



NY pols rip Trump over ‘public charge’ rule

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New York leaders this week blasted the Trump administration after it published the final version of a rule that would make it easier for the federal government to deny green cards to legal immigrants considered likely to use public benefits like food stamps.

The new “public charge” rule is expected to significantly reduce the number of low-income individuals who can become legal immigrants. Critics say it is racist and classist.

“This inhumane policy change is a direct threat to undercut legal migration of people of color by the Trump administration,” Make the Road New York Co-executive Director Javier Valdés said in a prepared statement.

According to research released last year by the Cato Institute, native-born Americans are more likely to use welfare benefits than immigrants.

State Attorney General Letitia James said she intends to sue to overturn the rule, calling it “egregious.”

Many other New York political leaders were highly critical.

“The President is launching a direct assault on our immigrant brothers and sisters,” Mayor de Blasio said in a prepared statement. “The America we know was built by hardworking dreamers from all over the world. That’s the America we’re fighting to protect. To our immigrant New Yorkers: we stand with you now and always. To our president: we’ll see you in court.”

Announcing the new policy, the Trump administration said it would help make immigrants more self-sufficient and less reliant on public assistance.

“Self-reliance, industriousness, and perseverance laid the foundation of our nation and have defined generations of hardworking immigrants seeking opportunity in the United States ever since,” U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Acting Director Ken Cuccinelli said in his own statement. “Through the enforcement of the public charge inadmissibility law, we will promote these long-standing ideals and immigrant success.”

The rule, which would take effect 60 days after its official release on Wednesday, does not apply to refugees or individuals receiving asylum.

“If you are worried or have questions about how ‘public charge’ could impact you or your loved ones, you can call ActionNYC at 311 or 1-800-354-0365 and say ‘public charge’ to access city-funded, trusted legal advice,” Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs Commissioner Bitta Mostofi

said in her own statement. “The City is here to help you make the right decision for you and your family.”

Receiving care at a NYC Health + Hospitals facility will not result in an individual being identified to the federal government as a public charge, the de Blasio administration said Monday. Nor will the usage of NYC Care, the city’s new healthcare program for people without insurance.

NYC Health + Hospitals is telling patients with questions to call (212) 659-6188 to get confidential, no-cost legal services from the New York Legal Assistance Group’s LegalHealth division.

Some social programs, like Medicaid for Pregnant Women and Emergency Medicaid, will not be public charge triggers at all.

In a statement, Rep. Grace Meng (D-Flushing) said she had called on Trump over the past year to not implement the new policy. “Hard working immigrants enrich our communities and contribute to our economy and nation,” she said. “We cannot allow them to be kicked to the curb by this President.”

On Twitter, Rep. Nydia Velazquez (D-Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens) said the rule is President Trump’s “latest attack on legal immigrants & undermines our nation’s immigrant heritage.” She is co-sponsoring legislation crafted to stop the new “public charge” proposal.