



Background and Key Statistics

International education is essential to the U.S. International students come to the U.S. on student visas in order to pursue undergraduate and graduate degrees, and to study English. The flow of international students is essential to U.S. diplomacy, academia, economy, entrepreneurship, innovation, and culture ([Higher Ed Immigration Portal](#) | [NAFSA](#)). In the 2019-2020 academic year, international students contributed \$38 billion and 400,000 jobs to the U.S. economy ([Reopening America](#)). Half of companies in the U.S. valued over \$1 billion have at least one immigrant founder ([NAFSA](#)).

International education is critical to PA. Each year, PA hosts 50,000 international students, who contribute \$2 billion annually and support 25,000 jobs in PA ([MPI](#) | [NAFSA](#)). In Philadelphia and [Pittsburgh](#), international students account for a large portion of local economies.

International students are essential to the field of English language teaching. Over 75,000 students studied in Intensive English programs (IEPs) in 2019, and nearly half intended to go on to further study in the U.S. ([Open Doors](#)).

Current Situation

For the past 70 years, the international student population has grown. But from 2016 to 2020, amid unwelcoming [policy decisions and rhetoric](#), growth leveled off, until finally in the 2019-20 academic year, the population declined for the first time in 15 years ([Open Doors](#)). When the COVID-19 crisis struck, the flow of travel, immigration, and international students to the U.S. was severely limited.

Although the Biden administration has outlined a [commendable agenda](#) to reopen these channels, wait times for visa processing are so long that many students will not be able to arrive in the U.S. in time to study this fall. We need to take action now so that universities and intensive English programs can recover this academic year ([ACE](#)). International students have other global options, and action is needed to keep the U.S. a desirable destination.

Senator Alex Padilla (D-CA) is circulating a letter to the Department of State that outlines the urgency of these issues and discusses potential solutions ([NAFSA](#)). Please ask for your senators' support.

Call to Action

Contact your members of Congress:

- [reach out to your U.S. senators](#), encouraging them to sign on to Sen. Padilla's letter.
- emphasize the importance of international students to Pennsylvania's economy and to you.
- emphasize that international education is a bipartisan issue.

Pennsylvania's U.S. Senators:

Senator Bob Casey Jr. (D)			Senator Pat Toomey (R)		
(202) 224-6324	Twitter	Email	(202) 224-4254	Twitter	Email