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Immigration

State Department Announces Global National Interest Exceptions to COVID-19 Travel Restrictions

Legal Update

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This article was prepared with the assistance of ABIL, the Alliance of Business Immigration Lawyers, of which Loan Huynh, Fredrikson Immigration Department Chair, is a member.

On April 27, 2021, the Department of State (DOS) announced national interest exceptions to all regional travel restrictions currently in effect as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

DOS said that students seeking to start studies in the fall, certain academics, journalists and individuals who provide critical infrastructure support in countries affected by a geographic COVID-19 restriction may now qualify for a national interest exception. This includes qualified applicants who have been in Brazil, China, Iran or South Africa.

DOS also said that the pandemic "continues to limit the number of visas our embassies and consulates abroad are able to process," and that visa applicants should check the website of their nearest U.S. embassy or consulate for the latest information about visa appointment availability.