa interviews as it weighs expanding social media vetting," Nahal Toosi, May 27, 2025, <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/05/27/trump-team-orders-stop-to-new-student-visa-interviews-as-it-weighs-expanding-social-media-vetting-00370501>.

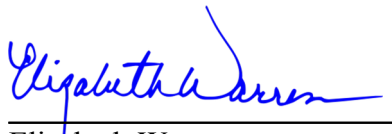
³⁰ NBC News, "Trump administration stops new student visa interviews," Abigail Williams and Deon J. Hampton, May 27, 2025, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/trump-administrations-stops-new-student-visa-interviews-rcna209305>.

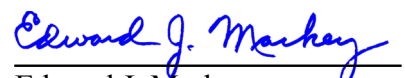
³¹ New York Times, "These Are the U.S. Universities Most Dependent on International Students," Emily Badger, et al., May 23, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/05/23/upshot/harvard-trump-international-students.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share&referringSource=articleShare&sgrp=p&pvid=6C9ECB47-A0F5-4E4F-8557-E9F403A4A089>.


- b. The total number of international students in Massachusetts whose revoked visas have been restored since January 20, 2025;
 - c. The total number of international students in Massachusetts whose SEVIS records have been terminated since January 20, 2025;
 - d. The total number of international students in Massachusetts whose terminated SEVIS records have been reactivated since January 20, 2025.
7. Please provide the following data:
- a. The total number of international students at Harvard whose visas have been revoked since DHS's May 22, 2025 letter;
 - b. The total number of international students at Harvard whose revoked visas have been restored since DHS's May 22, 2025 letter;
 - c. The total number of international students at Harvard whose SEVIS records have been terminated since DHS's May 22, 2025 letter;
 - d. The total number of international students at Harvard whose terminated SEVIS records have been reactivated since DHS's May 22, 2025 letter.
8. Have any international students at Harvard been subjected to secondary screening at any air or land port or any immigration enforcement action as a result of DHS's May 22, 2025 revocation decision?
9. What is the specific statutory or regulatory basis for DHS's decision to revoke Harvard's SEVP certification?
10. What is the specific statutory or regulatory basis for DHS's demand for each piece of information requested from Harvard in DHS's May 22, 2025 letter?
11. Please explain the specific steps DHS is taking to ensure compliance with the temporary restraining order granted on May 23, 2025?
12. How does your agency ensure that visa revocation decisions align with constitutional protections, including freedom of speech and assembly?


Thank you for your prompt attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,


Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator


Edward J. Markey
United States Senator


Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress

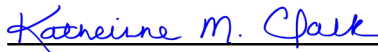

Lori Trahan
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



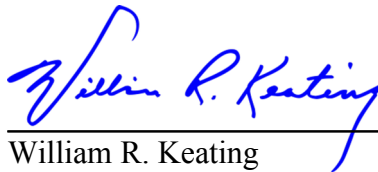
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