# Us government reveals criteria behind international student status crackdown



The U.S. government has recently disclosed additional information regarding a crackdown on international students, revealing the scope of the action and the criteria for terminating their legal status. This development comes amid multiple lawsuits filed by students who unexpectedly had their status cancelled in the past weeks, often with little to no explanation.

Over the last month, thousands of international students across the United States discovered that their records had been removed from the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS), a database managed by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). This removal created significant distress among the affected students, some of whom went into hiding due to fear of detention, while others abandoned their studies and returned home.

On a Friday, following a series of court challenges, federal officials announced the restoration of these students' legal statuses. They also revealed that they were developing a framework to guide future decisions on status termination. In a court filing on the following Monday, the government outlined a new policy document that detailed various grounds for cancellation, notably including the revocation of visas used to enter the U.S.

Brad Banias, an immigration attorney representing one of the affected students, commented on the policy expansion. He told the Associated Press, "This just gave them carte blanche to have the State Department revoke a visa and then deport those students even if they’ve done nothing wrong." Many students whose visas were revoked reportedly had only minor infractions on their records, such as traffic violations, with some unaware of the reasons for their targeting.

The government's legal representatives provided further insights during a court hearing involving Banias' client, Akshar Patel, an international student studying information systems in Texas. Patel's status had been terminated earlier in the month but was later reinstated, and he is now seeking a court ruling to prevent his deportation.

According to court filings and the hearing, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) conducted a review by cross-referencing student visa holders' names against the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), a database managed by the FBI that contains extensive crime-related data. This database includes names of suspects, missing persons, and individuals arrested regardless of whether charges were pursued or later dropped.

Approximately 6,400 students were flagged in this database search, as noted by U.S. District Judge Ana Reyes, who presided over the hearing. Patel was among those flagged due to a 2018 incident where he was charged with reckless driving; the charge had been dropped subsequently but still appeared in the NCIC records.

A spreadsheet listing 734 students flagged in the NCIC was sent to a Homeland Security official. Within 24 hours, the official responded with instructions to "Please terminate all in SEVIS." Judge Reyes remarked on this rapid response, stating, "All of this could have been avoided if someone had taken a beat," and criticised the government's "utter lack of concern for individuals who have come into this country." She highlighted that no thorough review to understand why names appeared in the database seemed to have taken place.

The sudden termination of legal status led to chaos for colleges, which traditionally would update the government on student status changes after students left their institutions. Some colleges instructed affected students to stop attending classes or working, warning of potential deportation.

Government attorneys clarified that removal of students from SEVIS did not necessarily indicate loss of legal status, arguing it served as an "investigative red flag" rather than a definitive termination. Andre Watson of the Department of Homeland Security stated, "Mr. Patel is lawfully present in the U.S. He is not subject to immediate detention or removal."

Judge Reyes declined to grant a preliminary injunction in Patel's case but encouraged both parties to reach a settlement allowing Patel to remain in the U.S.

The Associated Press is reporting these developments provide an overview of a significant government action affecting thousands of international students, detailing the processes behind the crackdown and the legal responses it has triggered.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

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