

May 8, 2024

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20016

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20522

Dear Secretaries Mayorkas and Blinken:

For more than two centuries, international students have attended American colleges and universities. They have learned, alongside Americans, the importance of United States' culture and democratic system—and have brought those important ideals back to their home countries. The international study programs have served as an important diplomacy model, and will continue to do so. What cannot be tolerated, however, is for international students to violate the terms of their visa, and, especially, U.S. law.

The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) is the government's mechanism to allow international students to attend American colleges and universities. SEVP utilizes the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) to “track and monitor schools; exchange visitor programs; and F, M, and J nonimmigrants while they visit the United States and participated in the U.S. education system.” When entering the United States as a nonimmigrant, students that receive these visas pledge to abide by U.S. laws, and universities rules.

Since the horrific October 7, 2023 terrorist attack against Israel, a wave of antisemitism and pro-Hamas protests has swept America's elite universities from coast to coast. Students and professional protesters have occupied and desecrated university buildings, trashed campus grounds with public encampments, injured innocent bystanders, and targeted Jewish students with threatening and antisemitic rhetoric. Such lawless behavior has appropriately resulted in arrests. For those international students who defied university orders, and police instruction, in favor of acting on pro-terrorist views, this should result in immediate expulsion from their host institution and our generous country. No questions asked.

SEVIS is a crucial tool in determining nonimmigrant eligibility to remain in the United States. Federal law requires any host college/university to submit timely updates in SEVIS regarding a student's status, including disciplinary actions, termination and arrest. While the nation continues to grapple with an abhorrent wave of pro-terrorist demonstrations and protests, it is imperative that American colleges and universities are reminded of their responsibilities to do so. It is also imperative that both the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. Department of State are communicating and enforcing the laws of our land. Let me be clear: espousing support for a designated Foreign Terrorist Organization is grounds for the termination

of a visa and immediate removal from our country. As pro-terrorist protesters continue to be arrested, I urge you to ensure those who are in our country on visas are placed into expedited deportation proceedings.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. Rubio", is centered on the page.

Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator