

Protests & Immigration Status Information for International Students

Free speech and the right to assemble are hallmarks of U.S. democracy and often provide amazingly positive experiences for our students while they study in the United States. We've collected some frequently asked questions from international students regarding participating in political protests, rallies and/or demonstrations, whether on a personal level or for academic reasons.

Please read the information below and exercise caution when participating in protests, demonstrations and rallies.

- **Do international students with an F or J visa have the legal right to participate in rallies, demonstrations or other protests?** Yes, but please be aware that if you engage in illegal activity as determined by a law enforcement officer present or reviewing video footage after the event and you are arrested and convicted, this may have severe implications for your immigration status and may result in your being denied the ability to remain in the U.S. or to reenter the US in the future.
- **Should I carry my I-20 and passport with me?** International students should always carry their New School ID, U.S. Driver's License (or State ID, if applicable). We also recommend that students carry a photocopy of their passport and I-20 if they choose to be involved in a protest, rally, or demonstration. When traveling, students should carry the original I-20 with a valid travel signature and their passport.
- **Can I call my consulate if I am arrested?** You have the right to call your consulate or have the police do it for you. The consulate may speak with you if they wish. If you are arrested, do not sign any papers waiving your rights. You should ask to speak with a lawyer. As a precaution, you may want to put together a list of useful numbers such as ISSS and Student Support and Crisis Management, your consulate, and an [immigration attorney](#) before attending any demonstration events.
- **If I am arrested, does ISSS have to report me to the government?** ISSS only reports the information we are required by law and/or regulations to report. Federal immigration regulations require that any *criminal convictions* be reported to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Additionally, ISSS is obliged to disclose certain information to DHS if requested.
- **When should I contact ISSS?** If you find yourself in a situation similar to one described above, please contact the ISSS Office at (212) 229-5592 or Student Support and Crisis Management at (212) 229-5900 during normal business hours. If you are experiencing an emergency outside of business hours, you can call the ISSS Emergency Line (212) 229-7001.