



Committee to Protect Journalists

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Office of Regulatory Affairs and Policy
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
Department of Homeland Security
500 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20536

Public Comment Regarding Proposed Rule DHS Docket No. ICEB-2025-0001, RIN 1653-AA95

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) submits these comments on the proposed changes to the I visa program as outlined in the Department of Homeland Security's proposed rule, Establishing a Fixed Time Period of Admission and an Extension of Stay Procedure for Nonimmigrant Academic Students, Exchange Visitors, and Representatives of Foreign Information Media (90 Fed. Reg. 42,070 proposed on August 28, 2025). Headquartered in New York, CPJ is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that has promoted press freedom worldwide for over 40 years. CPJ does not accept government funding.

Our comments will focus on the proposed revisions to the I visa category for representatives of foreign information media and their spouses and children. As proposed, the rule could drastically reduce the quantity and quality of international journalism in the United States, and there would be widespread risks for press freedom.

Replacing the current duration of status standard with a 240 day fixed time period will create an excessive burden on journalists and their employers. Under the current standard, foreign correspondents can provide accurate, in-depth coverage of both breaking news and long-term developments over years of uninterrupted employment. When journalists spend years rather than months in the U.S., they develop the deep knowledge, trusted sources, and cultural understanding required to explain American events effectively to global audiences.

The current system of longer stays serves a vital American interest: ensuring accurate representation of American policies, culture, and society to the world. The proposal would be highly impractical to implement and represents bureaucratic overreach. Reducing the visa stay to less than eight months will create instability for journalists and their families, likely leading to fewer applications for I visas. Media outlets would also be less likely to hire foreign correspondents. This risks leaving international audiences less informed about the United States, leaving a vacuum that adversaries will fill with narratives that serve their interests rather than factual reporting.

There is no clear justification for the proposed changes to the I visa category, particularly for the extremely short fixed time period of 240 days. General concerns about national security do not justify this counterproductive proposal. While national security and visa integrity are imperatives, the proposed restrictions would not advance these goals. The existing I visa program already ensures strict accountability by tying each visa to specific journalists and their employers, overseen by both the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of State.

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The proposed rule does not assert any documented cases of fraud or security breaches that justify this disproportionate policy change. Journalists with established careers and topical expertise would be less likely to pursue employment in the United States if they could not rely on long-term plans for their families. Greater turnover could actually increase security risks. Curtailing the I visa would only weaken global understanding of American life and politics, undermining America's own interest in how it is portrayed to the world.

Furthermore, any reviews of the content of a journalist's reporting would create an immediate chilling effect for I visa applicants and those applying for extensions. The proposed rule does not specify how "the content that the foreign information media representative is covering in the United States" (p-411) would be reviewed, nor how DHS will assess whether visa applicants and holders will "present national security concerns" (p-108). These vague standards could engender self-censorship, reducing global coverage of federal agencies and sensitive topics. Extensive reviews could threaten source confidentiality.

The proposed rule could have unintended effects on American journalists working abroad. Other countries would likely retaliate with restrictive requirements for correspondents from American news organizations. Such stringent requirements for I visa applicants would provide a justification for adversaries to attack independent journalism by citing U.S. precedent. Similar policies in China fueled tit-for-tat restrictions in 2020. Curtailing foreign journalists' ability to obtain visas is a well known means to restrict the free flow of information in more authoritarian countries.

CPJ urges the Department to withdraw the proposal and preserve the duration-of-status system for the I visa category. At the very minimum, a fixed time period of multiple years could provide more stability for international journalists. There must be strict firewalls protecting journalistic independence, including protections for source confidentiality, a transparent appeals process, the right to continue work during an appeal, and safeguards respecting press freedom principles.

For any questions, contact north-america@cpj.org.