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Valley Interfaith Project – Nov. 30, 2018
Rapid Response: Proposed “Public Charge” Rules Regarding Legal Immigrants

The Trump Administration’s Dept. of Homeland Security (DHS) is proposing to change long-standing rules regarding what would disqualify applications for Lawful Permanent Residence (LPR or “Green Card”). This a threat to many Arizona families.

When an immigrant applies for a visa or green card, the government looks at different aspects of their life. Under current federal rules, a person is considered a ‘public charge’ if the government believes they may become dependent on public assistance as their main source of support.

What the new rule would do:

- Expands the “public charge” analysis to include: non-emergency Medicaid, Medicare Part D, public housing assistance and SNAP (food stamps)
- There would be stricter standards for age, health, and income when deciding whether an immigrant is considered a public charge.

*DHS is also requesting comment on inclusion of CHIP, Arizona’s KidsCare, as a disqualifying service.

Who this affects directly:

- People applying to enter the U.S.
- Legal immigrants who are seeking LPR.
- Lawful Permanent Residents who have left the country temporarily (over 6 months) and want to re-enter.

The determination only applies to the LPR applicant, not the use of benefits by family members.

Why We Oppose the ‘Public Charge’ Rule Change

1. The proposed rule harms lawful immigrant and mixed-status families: This will not only keep many families separated but will force legal residents to choose between keeping food on the table or a roof over their heads and their future ability to apply for legal residency.
2. The rule targets lawful immigrants: This rule would target those who are living lawfully in the United States, or those who lawfully want to immigrate here. *These are the people trying to “follow the rules”.*
3. Fear of the new rule can cause families to withdraw from programs that provide for vital health and nutrition needs of their children, even if the rule does not apply to their situation.

In Arizona, 1 in 4 children is in an immigrant family (at least one parent is not a citizen). And most of those children are citizens!

This rule will affect hard-working, new American families. These workers are critical to our economy, but in lower-paying jobs they may rely on assistance to keep afloat. These programs provide adequate food or housing for children, or allow the family to bridge a rough period.

ACTION:

- Learn more about the Public Charge rule change: <https://protectingimmigrantfamilies.org/resources/>
<https://justiceforimmigrants.org/category/action-alerts/>
- **Submit Public Comments Before Dec. 10, 2018** (by 9:59 p.m. in AZ) *Every comment is important, as each unique comment will be considered. Write a short note, in your own words, opposing the Public Charge rule. Include a personal story if you have one to share.*

Submit your comment now:

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