

JAMES P. McGOVERN
SECOND DISTRICT, MASSACHUSETTS

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COMMITTEE ON RULES

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

SENIOR DEMOCRATIC WHIP



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April 11, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C St. NW
Washington, D.C.
20451

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

Dear Secretary Rubio and Secretary Noem,

I write to you with deep alarm and growing outrage over reports that the visas of dozens of international students at colleges and universities in Massachusetts's Second Congressional District have been revoked—seemingly without notice, cause, or due process.

These actions appear to be politically motivated and constitutionally suspect, raising serious concerns about the weaponization of our immigration system to intimidate and harass students, teachers, and institutions of higher education based on their political views.

Secretary Rubio and I worked together in the Congress for many years to advance human rights, particularly with respect to freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of association in the People's Republic of China. The actions taken by the State Department under this administration do not make us safer. In fact, they appear to be taking a page out of the authoritarian playbook that Secretary Rubio and I once stood together to condemn.

At least three universities in my district—the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Clark University, and Worcester Polytechnic Institute—have reported checking the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) only to discover that some student visas had been revoked. This includes the visas of at least 14 students at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, 12 students at Clark University, and 4 students at Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

These visas have been revoked without notice or due process. Neither the Department of State nor Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has provided any of these institutions with their reasons for terminating these students' visas.

These actions run counter not only to our values, but also to our long-term economic and national security interests. Revoking these visas without warning or due process will have a serious long-term chilling effect on our ability as a nation to attract the best and brightest researchers and experts from around the world.

There are over 80,000 international students in Massachusetts¹ and over 10,000 international students in the Second Congressional District.² These students contribute \$413.5 million to my district's economy alone.³ International students are integral to colleges and universities in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and across the United States. They come here seeking the best educational opportunities America has to offer and they enrich learning environments with countless cultural, academic, and economic contributions.

The actions of this administration are disorienting, dangerous, and a disruption to the education of students that I represent, some of whom hoped that they would be concluding their studies and graduating at the end of this spring. Many of them have plans to continue their education or enter the workforce in Massachusetts or the United States.

It is unconstitutional, unconscionable, and unprecedented that the Department of State and the Department of Homeland Security appear to be targeting and punishing students based on their political beliefs or national origin.

I am therefore requesting your immediate response to the following questions:

1. For what reasons have students' visas been revoked at the University of Massachusetts Amherst (UMass), Clark University (Clark), and Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI)?
2. Why did neither the Department of State nor ICE provide notice to these institutions upon revoking the visas of their students?
3. Given the fact that students at UMass, Clark, and WPI have not been afforded due process thus far, how will the Department of State and ICE ensure that these students will receive due process moving forward?

¹ <https://www.higheredimmigrationportal.org/state/massachusetts/>

² <https://www.nafsa.org/isev/reports/district?year=2023&state=MA&district=02>

³ At the University of Massachusetts Amherst, international students contribute \$218.4 million, supporting 2167 jobs; at Clark University, they contribute \$72.3 million, supporting 814 jobs; at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, they contribute \$59 million, supporting 574 jobs.

<https://www.nafsa.org/isev/reports/district?year=2023&state=MA&district=02>

4. What legal authority does the Department of State and ICE site for revoking student visas without notice, reasoning, or due process?
5. If these students' visas have truly been terminated, what avenues for appeal will be available to them?
6. Have you revoked the visas of any students at any other colleges or universities in Massachusetts' Second Congressional District?
7. How will the Department of State and ICE ensure that students at any college or university in the United States receive due process if they are threatened with revocation of their visas?

Due to the urgent and unprecedented nature of these events, I request a response by Friday, April 18th, 2025.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "James P. McGovern". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent "J" and "M".

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress