



THE GENERAL COURT OF MASSACHUSETTS
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1053

July 8, 2020

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to respectfully request that you reconsider and rescind the new temporary final rules announced on Monday which prohibits international students from staying in the United States if they are enrolled in an American college or university that implements an online-only platform for instruction. We understand that the guidance also applies to an institution that moves to exclusively online mid-semester in response to rising COVID-19 cases on campus, and to students who are living on campuses that are open, but offering classes online-only to protect the health and safety of their faculty and campus community.

As you know, since March our colleges and universities have been in furious upheaval, navigating an unprecedented pandemic and formulating strategies to continue teaching students without putting them, faculty and staff at risk. Our institutions have sought to balance concerns for public health with their academic mission of teaching and scholarship. This work has been both difficult and costly, and the new rules will add more uncertainty and disruption. Moreover, the new rules leave international students with the choice of either transferring to another institution that provides in person or hybrid instruction, or to depart the country and risk not being able to return. Students who fail to comply with this guidance may face deportation.

We also note that the new rules were introduced without notice, without an opportunity for public comment, and put undo pressure on campuses to stay open when it is unsafe to do so. This comes at a time when the United States has been setting daily records for the number of new infections, with more than 300,000 new cases reported since July 1. And the policy effectively reverses course from the spring and summer, when ICE temporarily suspended pre-pandemic rules banning international students from residing in the U.S. and taking online-only courses.

More than a million international students come to the US every year to earn a degree that will help them land better jobs, and many remain in the US after graduation. They contribute to the cultural diversity of our campuses and many pay full tuition, which helps our institutions, especially in these times of economic difficulty and uncertainty. In Massachusetts there are 77,000 international students with active US study visas and another 32,000 in the rest of New England. Our state ranks fourth nationwide for its number of international students, and Northeastern University, with 16,000, ranks third in the country. Nationwide, international

students contribute a \$41 billion economic impact that supports more than 450,000 jobs. As one of our University Presidents observed, no public good is served by these efforts to deprive international students from continuing to make valuable and necessary contributions to the prosperity of the nation and the impact on the economic interests will be negative and potentially irreversible.

This policy is not only punitive to these international students, it also threatens the safety of other students and the communities surrounding college campuses. Additionally, transporting international students who may have been exposed to the coronavirus to other campuses or to airports to fly back to their home countries poses a myriad of health risks.

Finally, we understand that both Harvard University and MIT filed suit seeking a preliminary injunction this morning and I am sure others will follow. This litigation will be costly, will take time, and will waste precious judicial resources at a time when we should be focusing on rebuilding our nation.

Accordingly, we request that, in the best interest of our nation, you reconsider and rescind the temporary rules to help preserve our higher education system which is, indeed, the envy of the world.

Most respectfully,

Robert A. DeLeo
Speaker of the House

Jeffrey N. Roy
House Chair
Committee on Higher Education

Anne Gobi
Senate Chair
Committee on Higher Education

Claire Cronin
House Chair
Committee on Judiciary

Paul McMurtry
House Chair
Committee on Tourism, Arts and
Cultural Development

Patricia A. Haddad
Speaker Pro Tempore

Bradley H. Jones, Jr.
House Minority Leader
20th Middlesex District

Alice H. Peisch
House Chair
Committee on Education

Joanne M. Comerford
Senate Chair
Committee on Public Health

William H. Straus
House Chair
Committee on Transportation

Lori A. Ehrlich
House Chair
Committee on Export Development

Ann-Margaret Ferrante
House Chair
Committee on Economic Development
and Emerging Technologies

William Galvin
House Chair
Committee on Rules

Smitty Pignatelli
House Chair
Committee on Environment, Natural
Resources & Agriculture

Danielle W. Gregoire
House Chair
Committee on State Administration
and Regulatory Oversight

Ruth B. Balser
House Chair
Committee on Elder Affairs

Adam Hinds
Senate Chair
Committee on Revenue

Frank A. Moran
Chair
House Committee on Personnel and
Administration

Kenneth I. Gordon
House Vice Chair
Committee on Economic Development
and Emerging Technologies

Paul Mark
Chair
House Committee on Redistricting

Tackey Chan
House Chair
Committee on Consumer Protection and
Professional Licensure

Kay Khan
House Chair
Committee on Children, Families and
Persons with Disabilities

Kevin G. Honan
House Chair
Committee on Housing

James O'Day
House Chair
Committee on Municipalities and Regional
Government

Marc R. Pacheco
Senate Chair
Committee on Global Warming and Climate
Change

Josh S. Cutler
House Vice-Chair
Committee on Children, Families and
Persons with Disabilities

David P. Linsky
Chair
House Committee on Post Audit and
Oversight

Thomas A. Golden, Jr.
House Chair
Committee on Telecommunications,
Utilities and Energy

Marjorie C. Decker
House Chair
Committee on Mental Health,
Substance Use and Recovery

Linda D. Campbell
House Chair
Committee on Veterans and Federal
Affairs

Jerald A. Parisella
House Chair
Committee on Public Service

Aaron Vega
House Vice Chair
Committee on Technology &
Intergovernmental Affairs

Kate Hogan
State Representative
3rd Middlesex District

Alan Silvia
House Vice Chair
Committee on Public Safety &
Homeland Security

Carolyn C. Dykema
House Vice Chair
Committee on Telecommunications,
Utilities and Energy

Michael S. Day
House Vice Chair
Committee on the Judiciary

Sean Garballey
House Vice-Chair
Committee on State Administration
and Regulatory Oversight

Theodore C. Speliotis
Chair
House Committee on Bills in the Third
Reading

Antonio F. D. Cabral
Chair
House Committee on Bonding, Capital
Expenditures and State Assets

Elizabeth A. Malia
Assistant Vice Chair
House Committee on Ways and Means

Brian M. Ashe
House Vice Chair
Committee on Export Development

Joan B. Lovely
Senate Chair
Committee on Rules

Natalie M. Higgins
Vice Chair
House Committee on Personnel and
Administration

Elizabeth A. Poirier
Ranking Minority
House Committee on Ethics

Cynthia S. Creem
Chair
Senate Committee on Personnel and
Administration

Steven Ultrino
State Representative
33rd Middlesex District

James Arciero
State Representative
2nd Middlesex District

Joseph W. McGonagle, Jr
House Vice Chair
Committee on Housing

Tricia Farley-Bouvier
House Vice Chair
Committee on Elder Affairs

Paul F. Tucker
House Vice Chair
Committee on Education

Patricia D. Jehlen
Senate Chair
Committee on Elder Affairs

Harriette L. Chandler
Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Bills in the Third
Reading

Daniel Cahill
House Vice Chair
Committee on Environment, Natural
Resources and Agriculture

Barry R. Finegold
Senate Chair
Committee on Election Laws

Nika C. Elugardo
State Representative
15th Suffolk District

Michael O. Moore
Senate Chair
Committee on Public Safety and Homeland
Security

Thomas M. Stanley
House Vice Chair
Committee on Municipalities and Regional
Government

Michael J. Barrett
Senate Chair
Committee on Telecommunications,
Utilities and Energy

Jay D. Livingstone
House Vice Chair
Committee on Consumer Protection and
Professional Licensure

Mary S. Keefe
House Vice Chair
Committee on Global Warming and Climate
Change

Daniel J. Ryan
Vice Chair
House Committee on Post Audit and
Oversight

Eric P. Lesser
Chair
Senate Committee on Ethics

Julian Cyr
Senate Chair
Committee on Mental Health, Substance
Use and Recovery

Carole Fiola
State Representative
6th Bristol District

Mindy Domb
State Representative
3rd Hampshire District

Tram T. Nguyen
State Representative
18th Essex District

Tami L. Gouveia
State Representative
14th Middlesex District

Susan L. Moran
State Senator
Plymouth and Barnstable District

Stephan Hay
House Vice Chair
Committee on Labor and Workforce
Development

Jack Lewis
State Representative
7th Middlesex District

William J. Driscoll, Jr.
State Representative
7th Norfolk District

Lindsay Sabadosa
State Representative
1st Hampshire District

Denise Provost
State Representative
27th Middlesex District

Jon Santiago
State Representative
9th Suffolk District

Senator Becca Rausch
State Senator
Norfolk, Bristol and Middlesex
District

Timothy R. Whelan
State Representative
1st Barnstable District

Louis L. Kafka
State Representative
8th Norfolk District

Maria D. Robinson
State Representative
6th Middlesex District

Christine P. Barber
House Vice Chair
Committee on Financial Services

Tommy Vitolo
State Representative
15th Norfolk District

Joan Meschino
State Representative
3rd Plymouth District

Jonathan Hecht
State Representative
29th Middlesex District

Adrian C. Madaro
State Representative
1st Suffolk District

Danillo A. Sena
State Representative
37th Middlesex District

Jonathan D. Zlotnik
State Representative
2nd Worcester District

Michael J. Soter
State Representative
8th Worcester District

Christina A. Minicucci
State Representative
14th Essex

Susannah M. Whipps
State Representative
2nd Franklin District

Mike Connolly
State Representative
26th Middlesex District

Natalie M. Blais
State Representative
1st Franklin District

James K. Hawkins
State Representative
2nd Bristol District

Daniel R. Carey
State Representative
2nd Hampshire District

Kate Lipper-Garabedian
State Representative
32nd Middlesex District

Patrick M. O'Connor
State Senator
Plymouth and Norfolk District

Christopher Hendricks
State Representative
11th Bristol District

Brian W. Murray
State Representative
10th Worcester District

David H. A. LeBoeuf
State Representative
17th Worcester District