

CALFRESH FORUM 2019

FOOD for ALL

Protecting and Expanding
Food Access for Immigrants

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How can we build a food assistance safety net that works for all Californians?



AGENDA

Introductions

History & Issue Overview

Discussion Activity

Food4All Workgroup Presentation

Discussion Activity

Q&A

HISTORY & POLICY CONTEXT



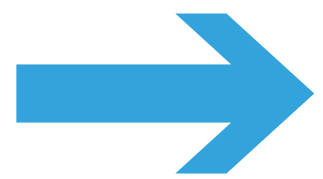
Immigrant access to public benefits:
How did we get here and where are we going?

Public Charge Overview

What does it mean and how could
it impact your community?

What Is 'Public Charge'?

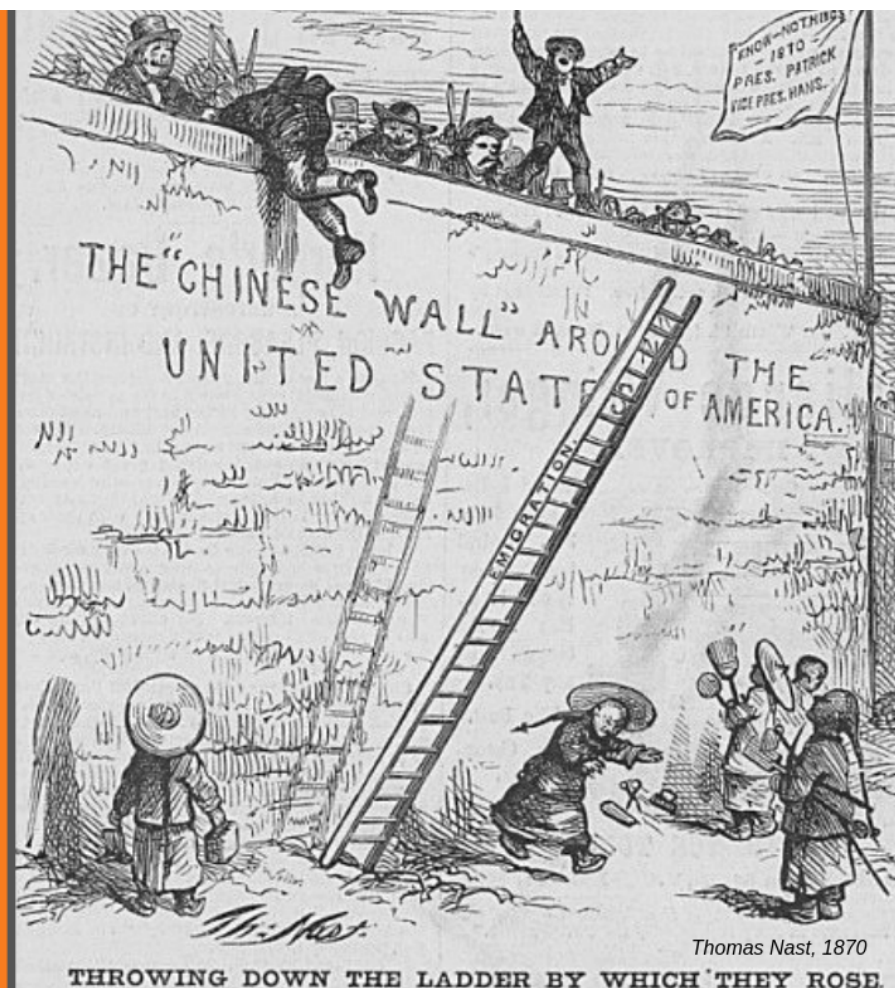
A term used in immigration law to describe an individual who is primarily dependent on the government for their basic needs.



A person deemed likely to become a public charge can be denied permanent resident status and permission to enter the country.

In the same year, U.S. Passed the Public Charge Rule AND Chinese Exclusion Act. Tell Congress to stop repeating history.

#ValueOurFamilies
#NoFamilyBan



Who Does It Apply To?

Persons applying for:

- Legal Permanent Residence (green card)
- An immigration Visa (to enter the U.S.)
- LPRs re-entering the U.S. after 6 months



Public Charge does NOT apply to:

Refugees, asylees, survivors of domestic violence, victims of trafficking or other serious crimes, special immigrant juveniles, and certain other groups.

Current Policy

Factors Considered in 'Totality of Circumstances':

Personal Factors:

- Age
- Health
- Financial resources
- Dependents
- Skills and work experience
- If they are sponsored

Public Benefits (cash assistance):

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF/CalWORKs)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Long-term care (institutionalization).

What are the Proposed Changes?

Add non-monetary benefits:

- Medicaid (Medi-Cal) and Medicare Part D
- SNAP (CalFresh)
- Federal Public Housing, Section 8 housing vouchers and Project Based rental assistance.



Stricter standards for personal factors:

Negative weight to children or seniors, persons with limited English proficiency, poor credit history, limited education, or a large family.

Also apply test to:

People applying to extend their non-immigrant visa, or change the category of their status (e.g., from a student to an employment visa).

**Heavily Weighted
Positive Factor**

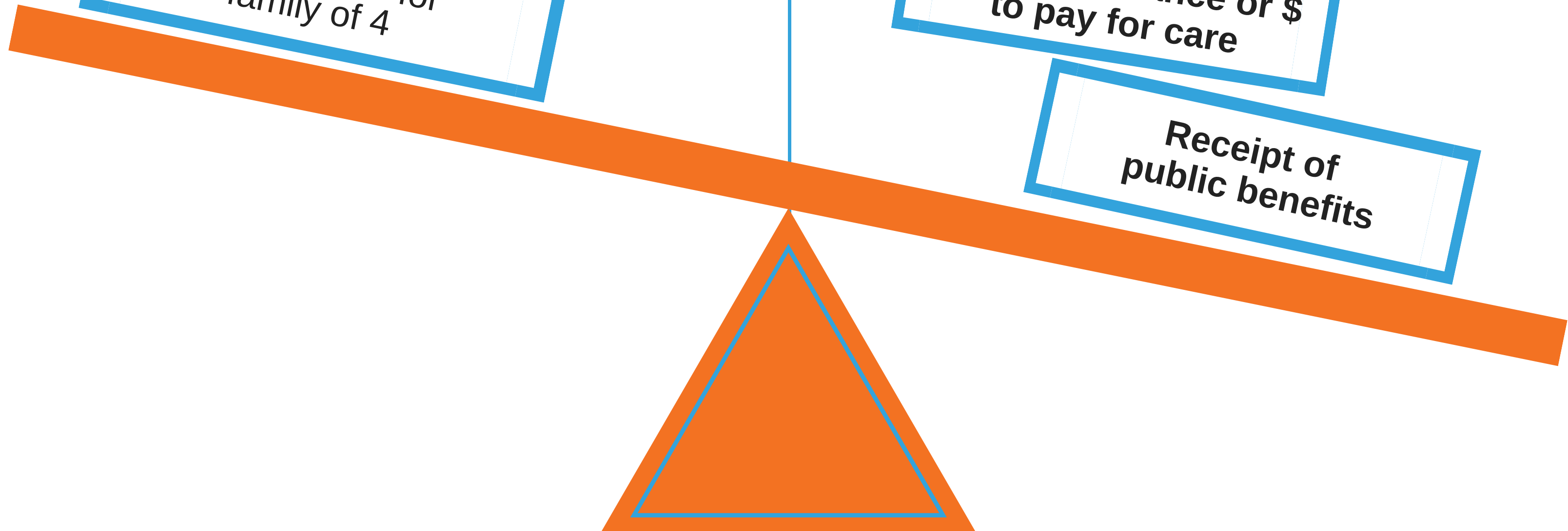
**Heavily Weighted
Negative Factors**

Income \geq 250% FPG
\$62,000/year for
family of 4

**Lack of job or
job prospects**

**Health condition w/o
private insurance or \$
to pay for care**

**Receipt of
public benefits**




How far is the "look back" period?

The rule is NOT retroactive.

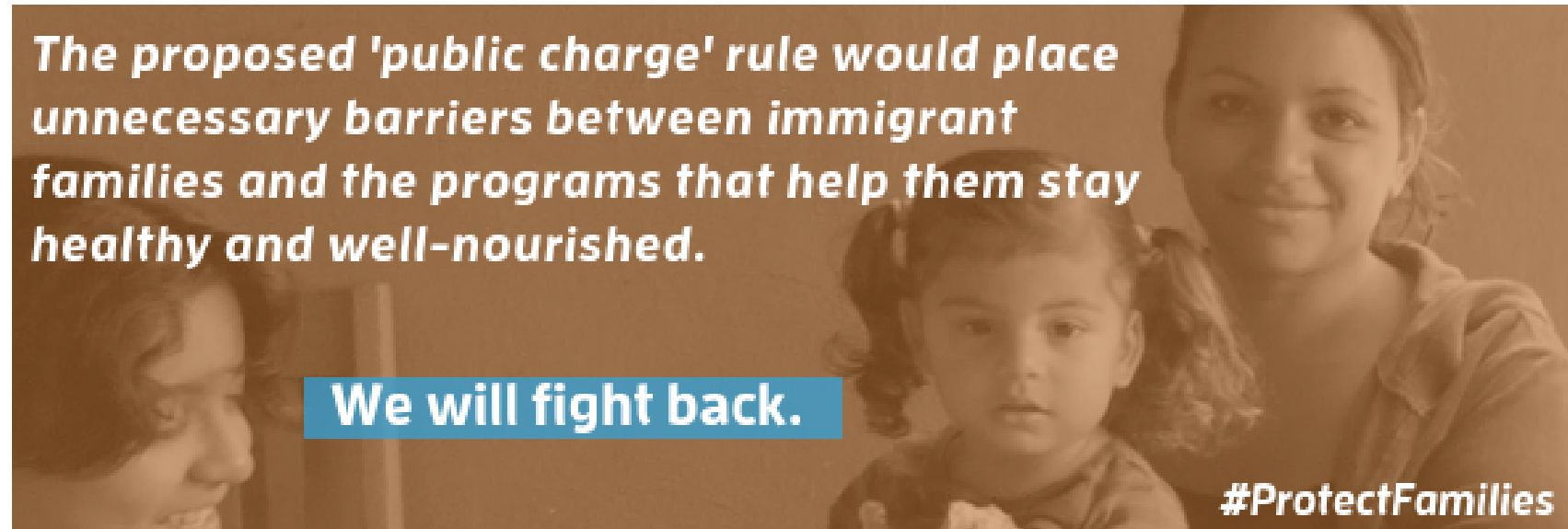
Benefits used before the rule is finalized **will not** be considered.

The rule would go into effect 60 days after it is finalized.

After that point, receipt of benefits during the **36 months prior to applying** for admission or a “green card” would be counted as heavily weighted negative factors in the public charge determination.



How will communities be impacted?



- ↑ Increase in hunger, poverty, and poor health.
- ↓ Lost jobs, economic output, and tax revenue.

If families forgo essential benefits...

- Children are less prepared to perform in school.
- Increased financial stress on parents.
- Heightened risk of chronic illness and mental health conditions.

If families disenroll from CalFresh & MediCal, CA could lose...

- Up to 17,000 jobs.
- Up to \$2.8 billion in economic output.
- Up to \$151 million in state & local tax revenue.

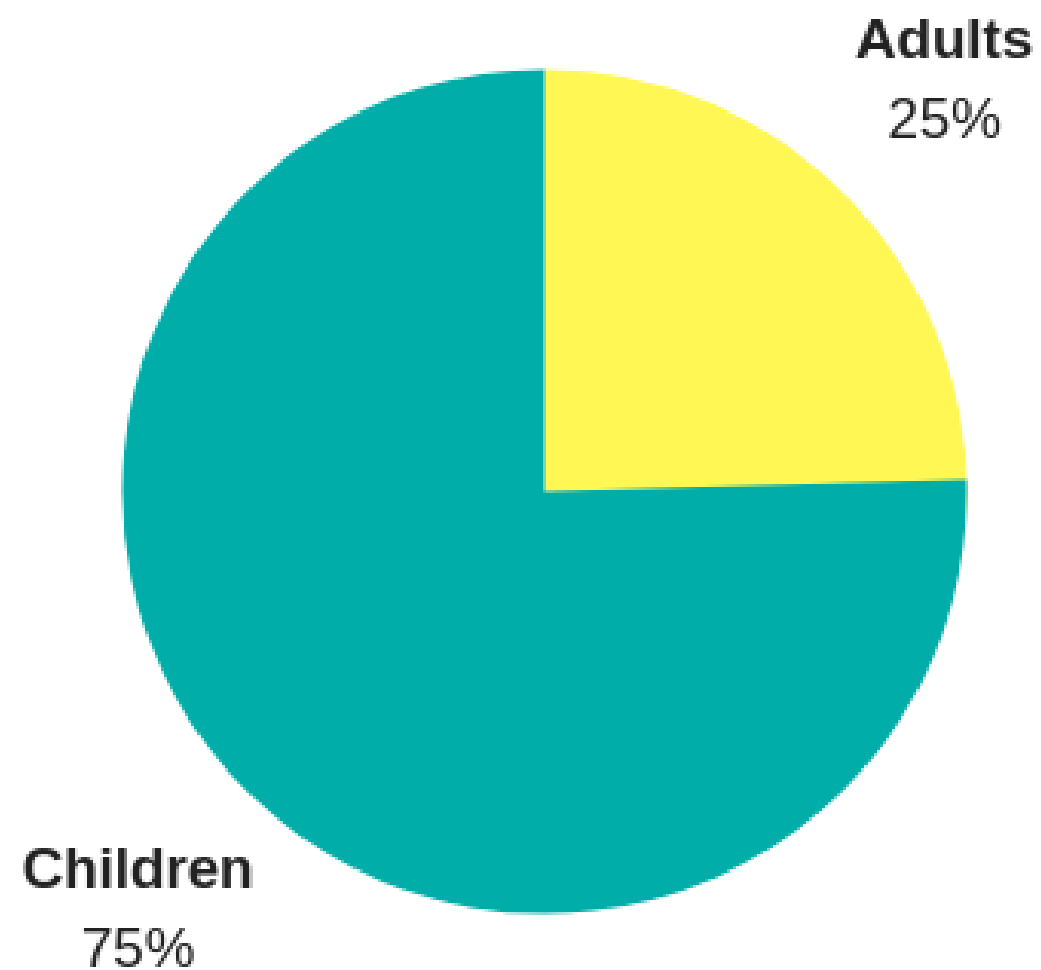
The Chilling Effect in Action

Firsthand account from WIC clinic...

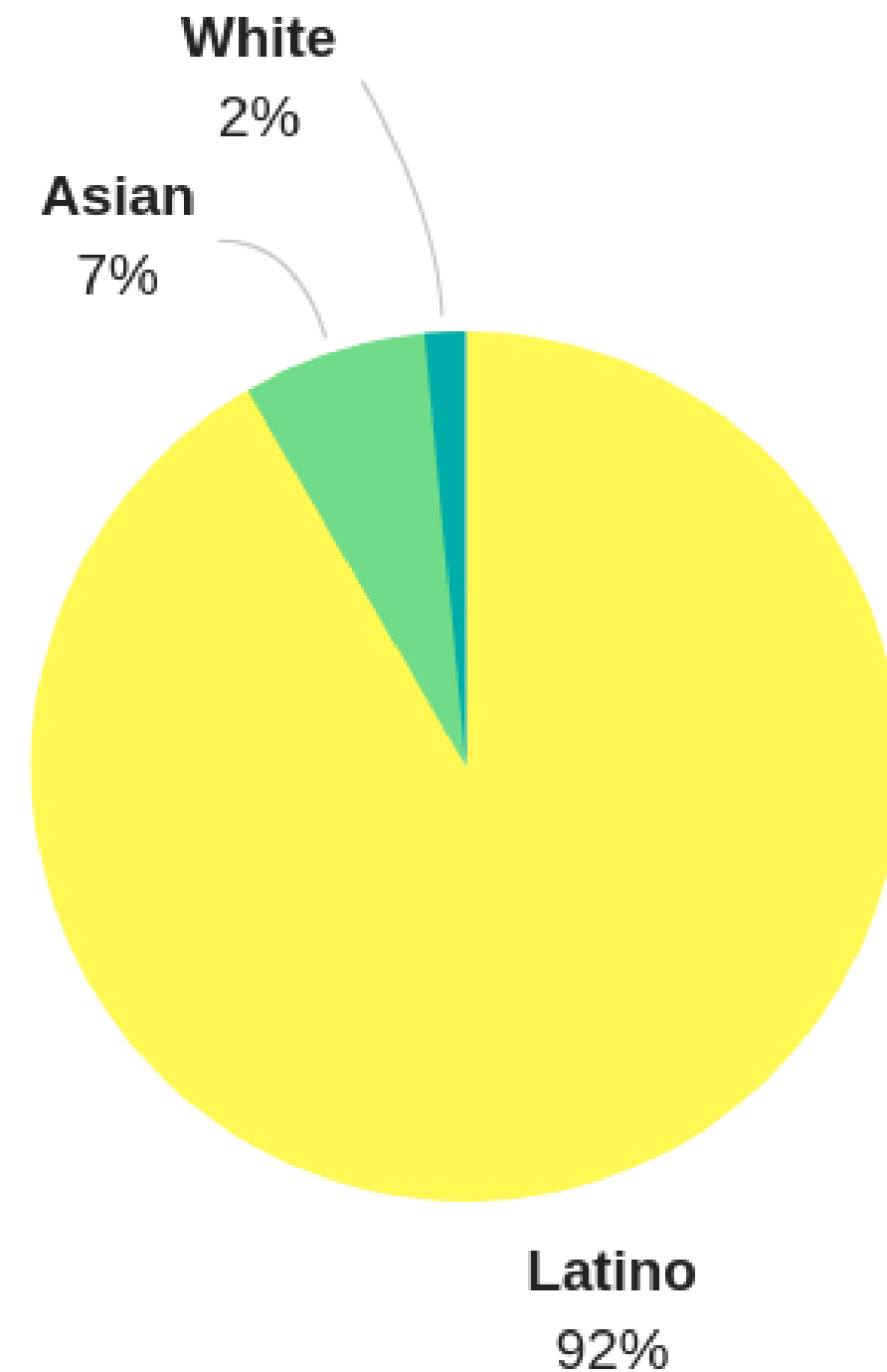
A client came in and identified as a DACA recipient. She was unable to renew her permit, and she did not want any government program to link back to her. Even though clinic staff advised her that WIC does not collect immigration status and does not share information with immigration authorities, she was advised by other members of her community not to accept any assistance from federal programs. She said she was very sorry and returned her Symphony breast pump.

Chilling Effect Population

Who might disenroll from CalFresh if Trump's public charge rule is enacted?



Total chilling effect population = 860,000



Ninez Ponce, Laurel Lucia and Tia Shimada. (2018). *How Proposed Changes to the 'Public Charge' Rule Will Affect Health, Hunger and the Economy in California*. The UCLA Center for Health Policy Research.

Up to **301,000 people** could disenroll from CalFresh if Trump's public charge rule is enacted



75% are children
and
100% are eligible to
receive CalFresh with no
immigration consequences,
but fear and confusion will
drive disenrollment.

Total Chilling Effect
Population = **860,000**

 = **20,000 People**

Timeline



October 10th

Notice of proposed rulemaking (NRPM) posted for public comment

October 10th - December 10th

Opportunity for public comment (60 days)

Agency must read and respond to comments

Final rule is published → takes effect 60 days later

Next Steps...

Blocking the proposed changes from taking effect

- It will take months for DHS to go through the comments and issue a final rule.
- Litigation could delay or potentially stop implementation.
- Should a Democrat win the White House in 2020, the rule could be reversed, though that process would take time.



Next Steps...

Combating the Chilling Effect

- Public charge rules have not changed for immigrants living in the U.S.
- There is no advantage to stopping your benefits right now.
- None of these rules apply to refugees, asylees, and other protected groups.

Urge county admin to make these points clear.

***Some people could be affected by current law.**

- Green Card holders MIGHT have a problem if they leave the U.S. for more than 6 months
- Use of benefits could prevent you from sponsoring a relative who is abroad.

Next Steps...

Building a Pro-immigrant Policy Agenda

- Pursue state and local policy change.
- Continue to build coalitions across movements.
- Elevate immigrant voices through storytelling and meaningful inclusion in the work.



FOOD for **ALL**



Resources



www.protectingimmigrantfamilies.org

Sign up for our Action Alerts!
cfpa.net/subscribe

Questions?

Email Gabby: gabby@cfpa.net

DISCUSSION

- What kind of issues are you seeing in your communities?
- Are there any barriers we haven't addressed?
- What has your organization done to address the issues?

FOOD FOR ALL WORKGROUP



What is the Food for All Workgroup?
How did it get started?
What are its goals?

DISCUSSION

If immigrant exclusions were removed from CalFresh, would more people participate?

- What other barriers would have to be addressed in order for this policy to be successful?
- What stakeholders should we talk to?
- How can we better engage you in the policy process?

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Q&A