

# Federal Policy Developments Digest

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September 2, 2025

## Trump Administration Proposes Capping International Students' Stay to Four Years (8.28.25)

The Trump administration has [proposed](#) a rule that would [limit](#) the length of time that certain visa holders (including international students and scholars) are allowed to stay in the US through eliminating the "duration of status" (D/S) policy. Currently, under the D/S policy, holders of F visas – the primary visa category used by international students – have been allowed to stay in the United States for the length of time it takes them to complete their programs. However, this cap would reduce the length to four years, regardless of the length of their studies. Holders of J visas, which cover certain international students and short-term college instructors and researchers, would also be impacted. F and J visa holders would need to undergo an extension of stay procedure through the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to stay in the US longer than four years. Additionally, the [proposal](#) would not allow graduate students on F-1 visas to change programs, nor would it allow undergraduate students on F-1 visas to change programs or "educational objectives" (i.e., programs, majors, or educational levels) during their first year of study, unless an exception is authorized by the Student and Exchange Visitor Program. The DHS claims that international students have taken advantage of the D/S policy, stating it has posed safety risks, wasted taxpayer dollars, and disadvantaged US citizens. Please note that this same cap was proposed during the end of Trump's first term, but the Biden administration withdrew the proposal the next year.

**Implications/next steps:** This proposal is open for public comment until September 29, 2025. International student advocates have expressed concern that this proposal will deter international students and scholars from coming to US institutions and increase bureaucratic backlogs. Fanta Aw, Executive Director and CEO of NAFSA, [stated](#) that the proposal represents "a dangerous overreach by government into academia" and that international students and exchange visitors are "the most closely monitored nonimmigrants in the country."

## Trump Administration Attempts to Widen In-State Tuition Ban for Undocumented Students

In June 2025, a federal judge [signed off](#) on a joint motion from the Department of Justice and the state of Texas ending Texas' in-state tuition rates for undocumented students. State and federal officials [argued](#) that Texas' in-state tuition policy discriminated against U.S. citizens from out-of-state who paid higher rates. The court settlement [led](#) to accusations of collusion. Now, the Justice Department has filed lawsuits against Kentucky, Minnesota, and Oklahoma to end in-state tuition for undocumented students, using the same argument that was used in Texas. Oklahoma has [followed](#) in Texas' footsteps and filed a joint motion to end its policy, although this request has not yet been approved by a federal judge.

**Implications/next steps:** The policy change in Texas will be used as a [precedent](#) as the administration seeks to target in-state tuition policies in other states. Thomas Saenz, president and general counsel at the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, [suggested](#) that the administration might be attempting to elicit different rulings from different courts in order to push the Supreme Court to weigh in. Currently, 23 states and DC have [policies](#) that allow eligible undocumented students to pay in-state tuition rates. In Texas, impacts of this policy change are being felt as the academic year begins. Texas [institutions](#) have not been given clear guidelines as of yet on who exactly needs to pay higher tuition, and many immigrant students are considering disenrolling from their courses because of the uncertainty and tuition increases. In August, a Texas district judge [denied](#) an emergency motion from civil rights advocacy groups to challenge the June ruling, which the advocacy groups have appealed.