Re: International students in net migration target

Dear Ms May,

We are writing to call on the Home Office to take international students out of the net migration target.

The Government has repeatedly stated that there is no limit to the number of international students who can come to the UK. Therefore, it is illogical to include international students in the net migration target.

International students add billions to our economy each year, contribute culturally and, on the whole, remain temporarily in the UK. As the All Party Parliamentary Group has shown through their work, international students add both to the labour market and UK economy. Businesses, trade unions and citizens alike believe that international students should no longer be included in the net migration target for this reason.

Data from the Home Office revealed that student overstaying is at worst three per cent, while Oxford Economics research for Universities UK found international students generate £25.8 billion a year for the economy, and furthermore international students are responsible for £10.8 billion of UK export earnings.

Some 78 per cent of undergraduate students believe that studying alongside international peers prepares them for working in a global environment, while 73 per cent of the British public would like to see the same number or more international students coming to study in the UK.

Despite the weight of evidence, the Government’s inclination appears to be to make it even harder for international students to come to the UK. This approach puts at risk the UK’s world-renowned universities and academia. Meanwhile, countries such as India have already said that any post-Brexit trade deal will in part depend on allowing more Indian students to study in the UK.
Higher education remains a success story for the UK as an industry and an export; the UK is a global leader and its position significantly contributes to the UK’s high “soft-power” ranking; indeed, 58 current heads of state and heads of government (over 25 per cent of the world’s countries and more than any other nation) benefitted from an education in the UK. To retain this position, along with the economic and social benefits, it is vital for our universities to recruit international students.

Instead, including international students in the net migration target, combined with the fact the Government continues to commit to restricting net migration to under 100,000, is deterring young people from coming to Britain to study, thereby putting the UK’s position at risk and damaging the country’s reputation.

Given that most international students return home following their studies and that the UK’s higher education sector is a big selling point, it is becoming ever more logical not only to take international students out of the net migration target, but to put additional policies in place to attract international students and to show the world that the UK is open for business, and welcoming of talent, wherever it comes from.

Yours sincerely,

Catherine West MP
Member of Parliament for Hornsey & Wood Green

Cc: Home Secretary Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP
Cc: Secretary of State for Education Rt Hon Justine Greening MP

Rt Hon Diane Abbott MP
Rushanara Ali MP
Heidi Allen MP
Mike Amesbury MP
Tonia Antoniazzi MP
Adrian Bailey MP
Clive Betts MP
Mhairi Black MP
Kirsty Blackman MP
Dr Roberta Blackman-Woods MP
Rt Hon Ben Bradshaw MP
Rt Hon Tom Brake MP
Karen Buck MP
Richard Burden MP
Rt Hon Vince Cable MP
Ruth Cadbury MP
Sarah Champion MP
Bambos Charalambous MP
Rt Hon Ann Clwyd MP
Vernon Coaker MP
Rosie Cooper MP
David Crausby MP
Alex Cunningham MP
Nic Dakin MP
Rt Hon Sir Ed Davey MP
Martyn Day MP
Thangam Debbonaire MP
Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi MP
Anneliese Dodds MP
Dr David Drew MP
Rosie Duffield MP
Julie Elliott MP
Paul Farrelly MP
Tim Farron MP
James Frith MP
Hugh Gaffney MP
Mike Gapes MP
Ruth George MP
Stephen Gethins MP
Preet Gill MP
Roger Godsiff MP
Patrick Grady MP
Peter Grant MP
Kate Green MP
Louise Haigh MP
David Hanson MP
Emma Hardy MP
Rt Hon Harriet Harman MP
Helen Hayes MP
Rt Hon Dame Margaret Hodge MP
Kate Hollern MP
Stewart Hosie MP
Christine Jardine MP
Diana Johnson MP
Darren Jones MP
Gerald Jones MP
Susan Elan Jones MP
Mike Kane MP
Peter Kyle MP
Ben Lake MP
Rt Hon Norman Lamb MP
Rt Hon David Lammy MP
Jeremy Lefroy MP
Clive Lewis MP
Stephen Lloyd MP
Caroline Lucas MP
Ian C Lucas MP
Gordon Marsden MP
Sandy Martin MP
Rachael Maskell MP
Chris Matheson MP
Kerry McCarthy MP
Stuart C McDonald MP
Rt Hon Pat McFadden MP
Alison McGovern MP
Liz McInnes MP
Carol Monaghan MP
Layla Moran MP
Ian Murray MP
Chi Onwurah MP
Luke Pollard MP
Yasmin Qureshi MP
Ellie Reeves MP
Marie Rimmer MP
Lloyd Russell-Moyle MP
Rt Hon Joan Ryan MP
Naz Shah MP
Virendra Sharma MP
Barry Sheerman MP
Tulip Siddiq MP
Andy Slaughter MP
Angela Smith MP
Cat Smith MP
Eleanor Smith MP
Jeff Smith MP
Alex Sobel MP
Jo Stevens MP
Wes Streeting MP
Paul Sweeney MP
Alison Thewliss MP
Ross Thomson MP
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Thelma Walker MP
Matt Western MP
Dr Alan Whitehead MP
Hywel Williams MP
Dr Paul Williams MP
Sammy Wilson MP
Dr Sarah Wollaston MP
Mohammad Yasin MP
Daniel Zeichner MP