



Statement on Possible Limitations on U.S. Student Visas from China

March 21, 2018

The United States has long been a global leader in international education and cultural exchange, and in fact has a global trade surplus in education with more than one million international students attending higher education institutions and intensive English programs (IEPs) in the last academic year. International students contribute more than \$39 billion to the U.S. economy, helping to create many jobs in the communities in which they study. At public higher education institutions, the tuition from international students also helps to defray the tuition costs for in-state students. However, the number of international student visas to the U.S. has already declined, with IEPs feeling the impact the most. Almost one-third of international students to the U.S. come from China – the most from any nation – so even a small reduction in visas for Chinese students would have a catastrophic impact on higher education institutions and programs.

Students and educators who travel to other countries for educational conferences or to study bring with them valuable resources and experiences, and take with them important cultural experiences and intercultural understanding. These exchanges advance mutual understanding and collaboration in a global community, and support both diplomatic and security interests, all necessary aspects of participating in a global economy. Limitations on visas for students from China to the United States would be detrimental not only from an economic standpoint, but from an intercultural and diplomatic standpoint as well.

As organizations committed to advancing excellence in English language education, TESOL International Association (TESOL), EnglishUSA, and the Consortium of University and College Intensive English Programs (UCIEP) strongly affirm their support for all international students and the IEPs that help them attain their academic, professional, and personal goals. International students are a valuable resource, and not a commodity that can be used as a bargaining chip. We urge the U.S. government to support all international students by facilitating access to high-quality education, including IEPs, and fervently oppose any efforts to limit the number of students coming from China or any other country.