

Use your voice to protect immigrant families today



**charlotte center**  
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# ACTION ALERT

## Use Your Voice! Protect Immigrant Families Proposed Changes Will Hurt Families, Communities



Last month, the Federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) published for public comment [proposed changes to the "public charge" rules](#) that will **overhaul our nation's immigration system to restrict immigration access based on income**. The proposed rules target immigrants legally seeking permanent resident status in the U.S. forcing them to choose between family unity and their ability to access basic needs such as food, shelter and health care.

We believe this proposal goes against our shared American values to transform our immigration system into a class-based "pay for play" system that is inaccessible for the families Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy serves.

**"Public Charge"** is a longstanding immigration rule which allows the government to deny entry or permanent residency if they determine that immigrant is likely to become primarily dependent on the government for financial support.

For decades, the only public benefits considered under public charge have been cash assistance and long-term institutional medical care at the government's expense.

### WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSED RULE DO?

- **Expand public benefits considered to penalize those who use vital assistance programs including:**
  - Non-emergency Medicaid
  - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP/Food Stamps)
  - Medicare Part D Low Income
  - Subsidy, Housing Assistance (Section 8 and Public Housing)
- **Impose harsh new income thresholds** that applicants, even those with sponsors, must meet to avoid a public charge assessment.

**A family of four would need to earn over \$62,750 to avoid a public charge assessment and receive legal status.**

The rule also explicitly states that an applicant's inability to work because of age, either being too young or too old, or disability, will be a significant negative factor in their public charge assessment.

Federal law provides some protections from this harsh proposal for humanitarian-based immigration applications such as refugees, asylees, victims of trafficking, violence, or crimes, and some other categories, who are exempt from the public

charge test and can receive benefits without impacting their immigration status. Another safe guard is that benefits, such as food and medical assistance, received by an applicant's dependents cannot be considered in the applicant's public charge assessment.

## THE IMPACT :

**The proposal is destructive:** This proposal is a dangerous departure from our country's proud identity as a nation of immigrants seeking the **American Dream's promise of opportunity earned through persistence and hard work**. North Carolina stands to lose up to [\\$573 million in economic benefits](#) from this proposal, as it creates instability and deters families from critical resources they need to make ends meet.

**The proposal favors the wealthy:** Instead, of welcoming the world's "tired, poor, huddled masses," this rule would prohibit all but the wealthiest from accessing our immigration system and the freedom, hope and opportunity it provides.

*"It will be nearly impossible for poor people, disabled people, the elderly, or children to adjust their immigration status under this proposal. Our organization serves hardworking low-income immigrant families who deserve a fair shot at the opportunity to support their families and keep them together."*

- Louise Pocock, Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy attorney

For more than 100 years, the U.S. government has recognized that social supports like health care and nutrition help families thrive and remain productive, and the government has long clarified that immigrant families can seek health and nutrition benefits for eligible families without fear of harming their immigration case.

**The proposal puts millions of families at risk:** Instead this rule would punish low-income people for wanting to legally live in the U.S. and deny vulnerable families the chance to even try to "pull themselves up by the bootstraps."

**1 in 3 children** in Charlotte are either foreign born or have at least one parent who is foreign born, and almost [20% of Mecklenburg County's children live below the poverty line](#).

For several months, Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy has been working with families who are afraid to use public assistance programs they are eligible to receive due to fears that using those benefits will harm their ability to adjust immigration status or even get them deported. We are certain that many more families will decline critical access to nutrition, healthcare and housing they are eligible to receive if these new proposed changes go into effect, creating more confusion for families who are already living in fear and vulnerable to exploitation.

## YOU CAN HELP

### [1. Submit comments against this proposal today!](#)

**The comment period for this proposal ends DECEMBER 10.** The government has already received more than **60,000 comments nationwide** opposing this rule, but we need thousands more comments from people like YOU. [Check out sample comments and drafting tips.](#)

### [2. Encourage your networks to comment this holiday](#)

season!

This Thanksgiving, use time with family and friends to support today's pilgrims -- newcomers to this country who seek the same opportunity as those we celebrate for arriving on the Mayflower hundreds of years ago.

**Don't let the U.S. government slam the door  
on those seeking that same dream.**

Building a strong community means helping families thrive. **When families are too afraid to seek assistance to meet their basic needs, our whole community suffers.** This rule only ensures a poorer, sicker, hungrier community. Family safety and unity should not have to come at the expense of stability.

**3. Join us next Thursday, Nov. 29 at 2 p.m. for a  
Facebook Live Chat about public charge and its impact.**

For additional information about "public charge," visit our [website](#), follow us on [Facebook](#), and join the [Protecting Immigrant Families Campaign](#).

[#ProtectFamilies](#) [#OurAmericanStory](#)

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**Give today. Change tomorrow.  
Be a champion for those in need.**

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