



Asian Americans Advancing Justice Condemns Public Charge Rule Changes

Norcross, GA, August 13, 2019 — Today, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security released a final rule making sweeping changes to the “public charge” test that will disproportionately block immigrants of color from obtaining green cards, inhibit immigrant workers and foreign students from extending or changing their visas, and undermine the ability of green card holders to re-enter the U.S. if they have spent more than 6 months abroad. The new rule dramatically expands the public charge ground of exclusion from a limited inquiry into whether an immigrant relies on the government for cash assistance or institutional care to an extraordinarily broad test that will exclude anyone who may use, at any time in the future, one of the supplemental benefits that millions of working Americans rely upon, such as non-emergency Medicaid, food stamps, and subsidized housing.

The new rule will impose an unprecedented test to assess future benefits use that will penalize immigrant children, immigrant seniors, and all immigrants who are low-income, limited English proficient, and lack access to private health insurance, educational opportunities, and credit. According to a report by Migration Policy Institute, more than 941,000 recent green card holders, including 300,000 from Asian countries, would likely have been excluded if the rule had already been in effect when they applied.

Despite the widespread outcry that led to over 260,000 public comments in the months following the proposed rule, the changes to the public charge criteria will go into effect 60 days after formal publication scheduled for tomorrow.

Asian Americans Advancing Justice, an affiliation of five civil rights organizations, issues the following statement:

“We strongly condemn the Trump administration’s changes to the public charge rule. This racist policy seeks to dramatically undermine the family-based immigration system that has been the backbone of our country and instead prioritizes wealthy immigrants. The public charge rule change continues the administration’s inhumane assault on immigrant families by increasing denials of green card applicants.

Public benefits are essential to helping families thrive. Weighing the likelihood of future benefit use, along with discriminatory factors such as English language proficiency and the age of an aspiring citizen, is unjust. The administration has intentionally sought to scare immigrants and their families from using public benefits. Since the rule change was proposed at the end of 2018, over 13% of immigrant adults are reported to have dropped their use of public benefits out of fear of risking their future green card status. With the rules now final, the effect will be even more devastating for our communities.

As a nation, we should prioritize accessible pathways to residency and eventually citizenship, reuniting families, and helping them succeed. Immigrant families deserve the right to reunite with their loved ones and use programs to ensure they are healthy, safe, and thriving. We call on the administration to cease their attack on immigrants and communities of color.”

About Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Atlanta

Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Atlanta (formerly Asian American Legal Advocacy Center or AALAC) is the

first non-profit law center dedicated to Asian immigrants and refugees (“Asian Americans”) in the Southeast.

Our goal is to engage, educate and empower under-represented Asian Americans to greater civic participation.

We are one of five independent organizations that make up the national Asian Americans Advancing Justice. Together with our affiliates in Chicago, DC, Los Angeles and San Francisco, we bring more than 100 years of collective experience in addressing the civil rights issues faced by Asian Americans and other vulnerable and underserved communities. Visit www.advancingjustice-atlanta.org.