

United States: District Court Temporarily Blocks F/M/J Ban for Incoming Harvard Students

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Country / Territory



United States

At a glance

- A Massachusetts federal district court has issued a temporary restraining order blocking the Trump administration from implementing a June 4 presidential proclamation that bans visa issuance and entry to foreign nationals seeking to enter the United States in F, M, or J status in order to begin attendance at Harvard University.
- The pause on implementation will remain in place while the court considers a preliminary injunction.

The issue

A Massachusetts federal district court has issued a temporary restraining order blocking the Trump administration from implementing a June 4 presidential proclamation that bans visa issuance and entry to foreign nationals seeking to enter the United States in F, M, or J status in order to begin attending Harvard University. The court order blocks the June 4 proclamation in full, so it also purportedly blocks the Trump administration from enforcing a provision in the proclamation that directs the Secretary of State to consider whether any F, M, or J visa holders currently attending Harvard should have their visas revoked. However, the authority of the Secretary of State to revoke visas is broad and not dependent on presidential proclamation, so visa revocations are still possible.

The court order also temporarily blocks a provision in the June 4 proclamation that directs federal agencies to review whether limitations should be imposed on Harvard's participation in the SEVP system, which is required to enroll international students. The Trump Administration had already taken separate action in late May to try to deactivate Harvard University's SEVP certification, and a temporary restraining order from the federal district court quickly blocked that action while litigation on the matter continues. Last night's court order now extends that temporary restraining order to June 20.

Harvard is challenging the SEVP decertification and the June 4 F/M/J proclamation in the same lawsuit. Temporary restraining orders remain in place for both while the court determines whether to issue longer-term preliminary injunctions during the litigation. The case is *President and Fellows of Harvard College v. DHS*, Case No. 1:25-cv-11472 (D. Mass., filed May 23, 2025).

What this means

While the temporary restraining order blocking implementation of the June 4 proclamation remains in place, prospective students will be permitted to apply for F, M, and J visas and seek entry to the United States to begin attendance at Harvard University. However, at the direction of the Secretary of State, consulates have paused the scheduling of student visa appointments while the State Department develops and disseminates internal guidance on heightened social media review of student visa applications. As a result, for the time being, the scheduling of student visa appointments in time for the fall 2025 school semester may be difficult or not possible.

This alert is for informational purposes only. If you have any questions, please contact the immigration professional with whom you work at Fragomen.