Congress of the United States Washington, DC 20515

October 6, 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 September 25, 2020 proposed rule that would arbitrarily limit international student visa lengths and place additional restrictions on student visas based on an individual's country of origin. These changes in policy place additional burdens on students and universities, further disincentivizing prospective international students from attending U.S. institutions of higher education. International students are a critical part of colleges and universities across the country, and this proposed rule would undermine our nation's leadership in higher education and research.

Currently, most international student visas are valid for the duration of status, which allows international students to remain in the United States if they remain enrolled in an institution of higher education while abiding by rules relevant to their immigration status. This proven system provides flexibility for both four-year degrees and doctoral programs that may require additional time to complete.

The proposed rule replaces this longstanding policy with a fixed, four-year visa. This would be further reduced to just two years for students who were born in Iran, North Korea, Sudan or Syria, regardless of their citizenship, as well as citizens of those countries. This rule also uses a flawed methodology to limit citizens of countries with certain visa overstay rates, disproportionately impacting students from countries that send smaller numbers of international students. Furthermore, the proposed rule would arbitrarily limit the number of times students can change programs at the same degree level and impose intrusive mandates that would allow Department of Homeland Security (DHS) officials to arbitrarily make determinations traditionally left to academic institutions.

These proposed changes, if enacted, would place at risk the academic careers of the over 1 million international students who attend U.S. institutes of higher education each year. These students play a fundamental role in our nation's academic and campus life. Their contributions are critical to maintaining the United States' leadership in STEM fields and cutting-edge technologies like machine learning and artificial intelligence. These rules would also threaten the hundreds of thousands of jobs supported by international students, as well as the tens of billions of dollars in economic activity that these students facilitate each year.

International students remain a key part of the higher education ecosystem. They enrich the higher education experience for all students and provide meaningful contributions to our country. The proposed rule places needless restrictions on these students and fundamentally threatens a cornerstone of our nation's higher education system. With this mind, we urge you to rescind these changes to duration of status of F, J, and I visa holders and maintain the current duration of status policy.

We must ensure the United States welcomes and fosters international students who are vital to our economy and continue to provide meaningful contributions to research, culture, academic life, and our country.

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

Sincerely,

Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress

/s/

Bobby L. Rush Member of Congress

/s/ James P. McGovern

Member of Congress

/s/ Danny K. Davis

Member of Congress

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Mike Doyle

Member of Congress

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Barbara Lee

Member of Congress

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Ayanna Pressley Member of Congress

/s/

Bonnie Watson Coleman Member of Congress Mark Pocan

Member of Congress

 $/_{\rm S}/$

Joseph D. Morelle Member of Congress

/s/

David N. Cicilline Member of Congress

/s/

Juan Vargas

Member of Congress

/s/

Jan Schakowsky Member of Congress

/s/

Zoe Lofgren

Member of Congress

/s/

Anthony G. Brown Member of Congress

/s/

Cheri Bustos

 $/_{\rm S}/$ /s/Susan Wild Jamie Raskin Member of Congress Member of Congress $/_{\rm S}/$ $/_{\rm S}/$ Ed Case Mike Levin Member of Congress Member of Congress /s//s/Jesús G. "Chuy" García Doris Matsui Member of Congress Member of Congress /s/John Garamendi Alan Lowenthal Member of Congress Member of Congress $/_{\rm S}/$ /s/Grace Meng James Langevin Member of Congress Member of Congress $/_{\rm S}/$ /s/Steve Cohen Eddie Bernice Johnson Member of Congress Member of Congress $/_{\rm S}/$ Rashida Tlaib Nydia M. Velázquez Member of Congress Member of Congress $/_{S}/$ /s/Katherine Clark Ruben Gallego Member of Congress Member of Congress $/_{\rm S}/$ Nita M. Lowey Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr. Member of Congress Member of Congress $/_{\rm S}/$ $/_{\rm S}/$ Deb Haaland Susan A. Davis Member of Congress Member of Congress $/_{\rm S}/$ /s/Jim Cooper Lori Trahan Member of Congress Member of Congress /s//s/Ro Khanna Seth Moulton

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/s/	/s/
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Member of Congress	Member of Congress
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Linda T. Sánchez	Eleanor Holmes Norton
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/s/	/s/
Antonio Delgado	Abigail D. Spanberger
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Joaquin Castro	Tom O'Halleran
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Diana DeGette	Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress	Member of Congress
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Jared Huffman	Jason Crow
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/s/ David Trone Member of Congress	/s/ Ted W. Lieu Member of Congress