

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

October 24, 2022

The Honorable Antony Blinken  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken:

We write to request an update on how the Department has addressed delays in student visa processing and if recommendations included in Senator Padilla's letter from August 2021 have been considered or implemented. We understand that the Department has made changes to current policies because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and thanks to those changes, many students, scholars, and exchange visitors have been able to secure visas to travel to the United States. This has bolstered American relationships with our allies, partners, and friends, and contributing to our economy. We hope you continue your efforts to streamline processes for students and scholars.

Specifically, we urge you to permanently maximize alternatives to in-person visa interviews by providing waivers, virtual interviews, extension of visa eligibility waivers, and all other practicable options. Your policy guidance to avoid duplicative in-person interview screenings of visa applicants who have already been vetted and received a visa to travel to the United States in the past was a thoughtful step. This wise use of limited resources both protects our security and reduces backlogs. We expect that there are now sufficient data to demonstrate the effectiveness of this policy and we would appreciate an update on this policy's impact. Given the importance of exercising discretion to waive visa interviews where they are duplicative, unnecessary, or harmful to the effective screening and processing of visas worldwide, we urge you to explore ways to continue this visa interview waiver process to reduce future uncertainty or confusion.

We would also like to express our appreciation to you and your dedicated staff. The staffs of the Bureau of Consular Affairs, particularly Visa Services, and the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs, as well as the foreign service officers in the field, have worked tirelessly to evolve processes in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic and we appreciate their dedicated service.

Sincerely,



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John Garamendi  
Member of Congress



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Mike Thompson  
Member of Congress



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James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress



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Adriano Espaillat  
Member of Congress



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Grace Meng  
Member of Congress



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Jim Cooper  
Member of Congress



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Anthony G. Brown  
Member of Congress



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Salud Carbajal  
Member of Congress



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Scott H. Peters  
Member of Congress



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Nikema Williams  
Member of Congress



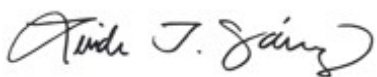
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Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress



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Ted W. Lieu  
Member of Congress




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Linda T. Sánchez  
Member of Congress



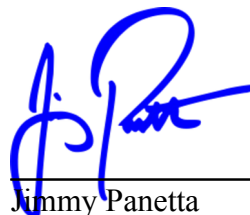

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MARK TAKANO  
Member of Congress



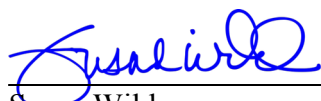

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Mike Levin  
Member of Congress




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Jimmy Panetta  
Member of Congress




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Susan Wild  
Member of Congress




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Pete Aguilar  
Member of Congress



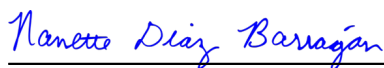

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Elissa Slotkin  
Member of Congress




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Tony Cárdenas  
Member of Congress




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Nanette Diaz Barragán  
Member of Congress




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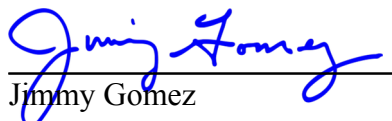
Karen Bass  
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley  
Member of Congress



Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress



Jimmy Gomez  
Member of Congress



Alan Lowenthal  
Member of Congress



Adam B. Schiff  
Member of Congress



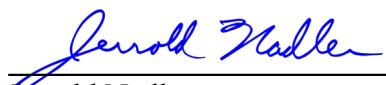
Juan Vargas  
Member of Congress



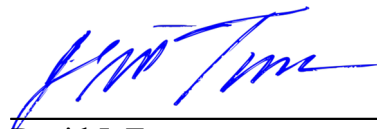
David N. Cicilline  
Member of Congress



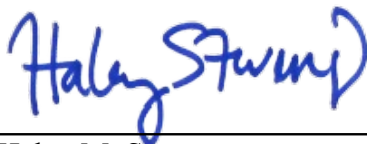
David Scott  
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress



David J. Trone  
Member of Congress



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Haley M. Stevens  
Member of Congress



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Ann McLane Kuster  
Member of Congress



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Marcy Kaptur  
Member of Congress



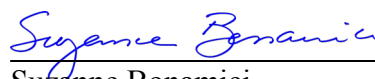
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Jamie Raskin  
Member of Congress



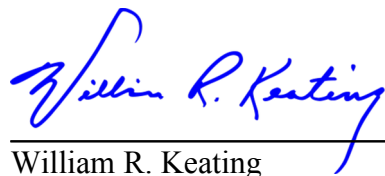
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Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress



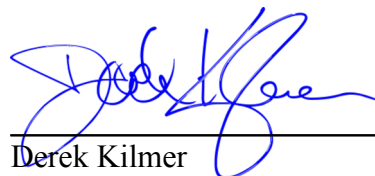
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Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress



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William R. Keating  
Member of Congress



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Derek Kilmer  
Member of Congress