



11/26/18

Dept. of Homeland Security's 'Public Charge' Rule Change Will Harm CMC Clients

Please lend your voice to prevent this harm and ensure justice for immigrants!

The CMC Immigration Legal Services program assists many of our hard-working immigrant brothers and sisters obtain the immigration benefits available to them under the law. In 2018 alone, we have served 204 individuals and have gained approvals for 85, with 85 applications currently pending approval. As with all CMC services, our immigration program clients are lower income and need our help to achieve their goals of becoming integrated into American society. We see, first hand, the talent and determination they bring to our community to improve their own lives, and by extension, the lives of those around them.

Currently, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is proposing a rule change that calls for the definition of 'public charge' to be radically altered from only affecting those immigrants who are at high risk of becoming dependent on the government long term, to affecting all immigrants who receive nearly any public assistance program benefits, including SNAP/Foodshare, public housing assistance, and non-emergency Medicaid, even if for only short periods of time. Under this proposed rule change, any immigrant who receives any government assistance covered by the rule will be penalized when applying for permanent status or other status changes. **The penalties are severe enough to prevent such applicants from ever qualifying or obtaining permanent status.** For more details about the rule change, please see: <https://cliniclegal.org/resources/uscis-proposes-vast-changes-public-charge-definition>

Thus, many CMC clients will be faced with the decision to either forego assistance that enables them to feed, care for, and house their families, or lose the ability to legally reside in the US. If this proposed rule goes into effect, many families we serve may face the risk of deportation solely for receiving public benefits that they are legally eligible for.

The staff and administration of the CMC find this proposed rule change unconscionable and are strongly opposed to its implementation. We feel it drastically betrays the words inscribed on the Statue of Liberty, "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free..." and turns the country's back on the very people who in decades and centuries past have become the backbone of our society. Who among us does not have ancestors and family members who came to America seeking a better life and were provided the opportunity to not only survive, but to thrive? As Americans and as people of faith, we refuse to stand by and watch as the door is slammed on our neighbors who seek that same opportunity.

If you would like to assist in keeping the rules of the American immigration system fair and just, we ask you to join us in providing comments on this proposed rule change. Go to: <https://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=USCIS-2010-0012> and click the "Comment Now!" button. **Comments are accepted until December 10!**

For guidance about commenting on the rule change, please visit the Catholic Legal Immigration Network resource webpage: <https://cliniclegal.org/sites/default/files/advocacy/CLINIC-Defend-Immigrants-by-Taking-Part-in-the-Federal-Rulemaking-Process.pdf>