November 3, 2020

Mr. Peter J. Olver
Head of the School of Mathematics
University of Minnesota
College of Science and Engineering
127 Vincent Hall
206 Church Street Southeast
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Dear Mr. Olver,

I thank you for the correspondence from you and over 100 other graduate students, postdocs, faculty and alumni from the University of Minnesota School of Mathematics. You express your concerns about a recently-proposed rule change by the Department Homeland Security ("DHS") and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE") affecting nonimmigrant student visas.

On September 25, ICE published a proposed rule to change the regulations governing international students and representatives of foreign media. The Notice of Proposed Rulemaking ("NPRM") would limit certain visa holders to a fixed time period of entry, rather than for the period that they are complying with the terms and conditions of their visa category. Per the NPRM, a two-year limitation would apply to citizens of 55 countries that, according to DHS data, have a visa overstay rate exceeding 10 percent, as well as citizens of Iran, North Korea, Sudan, and Syria – countries designated as state sponsors of terrorism. The proposed rule would also allow DHS to limit the admission of other individuals to two years if deemed in the national interest. Even if none of these criteria apply, international students would still be limited to a four-year visa regardless of the length of their course of study.

The NPRM threatens harm to Minnesota colleges and universities, including the University of Minnesota, and graduate students in the School of Mathematics and other disciplines. Last week, Attorney General Keith Ellison joined the Attorneys General of 21 other states and the District of Columbia in submitting comments opposing the proposed rule. I enclose a copy of the comments for your review.

I thank you again for your correspondence.

Sincerely,

DAVID S. VOIGT
Deputy Attorney General
(651) 296-3353

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