

# Latitudes: Immigration crackdown's under-the-radar impact

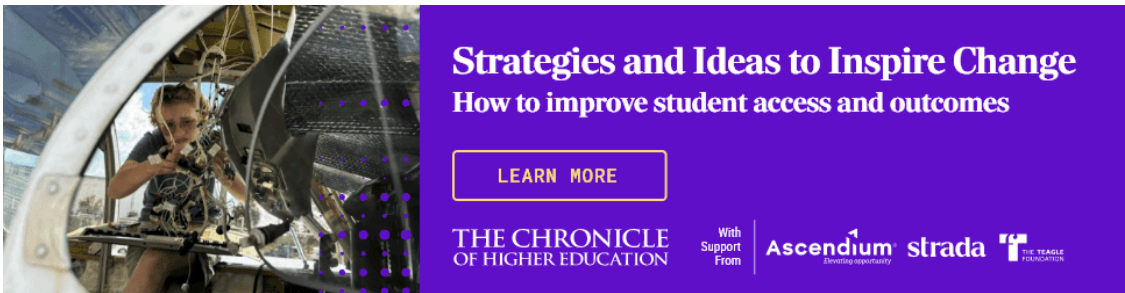
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**Karin Fischer at The Chronicle**  
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# Latitudes



By Karin Fischer

**In this week's Latitudes:** Tallying the impact of H-1B freezes on colleges in Florida and Texas. Epstein fallout hits international education. AI aces college entrance exams. But first ...

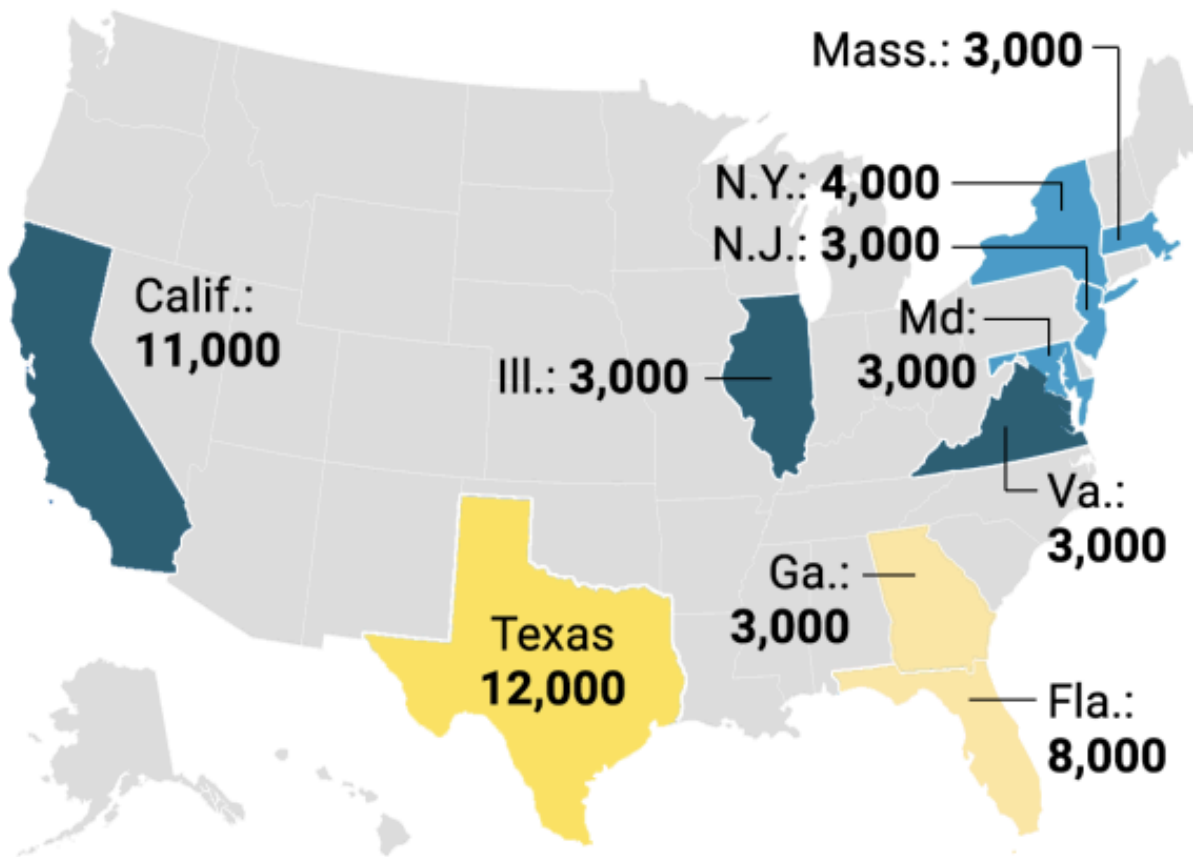
## TUITION ROLLBACKS THREATEN UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS

Half of all undocumented graduates of American high schools could be affected by efforts, some successful, to rescind policies that allow such students to qualify for lower in-state tuition rates.

Two of the three states with the most undocumented high-school graduates have already rolled back state tuition benefits. And the Trump administration is suing the third, California, over its policy.

Lawmakers in Florida, which has about 8,000 undocumented graduates, [rescinded](#) its law in early 2025. In Texas, home to the largest share, the country's oldest law offering in-state tuition was abruptly [repealed](#) in June after the Trump administration filed a legal challenge. Rather than contesting the lawsuit, Texas' attorney general, Ken Paxton, a Republican, asked a judge to side with the federal government and declare the 24-year-old law unconstitutional.

Two other states with large numbers of undocumented graduates, Virginia and Illinois, are facing similar lawsuits from the Trump administration.



About 75,000 undocumented students graduate annually from American high schools, according to a new [analysis](#) of census data from the Presidents' Alliance on

Higher Education and Immigration and the Migration Policy Institute.

Although the legal and legislative push to end state college-tuition policies has not attracted the same attention as raids by federal agents in Minnesota and elsewhere, it's part of an aggressive crackdown on immigration by the administration.

The U.S. Department of Justice argues such policies violate federal law because they do not provide the same benefits to all Americans. The measures treat domestic nonresident students like "second-class citizens," Pam Bondi, the U.S. attorney general, said.

Advocates said the programs allow undocumented students, many of whom have spent years in American public schools, access to college and encourage high-school graduation. "Policies that limit opportunities for first-generation immigrants undermine our nation's commitment to educating the next generation and harm the U.S. economy," said Corinne Kentor, senior manager of research and policy for the Presidents' Alliance.

Twenty-two states and Washington, D.C., currently provide tuition benefits to qualified undocumented graduates, the Presidents' Alliance reports. The Trump administration has also challenged laws in Kentucky and Minnesota. Oklahoma followed Texas' lead and ended its policy after a lawsuit.

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## INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP CUTS TIES OVER EPSTEIN CONNECTION

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A prestigious scholarship that sends Americans to Ireland and Northern Ireland for graduate study will drop the name of former U.S. Sen. George Mitchell after correspondence between the Maine Democrat and convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein was released by investigators.

The U.S.-Ireland Alliance said it [cut ties](#) with Mitchell, a key negotiator in the Northern Ireland peace agreement, because of "new information that has come to light." Queens University Belfast also said it would [rename](#) a research institute and remove a bust of Mitchell from campus.

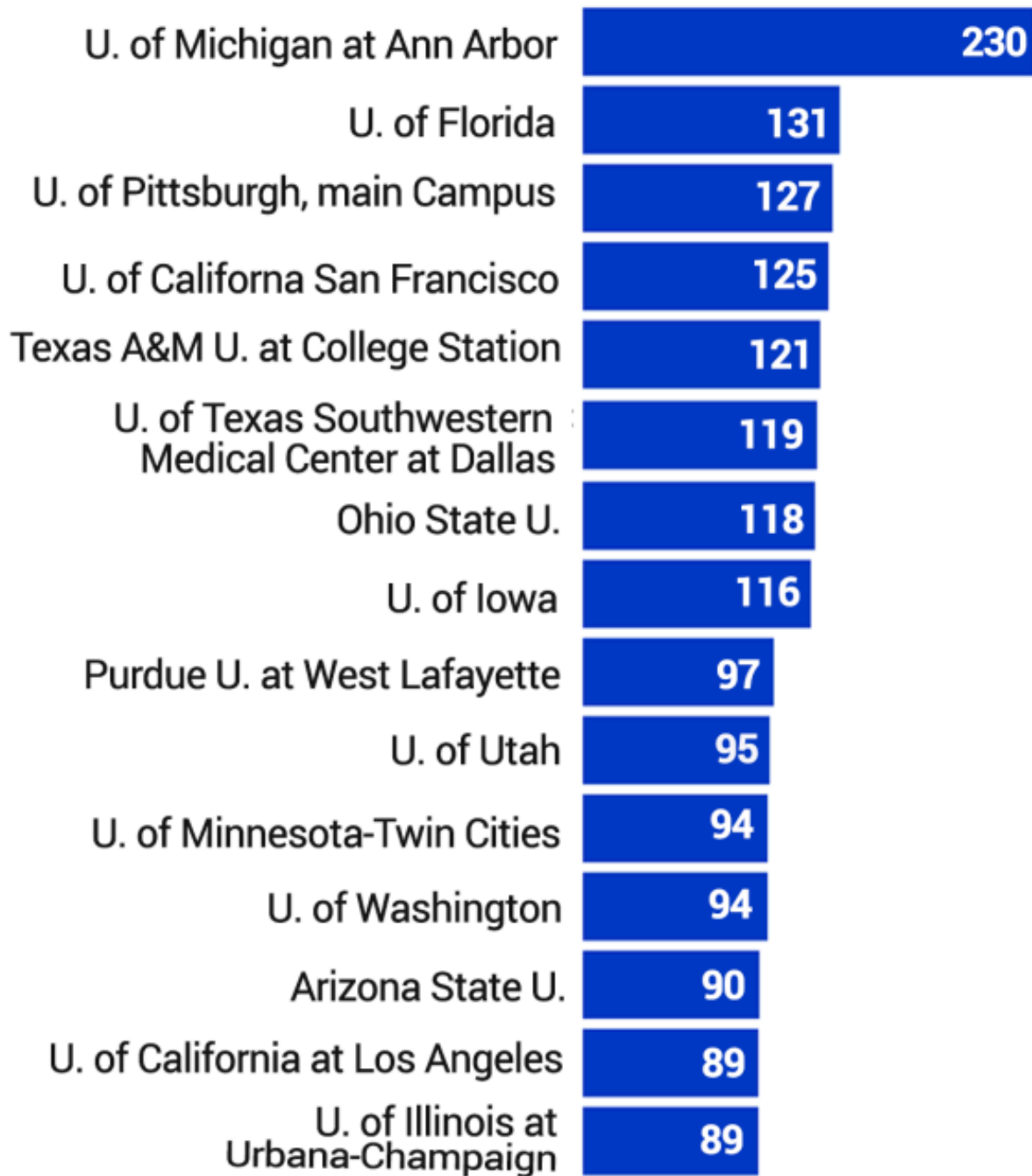
In a statement, Mitchell said that he “profoundly regrets” his relationship with Epstein. New documents show he had contact with Epstein after Epstein’s first conviction. *The Chronicle* has a rundown of some of Epstein’s [other academic ties](#) in the newly released investigative files.

## H-1B FREEZE, BY THE NUMBERS

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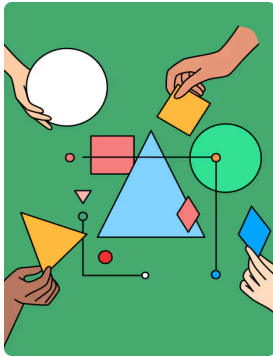
Colleges in two states that have frozen the hiring of new foreign workers are among the largest academic sponsors of skilled-worker visas.

Three of the six public campuses with the most applications for H-1B visas approved last year are in Florida and Texas. Colleges in the two states, which moved last week to pause H-1B hiring for at least a year, had more than 1,000 total approvals in fiscal year 2025, including new petitions and renewals.



To see the impact hiring freeze on a college-by-college basis in both states, check out this [database](#) created by my colleague, Jacquelyn Elias.

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## AROUND THE GLOBE

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**Russian universities will** no longer award bachelor's and master's degrees and will [offer](#) "basic" and "specialized" programs in their place under a new higher-education model.

**Academic boycotts and "soft exclusions"** of [Israeli institutions and researchers](#) is causing damage to science in the country.

**Thousands rallied in Belgrade** against the Serbian government's [crackdown](#) on student-led protests.

**The number of international graduate students** in Britain [fell](#) by 10 percent last year, while enrollment in programs offered by U.K. universities outside of the country increased.

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## The Trustees We Need Now

In today's volatile climate, college and university trusteeship has become a high-stakes, highly visible role. [Order this report](#) for insights into the ways trustees are trying to steer their institutions toward strategic success.

## AND FINALLY ...

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In much of the world, college-entrance exams are a high-stakes business, with students cramming for months and overhead flights and other distractions banned during testing periods. Scores make or break admission offers.

Now there's more competition — from [artificial intelligence](#). The latest version of ChatGPT earned 96.9 out of 100 on Japan's admission test, with perfect scores on nine of 15 subjects. Google's AI model got a 91.4, according to a joint experiment run by a Japanese newspaper and a start-up company. The average score is 58.1.

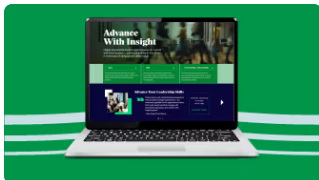
International educators can take heart from the findings, though — while AI did especially well on the science and math sections, it lost points on geography.

Thanks for reading. I always welcome your feedback and ideas for future reporting, so drop me a line at [karin.fischer@chronicle.com](mailto:karin.fischer@chronicle.com) or message me confidentially at [Signal](#). You can also connect with me on [X](#), [LinkedIn](#), or [Bluesky](#). If you like this newsletter, please share it with colleagues and friends. They can [sign up here](#).

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