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US IMMIGRATION & NATIONALITY LAW

IMMIGRATION UPDATE - APRIL 14, 2025

Posted on April 14, 2025 by Cyrus Mehta

Headlines:

USCIS Begins Scrutinizing Social Media; Many Student, Faculty, and Researcher Visas Revoked – The Trump administration has recently revoked more than 525 student, faculty, and researcher visas for a variety of reasons, or no reason.

Trump Announces Militarization of Southern Border – President Trump announced a "military mission for sealing the southern border of the United States and repelling invasions."

Trump Suggests Allowing Undocumented Farm and Hotel Workers to Leave and Return to United States – President Trump suggested that undocumented farm and hotel workers might be allowed to leave the United States and return in legal status if they have employers willing to vouch for them.

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USCIS Begins Scrutinizing Social Media; Many Student, Faculty, and Researcher Visas Revoked

The Trump administration has recently revoked more than 525 student, faculty, and researcher visas for a variety of reasons, or no reason. The administration has cited "antisemitic activity" as one justification for scrutinizing international students' social media postings and other communications. The actions have raised First Amendment concerns.

On April 9, 2025, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced that it is "considering aliens' antisemitic activity on social media and the

physical harassment of Jewish individuals as grounds for denying immigration benefit requests." USCIS said this new policy will immediately affect those applying for lawful permanent resident status, foreign students, and "aliens affiliated with educational institutions linked to antisemitic activity."

USCIS said it will "consider social media content that indicates an alien endorsing, espousing, promoting, or supporting antisemitic terrorism, antisemitic terrorist organizations, or other antisemitic activity as a negative factor in any USCIS discretionary analysis when adjudicating immigration benefit requests," effective immediately.

The efforts to deport foreign students and others have not been confined to addressing antisemitism. The Trump administration has claimed vast authority to do so, including under the little-used Alien Enemies Act of 1798. "All of these tools that exist in the statute have been used before, but they use them in a way that causes mass hysteria, chaos and panic with the hope that students won't get proper legal advice and they'll just, through attrition, leave the country," said Jeff Joseph, president-elect of the American Immigration Lawyers Association.

In many cases, the Department of Homeland Security issues orders for students to leave the country immediately, throwing their lives into chaos and interrupting their studies and research. The Trump administration has terminated many Student and Exchange Visitor Program registrations without notice, placed students out of lawful nonimmigrant F-1 status, and ended their employment authorizations under Optional Practical Training and Curricular Practical Training. Even permanent residents have been targeted. Reportedly, a variety of reasons (or even no reason) are cited as justification, including traffic violations resolved years earlier. Some students are leaving on their own while others have been detained by immigration authorities.

Meanwhile, some colleges and universities are attempting to address the revocations quietly under threats of having millions in funding yanked. Legal challenges are expected or have already been filed in some cases, with mixed results. The situation is complex and evolving. Stay tuned.

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Trump Announces Militarization of Southern Border

On April 11, 2025, President Trump announced a "military mission for sealing the southern border of the United States and repelling invasions." The plan includes "use and jurisdiction by the Department of Defense" over designated federal lands along the southern border, border-barrier construction and placing of detection and monitoring equipment, and enabling of military activities on the designated "military installation." It includes transferring authority to the Department of Defense over the Roosevelt Reservation, a portion of federal land along the border that is 60 feet wide.

The memorandum states that the plan will be implemented initially on a "limited sector" of federal lands designated by the Secretary of Defense, and may be extended by the Secretary of Defense at any time to additional federal lands along the southern border in coordination with other officials and "executive departments and agencies as appropriate."

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Trump Suggests Allowing Undocumented Farm and Hotel Workers to Leave and Return to United States

According to reports, at a cabinet meeting on April 10, 2025, President Trump suggested that undocumented farm and hotel workers might be allowed to leave the United States and return in legal status if they have employers willing to vouch for them. "We have to take care of our farmers, the hotels and, you know, the various places where they tend to, where they tend to need people," he said. "So a farmer will come in with a letter concerning certain people, saying they're great, they're working hard. We're going to slow it down a little bit for them, and then we're going to ultimately bring them back. They'll go out. They're going to come back as legal workers."

President Trump said the administration will work with people if they "go out ... in a nice way. We're going to work with them right from the beginning on, trying to get them back in legally. So it gives you real incentive. Otherwise they never come back. They'll never be allowed once a certain period of time goes by, which is probably going to be 60 days," he said.

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