



## SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGY

August 11, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio  
Secretary of State  
The State Department  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20520

RE: RIN 1400–AG01

Dear Secretary Rubio,

The Society for American Archaeology (SAA) writes to express its serious concerns with the new Visa Bond Pilot Program as announced in the temporary final rule (TFR) published in the Federal Register on August 6. This pilot program would have major adverse financial and research effects if final implementation is not modified.

The SAA is an international organization that, since its founding in 1934, has been dedicated to research about and interpretation and protection of the archaeological heritage of the Americas. With 7,000 members, the SAA represents professional and avocational archaeologists, archaeology students in colleges and universities, and archaeologists working at tribal agencies, museums, government agencies, and the private sector. The SAA has members throughout the United States, as well as in many nations around the world.

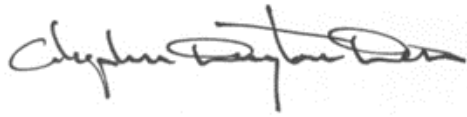
Under the TFR, individuals who are citizens of nations that have high visa overstay rates, and who are applying for visas as temporary visitors for business or pleasure (B–1/B–2), may now be required to post bonds of up to \$15,000 as a condition of visa issuance. Currently, the State Department lists Malawi and Zambia as the nations being subjected to the bond requirement.

As we stated in our letter of June 26 on the need for visa transparency, business travel is a vastly important part of America's tourism economy. For instance, archaeologists who come to our annual conference buy meals, ride in Ubers and taxis, and stay in hotels, all of which create jobs for Americans. In addition, the archaeologists who come share knowledge and research, a benefit to all of us. Such information and the scientific and economic advantages it creates cannot be fully realized without face-to-face contact. As we all have learned over the past five years, virtual communications are no substitute for physical meetings and certainly do not bring any tourism

dollars. Most foreign archaeologists probably do not have access to the amount of funds required for a bond such as that now required from visitors from Malawi and Zambia under the program. We also do not believe that archaeologists attending professional meetings are among those who overstay their visas.

Should the pilot program be expanded, we urge the State Department to minimize its financial and research impacts by exempting from its requirements those who travel to the United States for scientific conferences.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christopher D. Dore". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and a stylized "D" at the end.

Christopher D. Dore  
President