

November 21, 2018

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services  
Department of Homeland Security  
20 Massachusetts Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20529-2140

RE:Comments on Proposed Regulation Inadmissibility on Public Charge Grounds (DHS Docket No. USCIS-2010-0012)

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of the New York Foundation to express our strong opposition to the Department of Homeland Security's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (proposed rule) on public charge, published in the Federal Register on October 10, 2018.

Our foundation provides grants that support community organizing in New York City. Our grantmaking is focused on community-initiated and resident-led solutions to respond to local issues and elevate the voice of people that have been historically marginalized. Many of our grantee partners work with immigrants, communities of color, low-income and working families, youth, and the elderly.

The harms flowing from the proposed rule will ripple across the country and the economy. They will undercut the health and well-being of millions of immigrant families and exacerbate hunger, child poverty, and homelessness among immigrants and U.S. citizen children living in mixed-status families.

As immigrant families are interwoven into our social and economic fabric, these negative consequences will reverberate across the communities where they live and work. As a whole, New York City has over three million immigrants from more than 150 countries, constituting almost half of the city's employed population and 40 percent of its total population. According to a January 2017 report by New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer, immigrants are key drivers of economic growth. More than 83,000 New York City business owners are immigrants, and they represent over half of all self-employed New Yorkers. With more than \$100 billion in earned income, immigrants comprise 32 percent of total earnings in the city. Almost half of all workers in critical sectors, including technology, financial analysis, entertainment, and medical, are foreign-born. Finally, New York's immigrant families pay an estimated \$8 billion in city and state income taxes and \$2 billion in city property taxes. The immigrant workforce sustains and augments our city. The proposed rule unfairly penalizes hardworking, tax-paying immigrants and would unduly impair the vitality of the city.

We strongly oppose the proposed rule's punitive and cruel provisions that penalize immigrant parents and children for enrolling in services for which they are eligible. Immigrants have high rates of employment but often work in jobs that pay them less and are therefore less likely to provide them with employer-sponsored health insurance than their U.S.-born counterparts. Billions in taxes paid by immigrant families help support all government programs. Yet low-income children with foreign-born parents are less likely to receive SNAP or Medicaid than are children with U.S.-born parents.

Further, multiple studies demonstrate that benefits targeted by the proposed regulation, such as Medicaid and SNAP, increase childrens lifelong health and self-sufficiency in adulthood. The proposed regulation will have a major chilling effect on immigrant families who will face the untenable choice between using vital programs for which they remain eligible and keeping their families together. This will not only create fear among the families of immigrants without a green card, but those of green card holders and naturalized citizens as well. Its not the first time we've seen this happen. Following the 1996 welfare reform law, use of public benefits by individuals who remained eligible under the new restrictions plummeted. One recent study estimates that 875,000 to 2 million citizen children with a non-citizen parent could drop off of Medicaid/CHIP coverage despite remaining eligible, increasing their uninsured rate from 8 percent to upwards of 22 percent.

This regulation will force parents to weigh the risk of future denial of lawful permanent residency status against the risk of losing access to safe housing, adequate food, and healthcare. Enacting a regulation that undermines the health and wellbeing of families, exacerbates income inequality, and jeopardize economic stability runs afoul of core American values.

Given these adverse and deleterious impacts, we adamantly oppose the Department of Homeland Securitys proposed rule. Thank you for your attention to our comments.

Sincerely,

Maria Mottola  
Executive Director  
New York Foundation