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Columbus Joins Brief Defending International Students from Deportation

COLUMBUS – Today, Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein announced that the City of Columbus has signed on to an amicus brief* defending international students from a recent U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) policy to deport international students whose classes are fully online as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

“Cities must protect the rights and well-being of our immigrant students and their families,” said Klein. “This heartless policy interferes with colleges’ ability to do what’s best for their students, faculty and staff and could lead to universities rushing to reopen despite public health guidance. Our universities are making difficult decisions and, as coronavirus cases spike, we should be offering our universities more options for flexibility.”

On July 6, ICE announced that the State Department will not issue visas to international students enrolled in schools and programs that are fully online for the fall semester nor will U.S. Customs and Border Protection allow these students to enter the United States. Under the policy, international students must depart the country or transfer to a school with in-person instruction to remain in lawful status. If not, they could face immigration consequences including, but not limited to, the initiation of removal proceedings.

The amicus brief, initiated by Los Angeles and Boston and signed by 26 counties and cities across the country, supports a Harvard and MIT lawsuit seeking an injunction on the implementation of this new policy. A hearing on the universities’ lawsuit will be held tomorrow, Tuesday, July 14.

“The stated rationale for ICE’s July 9, 2020 directive is to get colleges and universities ‘to reopen’ in the midst of spiking COVID-19 cases across the country, the brief states. “But DHS and ICE have failed to provide any discussion, consideration, or explanation about the harms that will flow from this directive.”

[The Ohio State University](#) was among 180 colleges and universities that signed onto another amicus brief in support of the [Harvard and MIT lawsuit](#) last week.

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**Editor’s note: A copy of the brief is attached.*