

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 1, 2018

The Honorable Kirstjen Nielsen
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Nielsen:

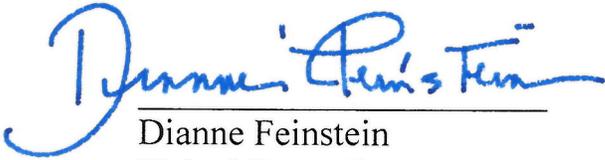
We write today to express our grave concern about the new immigration rule proposed by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). As the Minority Leader and Ranking Members of committees with jurisdiction over the programs that this rule would undermine, we ask that you rescind the proposal.

The DHS rule would expand the definition of “public charge” for immigration purposes and therefore prevent permanent legal residency for immigrants. In particular, the proposed definition includes use of non-cash essential programs such as food assistance or essential health coverage provided through Medicaid. The proposed “public charge” definition places an impossible choice before immigrant families: if a migrant child falls ill, he may lose eligibility for a green card, and if a parent runs out of money to feed their family, the parent will become ineligible as well. This proposed rule will cause tremendous harm to the health and well-being of thousands of children, citizen and immigrant alike.

When Congress expanded the definition of “public charge” in 1996, it rejected a definition of “public charge” that would have included food and health care assistance. Meanwhile, as documented by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), children who receive essential preventive care and services through Medicaid and CHIP coverage have better health and educational outcomes later in life, as compared to eligible children who do not receive such coverage. These children are also more likely to receive critical preventive care when their parents receive coverage under Medicaid. Expanding the definition of “public charge” would therefore both ignore the legislative intent and undermine critical health care programs for children and their families.

To preserve critical programs for children, we ask that you rescind the proposed rule.

Sincerely,



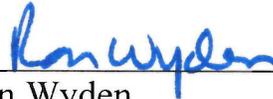
Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator