



July 22, 2021

Rachel E. Canty  
Director, Student and Exchange Visitor Program  
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement  
Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, D.C. 20536

VIA EMAIL

**Re:** Request for special student relief for students from Haiti

Dear Director Canty:

We are writing today to request that the Department of Homeland Security's Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) consider granting Special Student Relief (SSR)\* to F-1 students from Haiti. As you are aware, Haiti is enduring increasing unrest following the July 7, 2021, assassination of Haitian President Jovenel Moïse. The Information Update from the U.S. embassy in Haiti describes the unstable situation, reporting on bank closures, limited flight availability, supermarket closures, and the security and safety issues.

The most recent information posted in the SEVP Data Library (2020) indicates that there were 1,417 active SEVIS records for students with Haiti listed as their country of citizenship. As the turmoil and emergent circumstances in Haiti continue, F-1 students from Haiti would greatly benefit from the availability of Special Student Relief, which allows DHS to suspend the 20 hour per week limits on incident-to-status on-campus and USCIS-authorized off-campus employment, and for students to be considered engaged in a "full course of study" for the duration of their employment authorization if they satisfy specific minimum course load requirements.



As the situation in Haiti continues to be dangerous and uncertain, we ask that you consider and support this request, and to please forward it quickly through the necessary channels within the Department.

Thank you for your consideration of this urgent request for Special Student Relief to aid the challenges students from Haiti are currently facing.

Sincerely,

[Signature Redacted]

Esther D. Brimmer, DPhil  
Executive Director & CEO  
NAFSA: Association of International Educators

\* Regulations allow DHS to suspend or alter rules regarding duration of status, full course of study, and employment eligibility, for specific groups of students from parts of the world that are experiencing emergent circumstances. This collection of benefits is known as "special student relief." [63 Fed. Reg. 31872 (June 10, 1998), amending the Code of Federal Regulations governing F-1 duration of status at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2 (f)(5), full course of study at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2 (f)(6)(A) and (B), and employment eligibility at 8 C.F.R. §214.2 (f) (9) (i) and (ii)]