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Immigrants should not be punished for using public programs to keep themselves and their families healthy

Yesterday a Department of Homeland Security [proposal](#) that would make sweeping changes to the so-called “public charge” rule was posted to the Federal Register. That means that the 60-day public comment period is [now open](#).

If this rule change takes effect, it will seriously undermine the health and wellbeing of immigrant communities in the US [by driving immigrants away from healthcare, food assistance, and other resources that they are legally entitled to access](#).

We still have time to stop this rule change from moving forward. Here’s what you can do right now:

- **Submit a public comment by December 10.** You can [draft your own comment](#), using the talking points below, or [customize a sample public comment letter](#) provided by Protecting Immigrant Families.
- **Contact your policymakers** and ask them to speak out publicly against this rule change and to submit public comments themselves.
- **Write a letter to the editor opposing the rule change** (you can adapt the talking points below or use the [materials](#) provided by Protecting Immigrant Families and other advocacy groups) and send it in to your local newspaper.
- **Join a webinar to learn more.** On October 17, Protecting Immigrant Families will host a webinar on how the public charge rule works today, how the policy could change, and what you need to know if you are an immigrant or work with immigrant families. Register [here](#).

Key points to include in your public comment letter

The Department of Homeland Security and national policymakers need to hear why the proposed changes to the “public charge” rule should be rejected. The points below can help you craft your public comment, calls to legislators, and letters to the editor:

- This proposal threatens to scare families away from health-supporting programs they're legally entitled to access, undermining health and wellbeing and leaving our country sicker, hungrier, and more impoverished.
- The rule change would further bias the US immigration system against working-class immigrants. How you contribute to your community should define you in this country, not how much money you have.
- People with physical or mental health conditions that potentially interfere with their ability to earn an income would face stricter scrutiny under this rule change. Even children would face higher barriers to immigrating or remaining permanently in the US.
- Immigrants are our friends, co-workers, and community leaders. Immigrants should not have to choose between keeping their families together and accessing the programs they need to stay healthy and thrive.

Advocates are mobilizing against this rule change. So far, over 1,500 organizations have [signed on to a statement opposing public charge](#). The American Academy of Pediatrics [condemned](#) the proposal for presenting immigrant families with “an impossible choice: keep yourself or your children healthy but risk being separated, or forgo vital services like preventive care and food assistance so your family can remain together in this country.”

To learn more about this rule change and what you can do right now, [read our recent blog post](#), and [visit](#) Protecting Immigrant Families.