



A Passionate Voice for Compassionate Care

May 17, 2023

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA), the national leadership organization representing the largest group of nonprofit health care providers in the nation with more than 2,200 Catholic health care systems, hospitals, long-term care facilities, clinics, service providers and organizations, **I urge you to vote against S.J. Res. 18**, “A joint resolution disapproving of the rule submitted by the Department of Homeland Security relating to Public Charge Ground of Inadmissibility” being considered on the floor today.

CHA and our members have long supported access to health care for all immigrants. As a Catholic ministry, CHA shares this commitment to helping those who have come to the United States from other countries. Catholic health care organizations serve immigrants, including refugees and victims of human trafficking, in their clinics, facilities and emergency rooms. The public charge regulation, which was finalized last year, is a vital protection for legal immigrant children and families, as well as communities and our hospitals.

We have seen the challenges that the 2019 rule, issued in the last Administration, had on immigrant communities. This policy made it harder for legal immigrants to gain permanent residency if they had Medicaid coverage for 12 months within a three-year period or received federal nutrition or public housing benefits. Research has shown that these policies had a “chilling effect” on immigrants and their families — with families disenrolling from or failing to enroll in critical health, nutrition, and economic supports for which they were eligible. These effects were particularly challenging for mixed-status families. Reversing the current final rule will cause the ranks of the uninsured to grow, hospital costs to rise with added uncompensated care and public health to be adversely affected.

Instead, Congress should continue to work in a bipartisan way to increase access to health care as they have done these last two years. These policy changes benefited the country as the national uninsured rate continued to decline according to the National Center for Health Statistics released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) this week. We believe the current Senate Joint Resolution would impose added burdens on our nation’s health care system and would unduly prejudice low-income legal immigrants by hampering their ability to escape poverty and contribute to the common good of our society. These consequences directly contradict our government’s interest in protecting the health and well-being of the nation as well as the Catholic health ministry’s Gospel mandate and mission to care for the most vulnerable.

As Catholic health care providers, we are committed to reducing health disparities, promoting health equity and ensuring that everyone in our nation has access to affordable health care. We urge you to think of these important priorities and the vital contributions of immigrants to our country and vote no on S.J. Res. 18. We thank you for your leadership on behalf of all the communities we are privileged to serve.

Sincerely,


Sr. Mary Haddad, RSM
President and CEO