

National Asian American Coalition Letter Led By Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC, Asian American Scholar Forum, Chinese for Affirmative Action (CAA) & Stop AAPI Hate

June 13, 2025

Dear Secretary of State Rubio:

We, the undersigned organizations, write to express our serious concerns regarding your May 28, 2025 press release and tweet declaring that the Department of State (DOS), in coordination with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), would start to “aggressively revoke” the visas of Chinese students, including those “in critical fields.”¹ While it is certainly vital to bolster our national security against legitimate threats to U.S. interests, wholesale bans or visa revocations would not only contribute to an environment of fear, especially within the Asian American community, but also undermine U.S. competitiveness and global leadership in critical areas of science and technology. We urge you to immediately halt implementation and reevaluate this policy, and meet with leaders in civil society representing a wide spectrum of our populations.

In late April, the administration revoked visas and terminated Student and Exchange Visitor Information System records for thousands of international students, which had immediate negative impacts and threatened the U.S.’s vital talent pool. The administration made the appropriate decision to restore the records and prevent further harm to our students. Despite this course correction, such disruptions to long-standing policies cripple our country’s academic prowess in the world and contribute to reverse brain drain.²

This announcement to begin aggressively revoking Chinese student visas similarly threatens American competitiveness by harming our ability to attract and retain talents integral to our national security. As the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus noted in its May 30, 2025 letter, the lack of clarity around key terms like “critical fields” – which could include quantum computing, artificial intelligence, semiconducting – means that the U.S. could lose ground when it comes to emergent technologies if the international talent pipeline is stymied. For example, 66% of the companies on Forbes’s 2019 list of 50 most promising AI start-ups were co-founded by first-generation immigrants, a large majority of whom came to the U.S. on a student visa.³ With limited guidance from DOS, institutions are stuck in a holding pattern, unable to responsibly advise students, make admissions decisions, or plan for the coming academic year, all of which undermine the trust and stability needed to fulfill their educational and research

¹ See Marco Rubio (@SecRubio), X (May 28, 2025, 6:46 PM), <https://x.com/SecRubio/status/1927859105282015532>; see also Press Release, Marco Rubio, Secretary of State, New Visa Policies Put America First, Not China (May 28, 2025), <https://www.state.gov/releases/office-of-the-spokesperson/2025/05/new-visa-policies-put-america-first-not-china/>.

² Adrian Florido, *Government says-for now- it will restore international students' status*, NPR (Apr. 25, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/04/25/nx-s1-5377610/government-says-for-now-it-will-restore-international-students-stat-us>.

³ Tina Huang, et al., *Most of America’s “Most Promising” AI Startups Have Immigrant Founders*, Center for Security and Emerging Technology, at 3 (Oct. 2020), <https://cset.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/CSET-Most-of-Americas-Most-Promising-AI-Startups-Have-Immigrant-Founders.pdf>.

missions.⁴ We risk losing top global talent if international students believe their visas can be arbitrarily revoked or that they may not be able to complete their degree. Many of these students are drawn to the United States for the promise of the American dream and the ability to live in a free and democratic society.

Chinese international students contribute substantially to the long-standing preeminence of American technology and innovation, stimulate the economy, and become integral members of our American society.⁵ The overwhelming majority of these U.S.-trained, talented students want to remain in the United States after completing their education.⁶ International students create substantial immediate benefits to the United States economy, contributing over \$43.8 billion dollars and supporting 378,000 jobs in the last academic year alone.⁷ In fact, every three additional international students lead to the creation of one U.S. job. These international students who remain in the U.S. have co-founded at least twenty-one of the country's eighty-seven "unicorns" - privately held startup companies valued over \$1 billion.⁸ Many go on to build their careers, have families, and become citizens making this country their home.

Furthermore, by indiscriminately singling out Chinese students, this announcement targets individuals on the basis of national origin and jeopardizes fundamental principles of American law. The prohibition of discrimination based on national origin is grounded in Constitutional principles and federal law, yet this announcement seems to disregard that entirely. As Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC stated in a May 29, 2025 press release, "History has proven that exclusionary and discriminatory policies based on stereotypes rarely address actual national security concerns. Instead, they fuel prejudice and unfair targeting of Asian immigrants and Asian Americans."⁹ This new visa policy's broad-brush treatment of Chinese students is alarmingly reminiscent of the internment of U.S. residents of Japanese descent, including Americans during World War II—down to the same, thin national security justification. The State Department's two sentence statement ignores the lessons of history and violates equality under the law.

⁴ Letter from Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus to Secretary of State Rubio (May 30, 2025) (on file with author)[hereinafter CAPAC Letter].

⁵ Mark A. Barteau & Sarah M. Rovito, *International Talent Programs in the Changing Global Environment*, National Academies Press, at 38, 88 (2024), <https://nap.nationalacademies.org/read/27787/chapter/1>.

⁶ Over 90% of Chinese nationals in STEM PhD programs remain in the U.S. and contribute to its dominance in emerging technology. Jack Corrigan, et al., *The Long-Term Stay Rates of International STEM PhD Graduates*, Center for Security and Emerging Technologies, at 10 (Apr. 2022), <https://cset.georgetown.edu/publication/the-long-term-stay-rates-of-international-stem-phd-graduates/>.

⁷ *International Students Contribute Record-breaking Level of Spending and 378,000 Jobs to the U.S. Economy*, NAFSA (Nov. 18, 2024), <https://www.nafsa.org/about/about-nafsa/international-students-contribute-record-breaking-level-spending-and-378000-jobs>.

⁸ Remco Zwetsloot, et al., *Keeping Top AI Talent in the United States*, Center for Security and Emerging Technologies, at vii (Dec. 2019), <https://cset.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/Keeping-Top-AI-Talent-in-the-United-States.pdf>.

⁹ See Press Release, Asian Americans Advancing Justice - AAJC, Asian Americans Advancing Justice - AAJC Outraged By Secretary of State Rubio's Directive to Revoke Visas for Chinese Students (May 29, 2025), <https://www.advancingjustice-aajc.org/press-release/asian-americans-advancing-justice-aajc-outraged-secretary-state-rubios-directive>.

We reaffirm our commitment to the values of a compassionate immigration system, academic freedom, democracy, and the rule of law. Ultimately, vague and sweeping statements targeting Chinese international students risk undermining the very national security interests they purport to protect. These students contribute significantly to and are an integral part of our American society, innovation, and economic strength—often in fields critical to national competitiveness. By casting suspicion without clarity or due process, such rhetoric can drive top talent to other nations and weaken the academic environment and research enterprise that underpins U.S. global leadership.¹⁰ A policy approach rooted in transparency, precision, and evidence—not broad generalizations—is essential to safeguarding both our security and our values.

Sincerely,

18 Million Rising

AAPI NJ

AAPI Youth Rising

AFT

Alliance of Filipinos for Immigrant Rights and Empowerment

Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools

America's Voice

APA Justice Task Force

API Council

Arab American Institute (AAI)

Asian American Liberation Network

Asian American Pacific Islander Coalition of North Bay

Asian American Psychological Association (AAPA)

Asian American Scholar Forum (AASF)

Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC

Asian Americans United

Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education

Asian Youth Center (AYC)

Chinese for Affirmative Action

Clearinghouse on Women's Issues

Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)

Estrella del Paso (Formerly Diocesan Migrant and Refugee Services Inc)

Feminist Majority Foundation

Higher Education Chapter SEIU509

Hmong Innovating Politics

Human Rights First

Japanese American Citizens League

Justice Is Global

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

Muslims for Just Futures

National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA)

National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA)

National Iranian American Council Action

¹⁰ CAPAC Letter, *supra* note 2.

National Education Association
National Korean American Service and Education Consortium
National Pacific Islander Education Network
National Tongan American Society
NICOS Chinese Health Coalition
OCA Advocates St. Louis
OCA Asian Pacific Advocates Central Virginia Chapter
OCA-Asian Pacific American Advocates
OCA-Asian Pacific American Advocates, Greater Chicago
OCA-Asian Pacific American Advocates, Greater Cleveland Chapter
OCA Asian Pacific American Advocates, Greater Seattle
OCA – Greater Philadelphia Chapter
OCA Colorado
OCA COLUMBUS
OCA-Greater Los Angeles
OCA Greater Tucson
OCA Las Vegas
OCA-NY
OCA-Pittsburgh
Ohio Chinese American Association
OPAWL - Building AAPI Feminist Leadership
Pacific Asian Counseling Services
Peace Action
Peace Action New York State
Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK)
Stop AAPI Hate
T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights
The National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development (National CAPACD)
The LEAD Fund (Fund for Leadership, Equity, Access and Diversity)
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
The Sikh Coalition