

September 27, 2026

Tim Powers
Vice President for Government Relations & Policy Development
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
1025 Connecticut Avenue N.W.
Suite 700
Washington, DC 20036

Re: Endorse the Iranian Temporary Immigration Relief Act (H.R. 8740)

Dear Mr. Powers:

We, the undersigned organizations, write to ask National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU) to formally endorse the bipartisan [Iranian Temporary Immigration Relief Act \(ITIRA\), H.R. 8740](#), introduced by Representatives Yassamin Ansari (AZ/3rd) and Tom Suozzi (NY/3rd), and to encourage Members of Congress to cosponsor and support the legislation. Senator Richard Blumenthal (CT) also plans to introduce companion legislation in the Senate.

Iranian students and scholars have long come to the United States to pursue higher education, conduct groundbreaking research, and build careers that strengthen American universities, businesses, and communities. Today, however, some Iranian nationals who are lawfully present in the United States continue to face significant uncertainty regarding their ability to continue their studies, research, and careers.

Beginning in late 2025, a USCIS [adjudication pause](#) left Iranian nationals with pending immigration applications in legal limbo, placing some at risk of losing lawful status or work authorization despite complying with U.S. immigration law. While a federal court has since ordered USCIS to resume adjudications and the agency has indicated it is complying, the Administration has appealed the ruling, processing backlogs remain, and uncertainty continues for affected individuals.

For Iranian students and scholars, that uncertainty is particularly consequential. Returning to Iran can carry serious risks amid the regime's continuing repression of its citizens, including the January 2026 crackdown on protesters, mass arrests, and other human rights abuses. These concerns have been heightened by [proposed legislation](#) in Iran's parliament that could criminalize certain academic and research ties with foreign universities and institutions, placing students and scholars with connections to American universities at particular risk. At the same time, many of those affected are students, scientists, engineers, researchers, healthcare professionals, entrepreneurs, and other highly skilled individuals contributing to American universities and critical sectors of the U.S. economy.

For generations, Iranian students and immigrants have made extraordinary contributions to the United States. They have become Fields Medal recipients, helped lead America's Mars exploration program, pioneered advances in medicine and artificial intelligence, built successful American companies, and served the United States in senior government positions under both Democratic and Republican administrations. Today's Iranian students and scholars represent the next generation of that talent.

[ITIRA offers a narrow and temporary response](#). The legislation would provide Temporary Protected Status and work authorization to eligible Iranian nationals already lawfully present in the United States whose good-faith immigration applications were affected by the adjudication pause. Eligible individuals must have undergone vetting and background checks and have no criminal record or public-safety risk.

Importantly, ITIRA includes strong national security and accountability safeguards. It excludes individuals connected to the Iranian regime, including regime officials and agents and those providing material support to sanctioned entities, while maintaining existing national security, inadmissibility, and criminal bars.

We respectfully ask NAICU to formally endorse ITIRA and encourage its members and partners to urge Members of Congress to cosponsor and support the legislation. Higher-education organizations have an important voice in demonstrating the impact immigration uncertainty can have on students, scholars, researchers, universities, and the institutions that rely on their contributions.

Supporting ITIRA would help eligible individuals who followed U.S. immigration law continue studying, researching, working, and contributing to the United States while their good-faith immigration applications are adjudicated.

Thank you for your consideration. We would welcome the opportunity to provide additional information about ITIRA, and the students and scholars affected by this issue.

Sincerely,

Neda Bolourchi, JD, PhD

Executive Director

Public Affairs Alliance of Iranian Americans (PAAIA)

Ali Rahnema, JD

Interim Executive Director

Iranian American Legal Defense Fund (IALDF)

Peyman Malaz, PhD

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