



SISTERS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD  
**NATIONAL ADVOCACY CENTER**  
*Rise Up AND Act for Justice*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 13, 2019

## **LEGAL Immigrants may be Deported if They Make LEGAL Use of Public Benefits**

Yesterday, the Department of Homeland Security released its final rule that will change the long-standing definition and understanding of what it means for a LEGAL immigrant to legally accept federal public assistance, such as food stamps, housing assistance, Medicaid and more.

Historically, only immigrants who substantially relied on public assistance were exempt from receiving a green card or becoming a U.S. citizen. Now, the Trump Administration is expanding the definition to include any immigrant who uses any public assistance. Legal immigrants are likely to lose their green card status and have their citizenship applications rejected if they accept any public assistance for any length of time.

This immoral rule also will have dangerous consequences to U.S. citizens. Nearly 25 percent of children in the United States have at least one immigrant parent and 90 percent of these children are U.S. citizens; therefore, we are putting their lives at risk by forcing their parents – LEGAL immigrants – to abstain from public assistance.

Just as harmful is the Administration's decision to apply onerous public charge restrictions on people abroad seeking to immigrate to the United States.

"Traditionally, there has been a standard of self-sufficiency to arrive on our shores, but one that welcomes those who may need some support or acknowledges that at some points in our lives, we temporarily may need some assistance. Now however, only the wealthy or the educated will be welcome in President Trump's America," said Couch.

"This nation has great wealth and opportunity. We have the capacity to improve people's circumstances which in turn brings greater benefits to the United States. The United States should have no wealth or education test. Think of the Americans who would have been barred at the door if this public charge test had been administered in the past.

"The Trump Administration's final rule to subject LEGAL immigrants to possible deportation if they make LEGAL use of public benefits runs contrary to our Christian faith and to our American history. It marks a radical shift from our nation's history of family immigration and extending welcome to people seeking to build a better life. This targets not just the legal resident but also the legal resident's family, including U.S. citizens. This drastic and immoral rule clearly is a push against all immigration and against all immigrants," said Couch.

*[The National Advocacy Center](#) educates and advocates on social justice issues for the transformation of society to the benefit of all people reflecting the spirituality, history and mission of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd. NAC advocates at the Federal level for people living in poverty, immigrants, survivors of human trafficking, survivors of domestic abuse, and other vulnerable populations.*

*The Sisters of the Good Shepherd was founded in France in 1835 and are in over 70 countries on 5 continents and have had a presence in the United States for over 175 years. With a presence in 22 states and 1 U. S. Territory, the Sisters and their Lay Mission Partners have dedicated themselves to serving girls, women and families who experience poverty, exploitation, vulnerability and marginalization.*

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