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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

MIKE DOYLE

18TH DISTRICT, PENNSYLVANIA

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
306 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-2135

DISTRICT OFFICES:
2637 EAST CARSON STREET
PITTSBURGH, PA 15203
(412) 390-1499

4705 LIBRARY ROAD
BETHEL PARK, PA 15102
(412) 283-4451

627 LYSLE BOULEVARD
MCKEESPORT, PA 15132
(412) 664-4049

CO-CHAIR:
COALITION FOR AUTISM
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CONGRESSIONAL CAUCUS ON ROBOTICS

July 13, 2020

The Honorable Chad Wolf
Acting Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
245 Murray Lane, SW
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Acting Secretary Wolf:

I write today to express concern with the Temporary Final Rule that ends exemptions for certain students within the Student and Exchange Visitor Program. These sudden regulatory changes will have serious, negative, and lasting consequences for students and universities and require immediate reconsideration.

Across Pittsburgh, the Congressional District I represent, colleges and universities have been the driver of our city's transformation, attracting in top talent from around the world. These institutions have taken unprecedented steps to plan for a fall semester with courses delivered both online and in-person, based on federal, state, and local health recommendations and with the safety and health of students, employees, and the surrounding communities as the top priority. These institutions are maintaining flexibility to quickly adjust plans depending on the nature of the pandemic and orders from local and state government officials. Unfortunately, this new temporary final rule limits flexibility and opportunities for all students, and puts students, employees, and communities at risk.

I believe that this decision was motivated by political considerations, and not by concern for the safety and well-being of students enrolled in our nation's colleges and universities. International students bring tens of billions of dollars to the United States and our colleges and universities, and they contribute greatly to our institutions' learning environments, our nation's innovation and job creation, and America's global competitiveness. This rule forces international students to choose between their education and their health, and it asks universities to choose between their international students and a public health-based approach to the fall semester. By implementing this rule, you will put students, universities, and communities at risk.

I respectfully request the reconsideration of the Temporary Final Rule and extension of the March 2020 exemptions offered to institutions and international students thus far amid the pandemic.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Doyle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mike Doyle
Member of Congress