Our vision: A nation where all are truly equal, immigration is recognized as a strength, and no one in America is denied the essentials of life because of where they were born.

Our purpose: To unite to protect and defend access to health care, nutrition programs, public services, and economic supports for immigrants and their families at the local, state, and federal level.

The Trump Administration has made clear its intent to make life more difficult for low-income immigrant families by restricting their ability to access basic programs that safeguard their health care, nutrition, housing, and economic security. Adding additional barriers to accessing programs like Medicaid and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) will drive up poverty among families with children and have lasting consequences on the well-being of immigrant families and the communities in which they live.

Fighting an expanded “public charge” test

One of the most urgent threats is the Administration’s proposal to redefine “public charge,” so that only those with substantial incomes or resources would qualify for entry or adjustment of status. Current law authorizes a bar to entry or permanent legal status if an immigrant is likely to become dependent on cash “welfare” or long-term institutional care at government expense. But current policy does not consider an immigrant’s likely eligibility for non-cash supports that help so many working families climb the economic ladder. The possibility of changes to public charge has been rumored since early 2017, and in January 2018, the State Department revised its instructions to consular officials on public charge, adding the use of any public benefit by the person seeking a visa to enter the country, their family members, or their sponsor to the public charge consideration. These rumors and changes have already led to many immigrants choosing not to enroll themselves or their citizen children in critical programs despite their being eligible.

In October 2018, the Administration issued a proposed rule to formally redefine public charge so that even modest receipt of programs including non-emergency Medicaid, SNAP, help paying for prescription drugs under Medicare Part D, and several housing programs can be counted against immigrants seeking a green card. It weighs a range of factors in deciding whether a person is likely to use certain public benefits in the future, and would make it much more difficult for low and moderate-income immigrants to get a green card, extend or change their temporary status in the US.

This proposed regulation would mark a fundamental change from our nation's historic commitment to welcoming immigrants. It would radically reshape our legal immigration system, putting the wealthy at the front of the line, ahead of hardworking families who have waited years to reunite. No longer would the U.S. be a beacon for the world’s dreamers and strivers. Instead, America’s doors would be open only to the highest bidder.

Part of a pattern of attack on low-income immigrant families

Several legislative proposals in 2017 included provisions seeking to bar immigrant families from accessing basic health care and nutrition assistance. For example, Affordable Care Act “repeal and replace” legislation included provisions to bar additional classes of immigrants from purchasing insurance in the marketplace. Later in the year, the RAISE Act attempted to bar immigrant families from basic health care and nutrition assistance and
created new barriers to naturalization simply for needing this help. The enacted tax bill included restrictions on children without Social Security numbers receiving the child tax credit.

**Protecting Immigrant Families, Advancing Our Future Campaign**

The Protecting Immigrant Families, Advancing Our Future campaign, co-chaired by the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) and the National Immigration Law Center (NILC) brings together leading advocates for immigrants, children, education, health, anti-hunger and anti-poverty groups, and faith leaders, not only to defend against these threats, but also to lay the foundation for a more productive national dialogue about our immigrant tradition and our country’s future.

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**Work of the campaign**

- Building a network of state, local, and national organizations that brings together the various sectors potentially impacted by these threats and working together to align, coordinate, strategize, and take action
- Offering united public opposition to policy changes that would limit immigration only to immigrants with substantial resources, use poverty as a weapon against immigrants and use immigration status as a weapon against the poor
- Advocating for public policy that includes immigrants in the United States’ fundamental promise of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness
- Researching the impact of public policy threats and the best way to explain those threats to policymakers and the broader public
- Communicating with the public about a future built together by those whose families have been in the United States for generations and those who come today
To join the Protecting Immigrant Families Campaign as an Active Member, please go to bit.ly/PIFActivemember
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