

NATIONAL LAW CENTER ON HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY

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Maria Foscarinis: Public Charge Rule Will Destabilize Immigrant Families

(September 25, 2018, Washington, DC) – **Maria Foscarinis, executive director of the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty**, issued the following statement in response to the proposed public charge rule:

Over the weekend, [the Trump Administration announced a rule](#) that will prevent immigrant families from pursuing permanent legal residency if they or someone in their household legally uses assistance through certain federal programs.

Let us be clear: human rights and human needs do not disappear based on immigration status. Everyone needs a safe, secure place to live, nutritious food, and access to adequate health care. Keeping poor families out of housing and denying them food will only force them into deeper poverty and potential homelessness. This hurts them, their children and our communities.

This rule is not intended to motivate. It is intended to scare immigrant families.

Immigrants who have come to America to make a better life for themselves do not deserve to be treated as inferior. A family who has fallen on hard times needs support, regardless of where they were born or what they look like.

We are concerned about the impact of the rule itself, as well as the chilling effect it will have even for assistance that is in theory “exempted.” Poor immigrant families don’t necessarily read the Federal Register and--especially given the Administration’s overall hostility to immigrants--will likely assume they should not even try to seek help or even access to basic resources like school for their children.

The impact of this unjust rule will go beyond what is in ink. Passing this policy is likely to discourage immigrant families from pursuing benefits that they are still entitled to out of fear of retribution. Among other critical issues, the Law Center focuses on protecting the rights of homeless children under the McKinney-Vento Act, a right to education regardless of housing status. [Nearly one in four children in America has at least one immigrant parent](#). Children of immigrant families, some of who are American citizens, deserve access to an education and transportation to school.

This proposed public charge rule will make the children of our country poorer, sicker, and hungrier.

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[The National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty](#) (the Law Center) is the only national organization dedicated solely to using the power of the law to prevent and end homelessness. With the support of a large network of pro bono lawyers, we address the immediate and long-term needs of people who are homeless or at risk through outreach and training, advocacy, impact litigation, and public education.