

## Viewpoints

# Harvard Wins Key Legal Battle Over Student Visas: What it Means for Higher Education Institutions



U.S. District Judge Allison D. Burroughs issued a preliminary injunction in a closely watched case, blocking the Trump administration's attempt to revoke Harvard University's authorization to enroll international students. The ruling is significant, directing the administration to "immediately" prepare guidance to restore visa holders and applicants to their previous status and preventing any alteration to Harvard's Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) certification. This decision provides immediate, though potentially temporary, relief for institutions and international students alike. The administration has indicated an intent to appeal the decision, and the President recently announced on social media that the parties are engaged in active settlement talks.

The ongoing conflict highlights a fundamental divergence in perspectives. Harvard's attorney, Ian Gershengorn, publicly asserted that the administration was "using international students as pawns," reflecting concerns within the academic community about the stability and accessibility of U.S. higher



education for non- U.S citizens. Conversely, the Department of Justice has consistently cited national security concerns as the driving force behind the administrations' policies.

## Key Takeaways for Institutions that Enroll International Students:

- **Immediate Stability:** The preliminary injunction offers crucial immediate relief, allowing Harvard and, by extension, other institutions to continue enrolling international students without the threat of immediate SEVP decertification based on similar grounds. However, the anticipated appeal by the administration means, institutions should monitor future court proceedings closely.
- **SEVP Compliance:** This case underscores the critical importance of maintaining robust compliance with SEVP regulations. Educational institutions should ensure their processes for reporting, tracking, and supporting international students are meticulously adhered to, as SEVP certification is fundamental to their ability to host international students.

Our firm is closely monitoring these developments to provide timely guidance to ensure our clients are well-prepared to navigate these complex issues. Please contact us if you have specific questions about how these developments may impact your institution.

## Professionals

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