

Protecting Immigrant Families, Advancing Our Future

The Trump Administration has targeted immigrant families – many of whom include U.S. citizens – while cutting federal programs that safeguard the health care, nutrition, housing, and economic security of low-income families. The Administration and its congressional backers may soon combine these attacks, using myths about immigrants' use of services to restrict family-based immigration and deny low-income families access to programs and services essential to their health, nutrition, and well-being.

Emerging threats

A draft executive order leaked from the White House outlines plans to dramatically curtail lawful immigration. Current policy authorizes a bar to entry if a prospective immigrant is likely to become dependent on cash "welfare" or long-term care. But current policy does not bar admission based on an immigrant's likely eligibility for non-cash supports – like Medicaid and food stamps – that help so many working families climb the economic ladder.

The leaked executive order could include these and other vital programs as bars to entry or obtaining a green card, effectively making poverty a barrier to lawful immigration. And by threatening green card holders with deportation if their families seek non-cash benefits, it would force immigrant families to choose between staying together and meeting basic needs. Current law already bans immigrants' receipt of welfare, Medicaid, and other benefits for at least five years and restricts entry to immigrants deemed likely to depend on government assistance.

Senators Cotton and Perdue have also introduced legislation to limit family-based immigration, implement a new points-based system, and create new barriers to naturalization based on public benefit use. Other congressional proposals, like legislation that would limit some immigrant parents from claiming the Child Tax Credit, also threaten immigrant families. Policies such as these would set an alarming precedent and put millions of families at risk.

These impending threats, combined with the Trump Administration's ramped up immigration enforcement efforts targeting for deportation every person living in the U.S. without authorization (as well as many with authorization), have already deterred immigrants from seeking health, nutrition and other critical programs. Reports from across the country indicate immigrants and their family members are missing medical appointments and forgoing services for which they are eligible.

Protecting Immigrant Families, Advancing Our Future Campaign

A new campaign, Protecting Immigrant Families, Advancing Our Future, brings leading advocates together, not only to defend against these threats, but also to lay the foundation for a more productive national dialogue about our immigrant tradition and our country's future.

Vision: A nation where all are truly equal, immigration is recognized as a strength, and no one in America is denied the essentials of life because of where they were born.

Purpose: Unite to protect and defend access to health care, nutrition programs, public services, and economic supports for immigrants and their families at the local, state, and federal level.

Work of the campaign

- Building a network of state, local, and national organizations that brings together the various sectors potentially impacted by these threats and working together to align, coordinate, strategize, and take action
- Offering united public opposition to policy changes that would use poverty as a weapon against immigrants and use immigration status as a weapon against the poor
- Advocating for public policy that includes immigrants in the United States' fundamental promise of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness
- Researching the impact of public policy threats and the best way to explain those threats to policymakers and the broader public
- Communicating with the public about a future built together by those whose families have been in the United States for generations and those who come today

Campaign member organizations

The campaign is co-chaired by the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) and the National Immigration Law Center (NILC) and brings together leading advocates for immigrants, children, education, health, anti-hunger and anti-poverty groups, and faith leaders, including:

- American Academy of Pediatrics
- American Federation of Teachers, Nurses and Health Professionals
- Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum
- Asian Health Services (CA)
- Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations
- California Immigrant Policy Center
- CASA
- Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
- Center for American Progress
- Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
- Community Catalyst
- Dignity Health
- First Focus
- Food Research & Action Center
- Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
- Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
- Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition
- National Education Association
- National Health Law Program
- National Immigration Law Center
- National WIC Association
- NETWORK Lobby
- New York Immigration Coalition
- UnidosUS