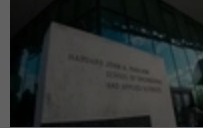




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The trial for a lawsuit filed by the American Association of University Professors against the Trump administration is taking place at the John Joseph Moakley United States Courthouse in Boston. | By [Julian J. Giordano](#)

By William C. Mao and Laurel M. Shugart, Crimson Staff Writers
July 19, 2025

A senior State Department official testified Friday that some claims and phrases common to pro-Palestine campus advocacy — including criticism of the state of Israel and calls for universities to divest from Israel — all “could be” grounds for revoking a noncitizen’s visa.

John L. Armstrong, who oversees a State Department bureau tasked with issuing visas, spoke during the trial for a lawsuit challenging the Trump administration’s immigration policies that was filed by groups including the American Association of University Professors and its Harvard chapter. Armstrong was the only government official to testify that he had direct input in revoking the visas of five noncitizen student and faculty protesters.

The plaintiff argued that the State Department’s actions violated the First Amendment. The plaintiff also argued that the State Department’s actions violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Constitution. The plaintiff also argued that the State Department’s actions violated the Administrative Procedure Act.

Armstrong testified that he had direct input in revoking the visas of five noncitizen student and faculty protesters. Armstrong testified that he had direct input in revoking the visas of five noncitizen student and faculty protesters.

The State Department’s actions violated the First Amendment. The State Department’s actions violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Constitution. The State Department’s actions violated the Administrative Procedure Act.

At the time of the trial, the State Department’s actions violated the First Amendment. At the time of the trial, the State Department’s actions violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Constitution. At the time of the trial, the State Department’s actions violated the Administrative Procedure Act.



that allows the State Department to U.S. foreign policy.

The executive order does not define antisemitism. It does, however, refer to an earlier executive order, signed by Trump during his first term, that instructs agency officials to consider the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s definition of antisemitism and its accompanying examples, which classify certain criticisms of Israel as antisemitic.

Armstrong said that his agency relied on a “common understanding” of antisemitism, which he defined as speech or conduct against Jewish people and the state of Israel.

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dodge,” Armstrong said in the Friday hearing.

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Over two weeks of trial, federal officials have repeatedly testified that the arrests of the five protestors were justified because they were illegally in the country after their visas had been revoked — without explaining why those documents had been canceled in the first place. Armstrong’s testimony provided a new, strikingly blunt description of the Trump administration’s rationale for revoking them.

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Armstrong was able to directly order the revocation of Ozturk’s visa under a wide-sweeping provision of the INA that allows consular officers to initiate a revocation for any reason. For the four other noncitizen protestors, Armstrong made recommendations to Secretary of State Marco Rubio based on the INA provision regarding U.S. foreign policy — a final determination that only Rubio could make.

Armstrong’s testimony came during the penultimate day of the trial for the case, which has become a critical test of the Trump administration’s efforts to deport noncitizen students and faculty involved in pro-Palestine advocacy.

Studies Association — have argued that the government instituted an “ideological deportation policy” that violates the First Amendment.

The policy, whose existence the government disputes, involves attempting to arrest and deport noncitizen university affiliates for their pro-Palestine speech — which the AAUP argues violates the First Amendment rights of its members.

Armstrong’s statements Friday were not the first revelations to come out of the trial. A Department of Homeland Security official testified last week that the department had created reports on more than 100 student protesters using a list created by Canary Mission

The trial can be addressed by lawyer the president’s decision

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agency officials to use a specific definition of antisemitism. In fact, the executive order does reaffirm and refer to an earlier executive order that tells agency officials to consider the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism.



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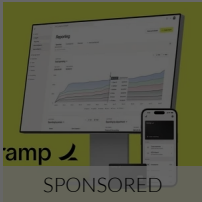
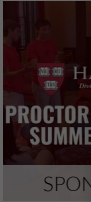
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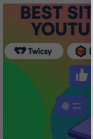


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