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Mr. Marco E. L. Mendicino
Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship
365 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, Ontario
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email: minister@cic.gc.ca

August 26, 2020

Re: New international student 50% rule

Dear Minister Mendicino,

I am writing you today to draw attention to an issue regarding the recent changes to the international student residency requirements put in place this summer.

On July 14th announcement your announcement on international students did bring some needed clarity on the topic. While many of the measure taken work on the board canvas of the national landscape, there are areas where these policies will have a detrimental effect on students, post-secondary institution and even local economies, that I do not believe were the intended consequences.

One of these consequences was recently brought to my attention by Northern College of Applied Arts and Technology, the main post-secondary institution with over four campuses serving people in my riding. As many post-secondary institutions, they currently host a number of international students. Though having extended the travel restrictions until August 31st, it is critically important that additional and targeted flexibility be provided to these students.

It is not uncommon for international students to take two consecutive short-term programs to diversify their professional and technical skills and increase their job prospects post-graduation. Should these post-secondary institutions need to extend online learning into the winter semester, students would not be able qualified to complete under the current rules.

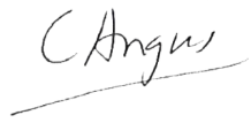
Applying the 50% rule to the total length of studies rather than on a program basis would alleviate this issue for most students concerned. Otherwise, this cohort's education will be in limbo as they are not able to attend classes at the same time, they are unable to re-enroll in the program. This is especially crucial for students that registered in a one-year Post Graduate Program, which are the most attractive programs for students attending Northern College.

In order to avoid this problem Northern College and other post-secondary institutions, would need decision on whether students can study online for winter semester by mid -September, at the absolute latest.

Minister, as you are aware this is not only an issue that Northern College faces. It is a potential problem faced by many other small and medium colleges that exist across the country. As you are aware the number of foreign students enrolled in post-secondary institutions have risen dramatically over the past decade and make up a large part of the revenue needed to operate these schools. These educational and economic engines will be needed to ensure that students get the training they need and that local economies are able to weather these storms.

Thank you for your consideration and look forward to your reply. If you require anything further on this topic, please let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "C Angus". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line that serves as a baseline for the signature.

Charlie Angus, MP
Timmins—James Bay