



HUMAN SERVICES
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Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham Issues Statement on Trump Administration's Public Charge Rule

SANTA FE – Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham this week sharply criticized the Trump administration’s adoption of a “public charge” rule that targets vulnerable immigrant families who use public benefits, potentially disqualifying them from obtaining or renewing a green card or visa.

The governor said her administration will explore mechanisms state agencies can employ to protect families, support enrollment of family members who are not impacted by the rule and conduct outreach and education to communities and local government agencies. The rule is scheduled to take effect Oct. 15.

“This is a heinous and ugly policy from a federal government that has made heinous and ugly treatment of communities of color their calling card,” Gov. Lujan Grisham said. “Legal immigrants have sacrificed to be here. They are nurses, primary care physicians, educators, service workers, public safety officers, first responders. They are American. But the Trump administration, through this rule change, has once again repudiated core American values, and I’m afraid it won’t be the last time. They have made it clear they want no immigrants of any kind. They are spitefully targeting vulnerable American families – immigrants who are here legally; immigrants who have gone through the intensely difficult process of becoming legal citizens of this nation because they believe in the ideals of this nation – and will force them off life-saving medicine and basic food assistance. It’s unconscionable and cruel. We must explore every available avenue for fighting this rule.”

“The public charge rule forces poor immigrant families to make difficult choices: either accept lifesaving medical and needed food assistance or forgo vital services to keep their family together.” said David R. Scrase, M.D. cabinet secretary for New Mexico Human Services Department. “This bitter rule will dramatically widen health disparities and we are deeply concerned about young vulnerable New Mexican children who may be deprived of benefits for which they are fully eligible.”

The prospective impact is far-reaching in New Mexico – nearly one in 10 New Mexicans is an immigrant, and one in nine have immigrant parents. More than 77,000 U.S. citizen children in New Mexico live with at least one immigrant parent and are in a family that receives basic food assistance. A Manatt Health analysis estimates that, across the country, as many as 26 million people and their families could be dissuaded from using public benefits under the proposed rule change.

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