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ASBMB responds to Trump administration's proposed restrictions on student and scientist visas

ROCKVILLE, Md. — The American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology submitted formal comments today to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security raising concerns about the agency's proposed changes to visas that allow foreign students and scientists to study and conduct research in the United States.

"The U.S. must strive to attract international students and researchers, and these proposed changes would only dissuade them," said Benjamin Corb, director of public affairs for the ASBMB. "As we laid out in our comments, if enacted, these changes will damage the U.S. economy and the American research enterprise by depleting the STEM workforce, discouraging and hindering scientific collaboration and reducing American research output and innovation."

DHS seeks to change how long students and trainees with J, F and I type visas can stay in America. The agency wants to restrict foreign students to four years of study here, but most graduate degrees in the sciences take between five and seven years to complete. The society argues that the visa process must accommodate degree completion.

"Rule changes like these show a lack of understanding and respect for foreign-born students currently studying — and participating — in the American scientific workforce," Corb said.

The ASBMB's comments also address the chilling effect of visa restrictions on international collaboration and how study after study has documented that diverse research teams are more creative and productive than ones that are not diverse.

"Adding unnecessary visa restrictions will deter international researchers from coming to the U.S., ultimately resulting in fewer breakthroughs, medicines and scientific products to market," the society's comments argue. "If the U.S. aims to continue to be a leader in scientific research and development, then the pace of American innovation must rapidly accelerate. Without an international STEM workforce, it will decelerate."

Read the full comments [here](#).

About the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (ASBMB)

The ASBMB is a nonprofit scientific and educational organization with more than 12,000 members worldwide. Founded in 1906 to advance the science of biochemistry and molecular biology, the society publishes three peer-reviewed journals, advocates for funding of basic research and education, supports



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science education at all levels, and promotes the diversity of individuals entering the scientific workforce. Learn more at www.asbmb.org.