



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

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PROPOSED RESOLUTION

URGING PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP AND THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY TO MAINTAIN THE CURRENT INTERPRETATION OF THE PUBLIC CHARGE RULE AND OPPOSING ANY FEDERAL REGULATORY CHANGE THAT WOULD NEGATIVELY IMPACT IMMIGRANT FAMILIES

WHEREAS, Cook County is a “Fair and Equal County for Immigrants” as defined in 07-R-240; and

WHEREAS, on October 10, 2018 the Federal Register published a proposed rule developed by the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) that would drastically change the “public charge” test for individuals seeking admission to or legal permanent residency in the United States; and

WHEREAS, “public charge” currently refers to a person who is likely to become “primarily dependent” on government services and as such may be barred from entering or gaining lawful status in the United States or; and

WHEREAS, at present, public charge is limited to being a direct recipient of cash assistance including General Assistance (GA), the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, or Supplemental Security Income (SSI), or institutionalized long-term care at the government’s expense; and

WHEREAS, the proposed rule changes public charge to consider *likely* use of or receipt of non-cash assistance including non-emergency Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the low-income prescription drug subsidy for Medicare Part D, and certain federal housing benefit programs; and

WHEREAS, the proposed rule would also require DHS to consider the person’s age; medical condition; family status; household assets, resources, and financial status; and education and skills in determining whether that person is likely to become a public charge; and

WHEREAS, children, older adults, individuals with limited education and/or limited English proficiency, and those with household income less than 250% of the federal poverty level will face more difficulty getting approval to enter the United States or gain lawful status; and

WHEREAS, over half a million residents of Cook County - more than one tenth of the population - are non-citizens; and

WHEREAS, over 94,000 children in Illinois live in a household with at least one non-citizen receiving SNAP and those households make up over 10% of Cook County households receiving SNAP; and

WHEREAS, the promulgation of the proposed rule may result in a significant “chilling effect” that will lead to many eligible households dis-enrolling from or forgoing enrollment into benefits that help address basic human needs such as health care, food/nutrition, and housing; and

WHEREAS, DHS’s proposed rule outlines possible impacts on those otherwise eligible for benefits, including “worse health outcomes, including increased prevalence of obesity and malnutrition, especially for pregnant or breastfeeding women, infants, or children, and reduced prescription adherence”; and

WHEREAS, the proposed rule further outlines a direct impact on health systems with “increased use of emergency

rooms and emergent care as a method of primary health care due to delayed treatment”; “increased prevalence of communicable diseases, including members of the US citizen population who are not vaccinated”; “increases in uncompensated care”; and

WHEREAS, in addition to public health, the proposed rule would impact overall social mobility as it would create “increased rates of poverty and housing instability”; and “reduced productivity and educational attainment.”; and

WHEREAS, an estimated \$92 million annually is estimated to be lost by Cook County residents if at least a quarter of households with at least one immigrant who receive these benefits were to withdraw from or forgo enrollment; and

WHEREAS, promulgation of the proposed public charge rule would exacerbate heightened fear and anxiety in the immigrant community and force many Cook County residents to make difficult decisions about accessing basic services such as health care and nutrition assistance programs; and

WHEREAS, more than 50,000 households in Cook County include at least one immigrant enrolled in Medicaid; and

WHEREAS, the loss of Medicaid for Cook County residents could result in significant increases in uncompensated care and decreased patient revenue from Medicaid reimbursement for Cook County Health and Hospitals System and other hospital and healthcare providers in Cook County; and

WHEREAS, the Cook County Board of Commissioners opposes any proposed change to the public charge rule which could negatively impact residents in Cook County.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Cook County Board of Commissioners opposes any federal regulatory change that would negatively impact immigrant families and urges President Donald Trump and the Department of Homeland Security to immediately withdraw the proposed public charge rule; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Cook County State’s Attorney send a response to the Federal Register, under the rule making powers of the federal rules, indicating to the Department of Homeland Security how strongly we are opposed to the proposed public charge rule; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Secretary to the Board of Commissioners transmit a suitable copy of this Resolution to the President of the United States, the Secretary of the United States Department of Homeland Security and the members of the Illinois Congressional Delegation.