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## New Regulations for J-1 Visa - Summer Work Travel

### Taken Question

Office of the Spokesperson

**Washington, DC**

### Question Taken at the June 20, 2011 Daily Press Briefing

June 21, 2011

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Q: Please provide details on the specific aspects of the new regulations for J-1 visas. What is the intention of these new regulations? Are we confident that these new regulations will protect recipients from abuse?

A: The Summer Work Travel (SWT) program has provided thousands of international college and university students an opportunity to visit the United States and experience the American people and culture firsthand.

In 2010, approximately 120,000 college and university students participated in the Summer Work Travel program.

Given the expanding size of this program, the Department of State has perceived the need to enhance safeguards for participants. We are confident that implementation of these safeguards should provide stronger protections and make this a more viable program.

The new safeguards include:

- A pilot program for six countries (Belarus, Bulgaria, Moldova, Romania, Russia, and Ukraine) aimed at thwarting the potential for abuse of summer work travel participants who come from those countries; and new program-wide regulations designed to strengthen and clarify current program oversight and administration requirements.
- A special e-mail address and a toll-free telephone number, available 24 hours a day/7 days a week, to enable students to have ready, direct contact with the Department about program complaints or issues; and,
- Department of State welcome letters and program brochures provided to each program participant to better inform them about what to expect in the Summer Work Travel program.

- An aggressive and proactive system to monitor sponsors better, including on-going data analysis, complaint tracking, and on-site visits to sponsors to fully assess their compliance and the effectiveness of the new regulations.
- Closer scrutiny to visa applications of potential SWT program participants from the pilot program countries. Consular officers refuse visas to those applicants who don't demonstrate that they are eligible for visas, including compliance with the pilot program's conditions.

PRN: 2011/1017

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