



## SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE CCP

DEMOCRATS | RANKING MEMBER RAJA KRISHNAMOORTHY

January 06, 2026

The Honorable Kristi Noem  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Noem,

For the United States to remain technologically and economically competitive with the Chinese Communist Party, we must continue attracting the best global talent and support a robust tourism industry. I am writing this letter out of concern regarding the recent DHS proposal requiring travelers from 42 countries with long established Visa Waiver programs with the US to submit five years of social media history, ten years of email addresses, extensive family details, biometric data, and other sensitive information..<sup>1</sup> While we absolutely must keep our nation secure from threats, deterring global talent from contributing to America is itself a threat. Particularly invasive forms of screening for visitors from friendly countries will drive away the tourists, students, and innovators who make the United States a global leader in tourism and education, all while encouraging other friendly countries to impose similar requirements on Americans.

Under current rules, travelers from 42 visa waiver countries use the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) and provide only basic contact information and eligibility details, and social media disclosure has been optional since 2016. Citizens of Britain, France, Germany, South Korea, Japan, and Australia, who have long entered the United States with minimal friction, would now face scrutiny that experts warn will deter travel and weaken the United States position as an innovation hub. DHS requesting this information from our friends and allies at a time when the United States is competing the PRC for top global talent is short-sighted, especially given the more effective means we have to vet and screen visitors.

The Trump Administration's policies are starting to meaningfully alter how international tourists and students see the U.S. According to a December survey by the non-government organization, Stop AAPI Hate, only 4% of international students said they feel "very" or "extremely" safe in the U.S. under the current climate, while 90% reported being "moderately," "very," or "extremely" fearful about their student visa status..<sup>2</sup> These findings build off work from the New York Times, whose October report on international students uncovered that as of

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Homeland Security. "[OMB Control Number 1651-0111] Agency Information Collection Activities; Revision; Arrival and Departure Record." December 10, 2025. <https://public-inspection.federalregister.gov/2025-22461.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Stop AAPI Hate. "UNSAFE, UNWELCOME, AND UNCERTAIN: What International Students are Telling Us." December 2025. <https://stopaapihate.org/2025/12/10/international-student-survey/>



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August, international student arrivals fell by nearly 20% from last year. This marks the largest drop on record outside of the pandemic.<sup>3</sup>

The DHS policies proposed here could also further damage one of the most reliable and important sections of the U.S. economy: international tourism. Last year, tourism generated \$2.9 trillion in economic output, or 2.5 percent of gross domestic product, and supported 15 million jobs.<sup>4</sup> Now, due to policies such as this, industry experts project 4.5 million fewer international visits this year compared with 2024, and arrivals decline across nearly all regions.<sup>5</sup>

Meanwhile, the PRC has seen a dramatic rebound in inbound tourism. It recorded a 60.8 percent increase in visitors in 2024 and welcomed roughly 132 million travelers.<sup>6</sup> Aside from the incalculable boost to the PRC's soft power, these tourism numbers have undoubtedly also led to quantifiable economic benefits for the PRC.

The PRC is increasingly seeing our immigration policies as working to their advantage. Education Minister Huai Jinpeng recently announcing that he is doubling down on the CCP's "Study in China" program, calling for international students to choose the PRC over the U.S.<sup>7</sup> Minister Huai has further argued that China's education system must "focus on fierce international competition," noting that education has already become "a crucial arena for major powers."<sup>8</sup> He has urged the CCP to take advantage of this historic moment and "accelerate the construction of a strong education nation" and to "enhance capacity to independently cultivate top-notch innovative talent."<sup>9</sup>

The stakes are clear. America's leadership in tourism and education depends on open channels for collaboration between allied nations, predictable entry procedures for our friends,

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<sup>3</sup> Aatish Bhatia and Amy Fan. "Nearly 20 Percent Fewer International Students Traveled to the U.S. in August." *NYTimes*. October 6, 2025. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2025/10/06/upshot/us-international-student-travel.html>

<sup>4</sup> Christine Cheung. "How Much More Can the U.S. Travel Industry Take?." *NYTimes*. December 19, 2025. <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/12/19/travel/us-travel-tourism-visas.html>

<sup>5</sup> Christine Cheung. "How Much More Can the U.S. Travel Industry Take?." *NYTimes*. December 19, 2025. <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/12/19/travel/us-travel-tourism-visas.html>

<sup>6</sup> Data Center of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. "China's Inbound Tourism Development Annual Report 2024 Released in Beijing." April 16, 2025. <https://www.ctaweb.org.cn/en/xsjl/10129.html>; Travel and Tour World. "Experiential Travel Drives Growth in China's Inbound Tourism, With Massive Increase." December 19, 2025. <https://www.travelandtourworld.com/news/article/experiential-travel-drives-growth-in-chinas-inbound-tourism-with-massive-increase/>

<sup>7</sup> Ministry of Education. "Huai Jinpeng visits CSCSE." November 22, 2025. [http://en.moe.gov.cn/news/press\\_releases/202511/t20251124\\_1421418.html](http://en.moe.gov.cn/news/press_releases/202511/t20251124_1421418.html)

<sup>8</sup> Ministry of Education. "教育部召开2025年终总结会." December 19, 2025. [http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb\\_xwfb/gzdt\\_gzdt/moe\\_1485/202512/t20251219\\_1423964.html](http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_xwfb/gzdt_gzdt/moe_1485/202512/t20251219_1423964.html)

<sup>9</sup> Ministry of Education. "教育部召开2025年终总结会." December 19, 2025. [http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb\\_xwfb/gzdt\\_gzdt/moe\\_1485/202512/t20251219\\_1423964.html](http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_xwfb/gzdt_gzdt/moe_1485/202512/t20251219_1423964.html)



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and the confidence of international partners. This proposal, in its current form, risks harming all three.

Accordingly, I respectfully request answers to the following questions no later than January 15, 2026.

1. What guidance has DHS provided for travelers who do not maintain social media accounts, and how does the Department ensure that the absence of social media activity does not result in adverse or discriminatory treatment during the screening process?
2. What standards, criteria, or analytical frameworks is DHS using to review and assess collected information under the new proposal?
3. Is DHS concerned that friends and allies may impose reciprocal requirements on U.S. citizens wishing to travel abroad?
4. Has DHS conducted any analysis of how the proposal will impact student and tourist travel to the U.S., and if so, what is the estimated economic impact?

Thank you for your attention to these matters.

Sincerely,

Raja Krishnamoorthi  
Ranking Member  
House Select Committee on the CCP