

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-0301

June 21, 2019

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump,

Millions of educated American students and professionals need you to take immediate and decisive action to end "OPT" (Optional Practical Training) by Executive Order.

In May 2016, the DHS issued 81 FR 13039, CFR Parts 8 214 and 8 274 which strongly encourages U.S. employers to hire foreign workers in place of Americans. We have strong concerns regarding the negative impact to U.S. citizen students and professionals and believe that ending OPT is in line with your April 2017 Buy American Hire American Executive Order.

OPT has increased more than 400%, and according to the Pew Research Center "OPT has surpassed the H-1B visa program as the nation's largest source" of STEM foreign labor. In 2017 more than 275,000 F1 student visa holders were employed in the U.S. on OPT. Neither the F1 foreign workers on OPT nor their employers are required to pay FICA taxes creating a 15% discount for employers when hiring OPT foreign workers before American citizens. This represents billions in tax loss to the country and our citizens.

OPT hurts American citizens: debt-laden college grads are being denied employment opportunities, U.S. white collar professionals are being replaced by foreign labor and U.S. women and minority STEM candidates are being shut out of U.S. jobs. Powerful interests will tell you that OPT is good for America and needed for U.S. competitiveness, but millions of taxpaying, hardworking people from across the country profoundly disagree. Please protect the millions of American students and American professionals and give them a chance to achieve the American dream.

Today U.S. universities attract foreign students on the promise of education and five years of tax-free OPT employment. Major corporations and the media would have you believe that there are not enough U.S. citizens to fill positions being filled by foreign workers today. But, the truth is, millions of American citizens are ready, willing and able to take those jobs, they just need a chance of employment. OPT removes that chance for millions of Americans.

Mr. President, American educated professionals and graduates need your support, protection and leadership. We encourage you to end OPT by Executive Order and put Americans first.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
Member of Congress