

# Issue Brief

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## Welcome to Succeed: The Value of International Students and Scholars

### Request

We urge members of Congress to publicly announce support for the international students and scholars who are contributing their talent to our colleges and universities, to our communities, and to the nation.

### Issue

The United States is in a global competition for talent and is at risk of losing its position as the most attractive country for international students and scholars. The most recent U.S. Department of State Open Doors Report published by the Institute of International Education reported a 6.6% decline in new international student enrollment, which is double the decrease from the previous year. In contrast, Canada, China, Australia, and other countries have adopted more welcoming immigration policies and are benefitting from increases in international student enrollment. Furthermore, data show that policies such as the Travel Ban and anti-immigrant rhetoric from policy leaders have encouraged some international students to choose study destinations other than the United States. Combined with the uncertainty about changes to the types of experiential, educational, and research opportunities that international students and scholars can pursue in the United States, we're at risk of even greater damage to our market share of the world's students and scholars.

Generations of foreign policy leaders agree that international students and scholars are one of the world's greatest foreign policy assets. International students create jobs, drive research, enrich our classrooms, and strengthen national security. The contributions of international students and scholars are critical to the United States through the \$39 billion they contribute annually to our economy and more than 455,000 jobs created. That's three jobs created for every seven international students who choose to study here. Significantly, the presence of international students and scholars enhance U.S. students' education and understanding of critical subjects, their preparation to live and work in an interconnected world, and their ability to tackle global challenges.

### Asks

To stop the loss of the world's most talented students and scholars, help us send a strong message that they are welcome in the United States:

1. **Tweet** about the benefits that international students bring to your state and district on **Wednesday, April 3, 2019**. Sample tweets:
  - While #IntlStudents make up only 5.5% of #HigherEd, they bring \$\_\_\_ and \_\_\_jobs to our [state/district] in addition to countless academic & cultural benefits [www.nafsa.org/econvalue](http://www.nafsa.org/econvalue)  
#YouAreWelcomeHere #WelcomeToSucceed
    - Find the number of jobs and dollars international students bring to your state or district at [www.nafsa.org/econvalue](http://www.nafsa.org/econvalue).

- International students: #YouAreWelcomeHere in the United States. Thank you for creating jobs, driving research, enriching America's classrooms, strengthening national security, & being America's greatest foreign policy assets. #WelcomeToSucceed
2. Deliver a **floor speech** on the importance of international students and scholars on **Thursday, April 11**. Please contact NAFSA for draft language.
  3. Support **legislation** that removes barriers to international students and scholars studying, working, and living in the United States:
    - Attract and recruit the best and brightest to the United States by
      - Establishing a coordinated U.S. recruitment strategy for international students and scholars;
      - Expanding dual intent to include foreign student (F) visa applicants; and
      - Improving visa application processing for scientists.
    - Support and retain talent in the United States by
      - Adjusting post-graduation immigration law to permit a direct path to green cards for Master's degree and higher graduates from U.S. colleges and universities; and
      - Providing limited work authorization for spouses.
  4. Monitor regulatory changes and exercise congressional **oversight** by
    - Supporting efforts to host a hearing on the contributions of international students and the policies that affect the flow of talent to the U.S.;
    - Working with federal agencies to maintain duration of status for foreign students and exchange visitors (F, M, J status); and
    - Working with federal agencies to preserve experiential learning opportunities for foreign students and authorize employment for their families.

## Contact

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## More information

[www.nafsa.org/internationalstudents](http://www.nafsa.org/internationalstudents)