

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 4, 2011

The Honorable Gene L. Dodaro
Comptroller General of the United States
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street NW, Room 7125
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

We write to request that the Government Accountability Office undertake a review of the Student Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) and the United States Department of State and Department of Homeland Security's issuance of nonimmigrant student and exchange visitor visas.

According to the latest statistics from the Department of Homeland Security, there are more than 10,000 schools approved to accept nonimmigrant students and exchange visitors to study at their institutions. We are increasingly concerned about the number of these approved institutions that have turned out to be operating not for educational purposes but instead solely to manipulate immigration law to admit foreign nationals into the country.

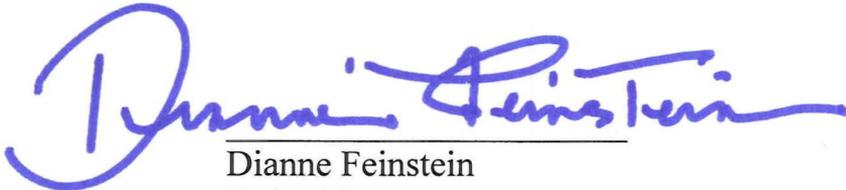
We therefore request that you initiate a GAO study to answer the following questions:

- Does Immigration and Customs Enforcement have appropriate procedures in place to detect fraud in the SEVP certification process?
- Are there adequate measures in place to detect fraud on the part of the SEVP certified schools once they begin accepting foreign students?
 - Does the recertification process appropriately assess risk factors to detect fraud?
 - Are site visits to SEVP certified schools being conducted with enough frequency and thoroughness to detect fraud?

- How does Immigration and Customs Enforcement communicate the number of students that the certified school can reasonably accept to United States Citizenship and Immigration Services and the Department of State to ensure that only an appropriate number of visas are issued for each certified school?
- Does United States Citizenship and Immigration Services or the Department of State have procedures that would detect when an unusually high number of students are applying to study at a SEVP certified institution that is not reasonably able to educate that number of students (as reflected in the school's certification application)?

We appreciate your prompt attention to this issue. Please have the appropriate GAO officials contact Kim Alton (Senator Feinstein, 202-224-9480) and Corey Dukes (Senator McCaskill, 202-228-6471) on our staff to discuss any details of the request or the conduct of the review.

Sincerely,



Dianne Feinstein
Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Claire McCaskill
Claire McCaskill
United States Senator