

# HOW TO IMPACT “PUBLIC CHARGE”: A 10 MINUTE GUIDE FOR LAW STUDENTS

## WHAT IS PUBLIC CHARGE?

On October 10th, 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 proposed regulation. The government has an obligation to respond to each unique comment, so every comment could slow down or even change what the final outcome of the public charge test is. Find out below how to submit your comment. Estimated time required: 10 minutes.

## 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 on the left 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 / over the age of 61</li> </ul>

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## **TAKE 10 MINUTES, 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!

Federal law requires that the government read and consider *EVERY* unique comment before issuing a final rule. Including your personal story, reasoning and knowledge of why these changes are impactful will make it more likely that the reviewing agency will read and respond to your comment.

Remember, the comments you submit can and often do shape the Administration’s decisions. Use the easy-to-use comment tool with draft language and tips 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:

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

Use your social media platform (e.g. linkedin, law school group pages) to encourage your family and friends to take 10 minutes to submit a public comment!

### **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 on Your Law School:**

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 Law Review/Law School Blogs:**

Use articles & editorials to be informative and expressive!

## **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).

This guide was created by **Samuel Park**, Immigrants Rising’s Legal Policy Associate.