



A Passionate Voice for Compassionate Care

September 19, 2019

The Honorable Judy Chu
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Rep. Chu:

On behalf of the Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA), the national leadership organization of more than 2,200 Catholic health care systems, hospitals, long-term care facilities, sponsors, and related organizations, I am writing to express our support for your legislation, the No Federal Funds for Public Charge Act of 2019 (H.R. 3222).

As the Catholic health ministry, our mission and our ethical standards in health care are rooted in and inseparable from the Catholic Church's teachings about the dignity of each and every human person, created in the image of God. These values form the basis for our steadfast commitment both to the principle that every person in our nation should have access to quality, affordable health care and to ensuring that all persons, regardless of their immigration status, are treated justly and shown the dignity and respect they deserve. CHA has strongly opposed the Administration's proposal to alter the definition of "public charge" in determining changes to immigration status to include the use of Medicaid and other vital assistance programs. These programs have lifted up legal immigrants and their families for decades and helped them to become healthy, productive members of our society. Restricting access to these programs for legal immigrants and their families not only is harmful to their health and well-being, it also harms our nation as a whole by generating fear and distrust as well as increasing poverty and the rates of the uninsured.

H.R. 3222 provides that no federal funds may be used to carry out the now finalized Department of Homeland Security rule entitled "Inadmissibility on Public Charge Grounds." CHA's own analysis indicates that in the time since this rule was proposed many immigrant families may have foregone health insurance coverage out of fear of losing their immigration status, and that many more will choose not to enroll in coverage programs if this harmful rule is implemented. As the rate of uninsured in our nation rose last year for the first time in nearly a decade, any measures that will lead to further increases on the number of those without health coverage will only make things worse. This was highlighted by the recent report from the Congressional Budget Office showing that the rule's implementation would remove \$2.7 billion in direct spending over the 2020-2029 period, with most related to health care programs.

Thank you introducing this legislation, and please feel free to contact me or a member of our advocacy staff should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sr. Mary Haddad".

Sr. Mary Haddad, RSM
President and CEO