

# “PUBLIC CHARGE”: A GUIDE FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS TO EXPRESS YOUR OPINION

## **WHAT IS PUBLIC CHARGE?**

On October 10, the Trump administration announced a proposed regulation that would dramatically reduce the number of immigrant families able to gain legal status in the United States. This regulation would broaden the “public charge” test and force immigrant families to choose between permanent legal status and their ability to access basic needs like healthy food, safe housing, and health care.

Now is the time to express your opinion about this rule change. Until December 10th, the administration is accepting public comments about the proposal regulation. Find out how to submit your comment below.

## **BACKGROUND ON PUBLIC CHARGE**

Since 1882, U.S. law has said that anyone who is likely to become a “public charge” is not allowed to immigrate to the U.S. The Trump Administration is proposing to change the meaning of the words “public charge” so that it will be more difficult for many immigrants to stay in the U.S. and become permanent residents.

<b>Current Definition of “Public Charge”</b>	<b>Proposed New Definition of “Public Charge”</b>
<p>Someone who relies primarily on the government for their living support, meaning anyone who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Receives monthly cash benefits from the government (Supplemental Security Income or SSI, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or TANF, or state or local welfare or “General Assistance” programs such as CalWORKs in California)</li> <li>▶ Lives in a government institution</li> </ul>	<p>The Trump Administration is proposing to make the definition of “public charge” much broader, to include the categories above PLUS anyone who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Receives “Food Stamps” to help buy groceries (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP)</li> <li>▶ Receives health insurance through Medicaid (called Medi-Cal in California)</li> <li>▶ Receives prescription drugs insurance through Medicare Part D</li> <li>▶ Lives in Public Housing or pays rent with Section 8 housing vouchers</li> <li>▶ Suffers from a serious health problem such as cancer</li> <li>▶ Does not have private health insurance</li> <li>▶ Does not have a stable job</li> <li>▶ Earns less than 125% of federal poverty level (\$31,375 for a family of four)</li> <li>▶ Does not have a high credit score</li> <li>▶ Lives in a household with many people</li> <li>▶ Does not speak English</li> <li>▶ Does not have a high school degree</li> <li>▶ Is under the age of 18</li> <li>▶ Is over the age of 61</li> </ul>

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## **VOICE YOUR OPINION, SUBMIT A COMMENT**

People across the country are getting involved and voicing their opinions regarding this policy. You also have an opportunity to let your voice be heard!

One of the best ways to get involved and voice your opinion is by **SUBMITTING A COMMENT ON THE PROPOSED REGULATION.**

Federal law requires that the government read and consider *EVERY* unique comment before issuing a final rule. These comments can and often do shape the Administration’s decisions.

**Take a few minutes now** to post a public comment regarding the proposed changes to public charge. You can do so by using the easy-to-use comment tool with draft language and tips (pictured on the right) at [www.protectingimmigrantfamilies.org](http://www.protectingimmigrantfamilies.org)

## **ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO GET INVOLVED**

Once you have submitted a comment, encourage others to do the same! Here are some ideas:

### **Host a Comment Party:**

Civic engagement is a reason to party! Invite others to come to a comment party and discussing public policy issues & submit a comment!

### **Table in Your College Campus:**

Knowledge is power! Talk to your campus about setting up a table on your college campus; the process is easy and free. Meet new people, discuss public policy issues and help people submit their comments right on the spot.

### **Write in Your School Newspaper:**

Use articles & editorials to be informative and expressive!

### **Share this on Social Media:**

Use your social media platform to facilitate civic engagement.

## **ABOUT IMMIGRANTS RISING**

Founded in 2006, **Immigrants Rising** transforms individuals and fuels broader changes. With resources and support, undocumented young people are able to get an education, pursue careers, and build a brighter future for themselves and their community. For more information, visit us online at [www.immigrantsrising.org](http://www.immigrantsrising.org).

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