

# ACLU lawsuit claims USC PhD student faces potential deportation without due process



A fourth-year USC student, less than a year from his PhD, now faces the threat of arrest and deportation after having his F-1 student status terminated.

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COLUMBIA, S.C. (WIS)— A fourth-year USC student, less than a year from his PhD, now faces the threat of arrest and deportation as the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has suddenly terminated his F-1 student status.

That's according to the ACLU, which is now representing the student in a lawsuit against DHS that claims he is being deported without any due process. Matthew Ariwoola is 32 years old and originally from Nigeria. He is studying and teaching at USC under an F-1 visa.

The ACLU says he is working on life-saving biomedical research at the university, developing medicines.

But the lawsuit claims his status has been revoked without warning. F-1 visas are monitored through what's known as the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System - or SEVIS. On April 8th, the lawsuit alleges USC staff informed Ariwoola that his SEVIS record had been terminated, and as a result, he was unable to continue studying and teaching due to his immigration status. He was also notified that he was either "identified in a criminal records check, or had their VISA revoked. SEVIS record has been terminated."

Ariwoola does not have a criminal record, however, he believes this all stems from his arrest in 2023 on a Theft by Deception warrant out of Georgia. But the ACLU claims he had never been to Georgia and had never had any contact with the accuser. The ACLU also says that after reviewing the case, the prosecutor dismissed all charges.

The lawsuit states, "Matthew was never required to appear in court, and the case was rightfully dismissed." The lawsuit also says that if his SEVIS record is terminated, Ariwoola will not be able to graduate this year, and losing his stipend would leave him and his family in dire financial straits. In the ACLU lawsuit, Ariwoola is asking the court to restore his valid F-1 student status so that he can continue to study at USC.

You can read the entire complaint [here](#).