

To whom it may concern,

I am an American citizen who has been legally living and working in China since 2011. I am writing to strongly protest the proposed changes to the Electronic Visa Update System and provide information regarding how these changes--although directed at aliens--will negatively affect, compromise the privacy of, and in some cases even endanger, American citizens who are travelling abroad.

The Chinese Ministry of Public Safety regularly cites international precedent when rolling out new border control regulations--the most recent example being the current roll out of biometric data requirements. If the proposed changes are made, it's only a matter of time before China retaliates and requires American citizens to provide social media account information if they want to enter China. It's also quite likely that the Chinese Authorities would follow the US's lead in another unsavory practice--requiring travelers to turn over social media account passwords at the border or be denied entry.

Currently available software allows an entire lifetime's worth of data to be downloaded from an unlocked phone, laptop or online account in just minutes. Such unrestricted power is inappropriate for use even on non-citizens, but the fact that it's use would almost certainly subject US citizens (and their employers) to the same treatment in foreign countries should be reason enough to abandon these proposed changes--which grant even more power to Border agents looking to seize personal/privileged information without judicial oversight.

Having a life-time's worth of data copied by the government puts victims at increased risk of having their data stolen by criminals--as Federal agencies have regularly lost data in recent years to hackers or rogue employees. More concerning is the effect this policy would have on US citizens travelling to or working in authoritarian regimes. A US citizen travelling to China who was forced to turn over usernames and passwords for their social media accounts could be deported or even imprisoned for a long forgotten and seemingly innocent post about a politically sensitive topic in China.

I hope that after reviewing the numerous negative effects this policy will have on American citizens and American moral leadership on freedom and due process, Customs and Border Protection concludes that the proposed changes are averse to American interests and abandons them as such. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Austin Dempewolff  
Shanghai, China

aDempewolff@gmail.com

US Address:  
2 Grist Mill RD.  
Middlebury, VT 05753

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