



CITY OF BOSTON • MASSACHUSETTS

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
MARTIN J. WALSH

July 8, 2020

Matthew T. Albence  
Deputy Director and Senior Official Performing the Duties of Director  
U.S Immigration and Customs Enforcement  
500 12th St., SW  
Washington, D.C. 20536

Dear Mr. Albence,

I vehemently oppose the recent announcement from the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) that would force tens of thousands of students in Massachusetts on F-1 and M-1 visas to choose between living in the U.S. and studying at the school of their choice. The Trump administration is trying to use this rule to pressure schools to open in the fall, but now is not the time for reckless, politically-motivated actions.

Boston's colleges and universities must keep their students and staff safe and healthy, and it is critical that decisions to physically open campuses and resume in-person learning be based on scientific research and data and determined by each school's capacity. The federal government's attempt to force schools to reopen is dangerous, and the safety of all our students and the surrounding communities is paramount.

The Boston area attracts the world's top talent, and over 70,000 international students choose to call Massachusetts home. Asking them to leave because of a worldwide pandemic is not only cruel, unsafe, and unfair, but also may make continuing their education impossible. Some of our students come from countries with restrictive governments, limited access to the internet and coursework, and struggles to meet basic human needs. Furthermore, many of these international students continue to contribute to Boston after graduation, despite strict restrictions and a limited number of employment-based visas. In 2016, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that over 15,000 individuals in Boston held H-1B visas alone.

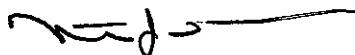
Because international students receive no government financial aid despite contributing to the U.S. economy, this policy would also have severe consequences on our economy. According to NAFSA: Association of International Educators, international students contribute \$3.2 billion to the economy and support nearly 39,000 jobs in Massachusetts

alone. We cannot take that from schools, workers, and businesses that have already lost so much because of the COVID-19 pandemic and are struggling to stay afloat during this difficult time.

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U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement must reverse this terrible policy before it causes unnecessary chaos and threatens the safety and well-being of all our communities. The City of Boston is a welcoming community for students of all backgrounds, and we will continue to stand with our schools and their international student populations to protect their right to study, contribute, and succeed here.

Sincerely,



Martin J. Walsh  
Mayor of Boston