



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
Office of the Governor

April 24, 2018

The Honorable Mick Mulvaney, Director  
Office of Management and Budget  
725 17<sup>th</sup> Street NW  
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Director Mulvaney:

On behalf of the State of Washington, I write to express my grave concerns regarding proposed changes to the Inadmissibility and Deportability on Public Charge Grounds rules (RIN 1615-AA22), currently under review by your office.

These troubling changes will have a significant economic and administrative impact in Washington State. The proposal is clearly intended to deny basic supports like food, health care, and housing to lawfully present immigrants and their families — including millions of children and U.S. citizens — who pay taxes, work, go to school and contribute to our country's economy. **Prior to publication of this rule, I respectfully request that OMB meet with my staff to discuss the harmful effects it would have on the people, industries and economy of my state.**

Among my chief concerns is your agency's indication that the proposal is not economically significant. I assure you there would be a substantial financial impact on Washington and many, if not all, other states.

As you know, the proposal disrupts settled law by making unprecedented changes to longstanding immigration policies that determine how an individual's application to extend or change their immigration status is processed. It would allow the federal government to discriminate against individuals who have used, or whose families have used, public assistance programs including the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Affordable Care Act (ACA) premium tax credits, the Women, Infant and Children (WIC) nutrition program, Section 8 housing vouchers, means-tested energy benefits, and even refundable tax credits.

Given the broad-based fear and confusion this proposal will spur, it is inconceivable that the impact on federal programs would not exceed the \$100 million threshold for an economically significant rule. According to one estimate, Medicaid and CHIP provide health coverage to more than 8 million children who are U.S. citizens and have at least one immigrant parent — including 240,000 in Washington State alone.<sup>1</sup> If just 30,000 of these children decline health care because of the proposal, the impact would easily exceed the threshold for an economically significant rule, before even taking into account the effects in SNAP, the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), the child tax credit, WIC and other programs.

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<sup>1</sup> Kaiser Family Foundation, "Nearly 20 Million Children Live in Immigrant Families that Could Be Affected by Evolving Immigration Policies," April 18, 2018.



These programs are supported in part by the billions of dollars in taxes paid by immigrant families, and they play a critical role in helping to keep children and their families from falling deep into poverty. By significantly expanding the scope and reach of “public charge” rules, our state expects many eligible individuals to stop using their benefits or not apply for benefits at all. This will undoubtedly lead to people across the U.S. going hungry, not accessing needed medical care, losing economic self-sufficiency, and even becoming homeless. This proposal will increase downstream costs on taxpayers, do irreparable harm to the productivity of our economy, and compromise the health and safety of our communities. For example, strong evidence shows:

- Lack of prenatal care for pregnant women leads to an increased number of high-risk labor and deliveries and poor birth and maternal health outcomes including death.
- Lack of timely and regular health screenings for children can lead to lower detection of developmental delays, lower rates of vaccinations, poorer oral health, and many other outcomes that negatively impact a child’s ability to learn and grow.
- Delays or failure to seek needed medical care drives up avoidable emergency room costs, increases costly inpatient hospital stays, increases uncompensated care costs, and delays early diagnosis and treatment of serious medical conditions.
- Increased food insecurity, especially among children losing WIC and SNAP benefits, leads to negative health outcomes including anemia, diabetes, heart disease, and depression, as well as increased need for medical care.
- Lack of basic food for children has consequences not only for long-term health outcomes but also social, emotional, and cognitive development.
- Lack of home energy assistance leads to colder and damper conditions in families’ homes, increasing the risk of chronic bronchitis and other respiratory illnesses.
- Increased homelessness has profound and lasting impacts on children and their families, often leading to severe emotional distress, mental illness, chronic health conditions, and impairments in learning, behavior, and physical and mental well-being.

These serious consequences not only affect the health and well-being of Washington’s children and families but also create a significant economic burden on the state. Specifically, these changes will adversely affect our state and local government agencies charged with administering these programs and serving our communities, including schools and universities, child welfare agencies, public housing authorities, public health systems and hospitals.

Washington is home to 455,000 children who are U.S. citizens and have at least one immigrant parent. Our state is deeply concerned that this rule directly threatens their access to basic food, health care, and housing, and we would appreciate the opportunity to discuss it with you before it is proposed.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Very truly yours,



Jay Inslee  
Governor