



UAW Local 4121

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May 21, 2020

The Honorable Mike Pompeo
U.S. Department of State
Office of the Secretary
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

The Honorable Chad Wolf
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20528

The Honorable Eugene Scalia
U.S. Department of Labor
Office of the Secretary
Room S-2018 200
Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20210

Dear Secretary Pompeo, Acting Secretary Wolf, and Secretary Scalia:

We write in response to the White House Executive Proclamation of April 22, 2020, which asked your offices to “review nonimmigrant programs and ... recommend other measures appropriate to stimulate the United States economy.”

On behalf of the 6,000 Academic Student Employees and Postdocs at the University of Washington, nearly 40% of whom are international students and scholars, we write to ask that you: urge the Executive to reverse any limitation or suspension of immigration programs; and urge preservation and expansion of current programs critical for non-immigrant visas holders and visa applicants in higher education and academic research, such as Optional Practical Training (OPT) and Curricular Practical Training (CPT), the J-1 exchange visitor program, the H-1 specialty worker program, and the O-1 program for individuals with extraordinary ability/achievement.

International students and scholars are integral to the instruction and research missions of our University. As Postdoctoral Scholars, Research and Teaching Assistants, Tutors, Research Scientists and Techs, Faculty, Lecturers, Medical Residents, and many others, these workforces help our University secure over \$1 billion in federal research grants, which in turn multiply our community's growth in jobs and revenue. They also are key to instructing over thirty thousand undergraduate students. Removing these individuals from campuses or preventing them from entering the country would severely disrupt our strong collaborative working relationships that are vital to our ability to overcome the pandemic. Any policy that reverses or limits visas and related programs would undermine decades of collaborative work between the United States and our international partners in fields that contribute to health and economic security for all.

While massive unemployment from the pandemic is indeed a serious issue, the notion that immigrant workers contribute to unemployment is severely misguided. The Joint Committee on Taxation found that the CARES Act will hand over [\\$83 billion](#) in tax breaks to wealthy businesses and individuals.

International students and scholars are facing precarity due to relatively low incomes and lack of access to social support programs like unemployment and health insurance. Moreover, the devastating impact of the pandemic will be severely compounded if immigration were restricted. Immigrant workers are successful job creators and entrepreneurs. Recent [data](#) from the Congressional Research Service show that international students routinely remain in the U.S. after graduation, playing an instrumental role in our business, technology, resource, and healthcare sectors by contributing technical skills and knowledge toward solving some of America's most pressing problems. Another study determined that unemployment rates for US citizens would actually [increase](#) if immigration were restricted. Thus assertions such as those expressed by the May 7, 2020 letter sent to President Trump by Senators Cotton, Cruz, Grassley and Hawley are not borne out by evidence.

We therefore join the American Council on Education, American Association of Universities, NAFSA, and dozens of other national education-based organizations to encourage your agencies to take all necessary steps to urge the preservation and and continuation of immigration programs and to preserve and expand non-immigrant programs.

Sincerely,

UAW 4121 Joint Council:

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cc Washington State Congressional Delegation