

## Contact your California senators

- [Senator Adam Schiff](#) and staff member [ManoLasya Perepa](#)
- [Senator Alex Padilla](#) and staff member [Ursela Ojeda](#)

## [Contact your senators](#) in other states

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### Letter Starts:

[Date]

The Honorable [Your Senator's Name]

U.S. Senate

Washington, D.C. 20510

- OR -

[Representative's full name]

U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. 20515

### **RE: International Students are Critically Important to Our Nation's Economy, Security, and Innovation**

Dear Senator [NAME]:

Dear Representative [NAME]:

On behalf of California Institute of the Arts (CalArts), a highly respected educational institution serving students from across the country and around the world, I am writing to share my concerns about recent actions and policies that create barriers for international students and scholars seeking to study and contribute to higher education in the United States.

I urge you to convey to Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem that it is in our national interest to welcome international students and scholars to study at colleges and universities throughout the U.S.

International students **fuel our economy**, help drive American innovation, and **enhance opportunities for domestic students**. As Secretary Rubio has said, we must ensure that every policy pursued by the State Department makes America **safer, stronger, and more prosperous**. But efforts to restrict or deter international students from pursuing their studies in the U.S. is detrimental to American students at our campus, to local businesses, and to the

United States' position as the global leader in higher education.

At CalArts, international students come to our campus from 50 countries and comprise 30% of our student body. Most international students pay full or out-of-state tuition, injecting vital revenue into our institution and other colleges and universities across the U.S., which helps keep costs lower for domestic students—**making college affordable for more Americans.**

**International students fuel our economy.** In 2023-24, international students **contributed nearly \$44 billion to the U.S. economy**, making higher education **the nation's seventh largest service export**. Their spending on housing, food, and services helps sustain businesses in our state and across the U.S. For every three international students, one U.S. job is created or supported in sectors that benefit Americans—that's more than 378,000 American jobs nationwide.

**International students make America safer.** Recent immigration actions, including any pause in visa processing, will discourage students from studying in the United States at a time when other countries are increasing their recruitment efforts. In fact, new survey data by StudyPortals shows that interest in U.S. postgraduate education has plunged 40 percent since January 2025. In addition to the negative economic impact, if international students no longer come here, the United States will lose out on the opportunity to build relationships with future leaders, business partners, entrepreneurs, and allies—relationships that strengthen our national security and represent an investment in America's future.

**International students drive American innovation.** International students have pioneered breakthroughs in **nanotechnology, cancer treatment, and artificial intelligence**. The technology enabling Zoom and FaceTime was invented by an international student. International alumni have founded a quarter of the **billion-dollar start-ups in the United States**. When one talented Turkish student could not secure a visa to stay in this country, he took his expertise instead to China—where he helped **Huawei** dominate 5G technology, outpacing its competitors tenfold in terms of securing patents. **America cannot afford to drive away the world's top minds** and shut the door on the next generation of life-changing discoveries.

**Abrupt visa and immigration actions targeting international students and scholars are counterproductive.** International students already undergo an extensive vetting process. If the administration has concerns about compliance, those concerns should be clearly communicated to both students and higher education institutions. Without transparency and due process, such actions risk undermining—not strengthening—national security. More broadly, they send a troubling message that the United States is no longer a welcoming destination for the world's most talented students and scholars.

On behalf of California Institute of the Arts, I strongly urge you to communicate to Secretaries Rubio and Noem that continuing to welcome international students and scholars to study, contribute, and succeed in the United States must remain a national priority—it is part of what has made this country great.

Thank you for your leadership on this critical issue.

Your Name  
Title

Institution