

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 8, 2020

The Honorable Chad F. Wolf
Acting Secretary of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Acting Secretary Wolf:

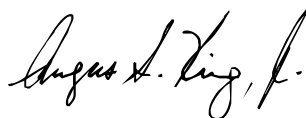
On Monday July 6, 2020, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) announced changes to the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP). Specifically, ICE ended temporary exemptions for nonimmigrant F-1 and M-1 students taking a full online course load due to the COVID-19 pandemic for the fall 2020 semester. By removing this exemption, ICE is forcing the hand of schools to resume in-person learning as a blanket policy, rather than understanding that each school faces different challenges and must respond accordingly.

As you know, schools throughout the country made difficult decisions because of the COVID-19 pandemic, including sending students home and moving to online instruction. In response, SEVP allowed temporary exemptions for online courses in both the spring and summer semesters. As we head to the fall semester, schools continue to face immense challenges as they determine the best path forward to ensure continued educational opportunities while also protecting the public health and safety of the students, faculty, and administrative staff needed to provide in-person learning.

While I share the goal of resuming in-person instruction at our colleges and universities, the increase of cases of COVID-19 throughout the country is cause for concern. There have been spikes in the South and West, and experts including Dr. Fauci have predicted a second wave of cases in the fall. Therefore, it is important that we allow schools the flexibility they need for their students to learn.

I know you have many decisions to make as you release guidance and regulations that are in the best interest of students, faculty, and staff. It is clear that schools are making their decisions for the same reasons. That is why I urge you to consider allowing an extension of waivers during the fall semester. I look forward to working with you on this matter and others that affect our postsecondary institutions.

Sincerely,



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator