

The Interfaith Immigration Coalition will continue to add to this toolkit as new resources become available. Please check back often.

The public comment period is open from Oct. 10 to Dec. 10, 2018.

Public Charge Interfaith Advocacy Toolkit

Table of Contents

Introduction: Our Collective Call to Action	2
Interfaith Public Charge Strategy & How to Use this Toolkit	2
Backgrounder: What is Public Charge, Why Does This Matter, and How Will This Affect My Community?	3
Public Charge Flyers Link	5
How to Write and Submit a Public Comment	5
Interfaith Messaging on Public Charge	7
Faith Quotes to Guide Public Charge Messaging	8
Sample Social Media	9
Public Charge Graphics Link	9
Public Charge Op-ed Template	11
How to Organize an Interfaith Public Comment Event!	12
Sample Press Release for Public Comment Events	16
Tools for Organizers	16
• Public Charge Mini-Toolkit for Organizers	16
• Public Charge One-pager for Organizers	16
• Mobilizing Faith Communities to Protect Families Video - COMING SOON!	16
Other Ideas for Action	15
Resources	15

The Interfaith Immigration Coalition will continue to add to this toolkit as new resources become available. Please check back often.

The public comment period is open from Oct. 10 to Dec. 10, 2018.

Introduction: Our Collective Call to Action

The administration is proposing a new rule that would drastically reshape who we welcome as newcomers to our society. The rule would place a higher value on those who are affluent and challenge hard-working families in their efforts to remain together. In doing so, the administration will also put the health and well-being of families, including millions of children, at risk. As people of faith we are called to stand with our brothers and sisters and oppose this proposal, which would harm families, alter the face of our nation, and send a signal to immigrants that they are not welcome.

If the proposed rule is not defeated, hard-working families who are already struggling will be even more vulnerable to homelessness, illness, and malnutrition. Immigrant families will be put in the unimaginable position of being forced to choose between being together and accessing public benefits assistance. With one in four American children having at least one immigrant parent, this issue touches millions. Stripping families of their basic needs is not consistent with our shared values. As people of faith, we do not believe anyone should have to pick between hunger and disease and risk the deportation of a family member.

This interfaith advocacy toolkit will help organizations and communities respond to this massive threat by encouraging participation in the public comment period for the proposed public charge rule. Our best chance at defeating this rule is through lifting our voices in opposition. The strategy is for the interfaith community to formally register that opposition through submitting public comments. Our collective goal is to have 100,000 comments submitted during the 60-day window. Widespread participation in the public comment period is our opportunity to disrupt this rule and to stand for our collective belief that ***Families Belong Together.***

Interfaith Public Charge Strategy & How to Use This Toolkit

This toolkit contains: tools to educate yourself, your organization, and community about the proposed rule; a sample comment; and media and background resources. During the public comment period, we suggest that organizations use this toolkit to take the following steps:

- 1) find resources to educate yourself about the rule
- 2) share your opposition on social media
- 3) draft and submit a public comment**
- 4) and inspire and organize others to submit their own comments!

The Interfaith Immigration Coalition will continue to add to this toolkit as new resources become available. Please check back often.

The public comment period is open from Oct. 10 to Dec. 10, 2018.

Submitting a public comment is the best way for us to have an impact and organizational resources should be directed to drafting and submitting a comment. For organizations that have capacity to do more than a public comment during the 60-day window, which runs from Oct. 10 to Dec. 10, 2018, we've included some additional ideas for action at the end of the toolkit.

Backgrounder: What is Public Charge, Why Does This Matter, and How Will This Affect My Community?

What is the proposed rule on public charge?

The Department of Homeland Security has issued a proposed rule that would make it much more difficult for immigrants to apply for legal immigration status in the United States. The proposed rule dramatically expands the definition of what it means to be “a public charge,” or someone who the government determines could become a financial burden on society. Through the expansion of the definition of public charge, the proposed rule raises barriers to maintaining and obtaining legal immigration status, for example, being able to become a lawful permanent resident (green card holder).

Previously, the government restricted immigration applications on public charge grounds if it determined an immigrant would likely depend on public cash assistance or need long-term medical care in an institution at the government's expense. Under the proposed rule, the definition is so broad that it would deny immigrants legal status if they have used one of an expanded list of public benefits to survive. Also, many more elements would be considered as positive and negative factors in determining public charge, including the immigrant's: age, health, family status, financial status, education, skills, and employment history.

See resources at the end of the toolkit to learn more.

Why does this matter?

This proposed rule will not only hurt families, it could also lead to their separation by creating legal barriers and exposing them to deportation. As the interfaith community, we are called to stand with all families, for the common good of all, and to defend those made vulnerable by people in power. Guided by our interfaith teachings to welcome immigrants and uphold justice, we must educate ourselves on this issue and prepare our communities to face it head on.

An overbroad public charge definition will force immigrants to choose between vital public assistance that keeps their families healthy or the opportunity to obtain or maintain legal immigration status. Simply put, it's a choice between having a roof over your head and having your family torn apart.

The Interfaith Immigration Coalition will continue to add to this toolkit as new resources become available. Please check back often.

The public comment period is open from Oct. 10 to Dec. 10, 2018.

Ultimately, the proposed rule means that our society values affluence over hard work and family. Our faith teachings remind us to carry one another's burdens and live in harmony. We must succeed in one to achieve the other.

How will this affect my community?

These changes put people's lives and well-being at risk.

- Programs such as Medicaid and Medicare allow families facing financial challenges to obtain medical services. People who pull out of these programs will no longer have access to regular check-ups that could prevent serious illnesses. People with manageable chronic conditions (diabetes, high blood pressure, kidney disease, etc.) would no longer be able to see their doctors and get the treatment they need.
- Programs like Special Supplemental Nutrition Program (commonly known as food stamps) helps families put food on their table. Malnutrition can affect an adult's ability to focus and fight off infections. It can also damage a child's mental and physical development.
- Families who rely on housing assistance will be faced with the threat of homelessness under the proposed rule.

These changes hurt and destabilize families.

- Forcing people to choose between maintaining or obtaining legal immigration status or meeting their family's basic needs is callous and cruel.
- The proposed rule will cause stress and fear and may lead to more families withdrawing from needed benefits, whether subject to the rule or not.

It hurts our communities and local economies.

- Families affected by the rule will be forced to turn to local social services, such as food pantries and homeless shelters, to meet their basic needs. Families may avoid receiving medical attention for conditions until they are forced to go to an emergency room. This shift will be extremely costly and destabilize communities and strain organizations that serve the common good.
- The proposed rule keeps families from reaching their full potential by depriving them of basic necessities like food, housing, and medical care.

These changes undermine American values and the building blocks of our nation:

The Interfaith Immigration Coalition will continue to add to this toolkit as new resources become available. Please check back often.

The public comment period is open from Oct. 10 to Dec. 10, 2018.

- The proposed rule erodes what many consider to be the American dream, the opportunity to work hard to build a better life. The proposed rule seeks to shut the doors to the United States to all but the affluent.
- The proposed rule seeks to restrict and reduce immigrants in the United States. It completely ignores the contributions immigrants of all backgrounds have made to the nation's success.

What can I do now that the proposed rule is published?

- Submit a public comment! There is a 60-day comment period, from Oct. 10 to Dec. 10, 2018, when people and organizations may submit written comments to oppose the rule. The number and content of comments submitted during this period will impact whether the proposed rule will be finalized as-is or be revised. **This is our best chance to make a difference.**

Public charge flyers to assist with outreach and activating communities:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1L6gTC9ChEh19b1jrnFYbRjxt9PXf7acL?usp=sharing>

How to Write and Submit a Public Comment

YOU are needed to submit a public comment. Collectively, our goal is to encourage organizations, places of worship, and the individuals to submit at least 100,000 comments. We will not stand idly by while our neighbors are in need.

Step 1: Develop your public comment

You can use the sample comments below or use resources/education materials in this toolkit to create your own comment! Check out some tips for writing comments from regulations.gov [here](#).

We STRONGLY recommend you not copy sample comments word for word and develop your own unique comment. Unique comments are counted separately while identical comments can be counted as a single comment. Think about customizing your comment by writing about the impact the proposed rule would have on you/your family, your place of worship, your community, or other information that is unique to you.

CLINIC organizational sample comments: **COMING SOON**

CLINIC Public Charge Mini-Toolkit with short sample comments: <https://cliniclegal.org/public-charge/mini-toolkit>

CLINIC self-reporting webforms:

- For individuals/organizations: <https://cliniclegal.org/public-charge/comments>
- For public charge event organizers: <https://cliniclegal.org/public-charge/speak-up>

Protecting Immigrant Families general sample comments and portal:

<https://protectingimmigrantfamilies.org/>

The Interfaith Immigration Coalition will continue to add to this toolkit as new resources become available. Please check back often.

The public comment period is open from Oct. 10 to Dec. 10, 2018.

Protecting Immigrant Families interfaith sample comments and portal:

<https://www.ouramericanstory.us/faith-traditions/>

REMEMBER: Your comment is public, not private, and anyone will be able to view it. If speaking about a personal experience or the experience of an individual or family impacted by this rule, be careful about identifying information. Additionally, because comments are public, we recommend using respectful and professional language.

Step 2: Submit your public comment

Here are the easiest ways to submit your comment:

Regulations.gov

You can visit the www.regulations.gov webpage and search “Department of Homeland Security public charge inadmissibility” or [this link](#) will take you directly to the page for the proposed rule.

CLINIC step-by-step powerpoint on how to use regulations.gov: **COMING SOON**

Protecting Immigrant Families portal

Follow this [link](#) to the Protecting Immigrant Families interfaith public comment portal. The portal will autopopulate a comment for you which you can use or delete and create your own. The portal will automatically submit your comment to regulations.gov.

By mail

You can submit comments by mail to:

Samantha Deshommes, Chief, Regulatory Coordination Division
Office of Policy and Strategy, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Department of Homeland Security
20 Massachusetts Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20529-2140

IMPORTANT TO MAKE SURE YOUR MAILED COMMENT COUNTS:

- You must include your first and last name and the DOCKET #: DHS Docket No. USCIS-2010-0012.
- Comments must be postmarked by Dec. 10, 2018.
- Check out [this mini-toolkit](#) with more guidance on submitting comments by mail.

The Interfaith Immigration Coalition will continue to add to this toolkit as new resources become available. Please check back often.

The public comment period is open from Oct. 10 to Dec. 10, 2018.

Interfaith Messaging on Public Charge

Use this resource to help formulate press releases, social media posts, and respond to interview requests regarding public charge.

Overall framing and messaging tips

- The proposed rule makes immigrants face a battery of tests with one central goal: making America only open to the wealthy. The administration isn't trying to measure potential; they are putting up barriers to favor more affluent applicants.
- The proposed change to public charge is another way of hurting immigrant families, the same as separation at the border and family detention.
- The income limits proposed would create an immigration system rigged for the wealthy, putting green cards up for sale to the highest bidder.
- It is immoral, unjust, and cruel to force families to choose between family stability and meeting basic human needs including food, shelter and medical care.
- Our faith beliefs call us to stand up for people and families facing persecution and oppression at the hands of the powerful.
- The consequences of this proposed rule go beyond the realm of immigration. These changes will affect U.S. citizens who are part of mixed immigration status families, including kids and pregnant women who use these programs to fulfill basic needs.
- Democracy isn't limited to the voting booth! Submitting public comments on unacceptable rules and regulations is an exercise of civic engagement and an act of love for your neighbors.

Learn more concepts about messaging and framing using The Immigrant Learning Center's "[Taking Back The Narrative](#)" tool.

Talking points

- The rule would make it exceedingly difficult for hard-working immigrants to maintain or obtain legal status, making them vulnerable to deportation and putting family unity at risk.

The Interfaith Immigration Coalition will continue to add to this toolkit as new resources become available. Please check back often.

The public comment period is open from Oct. 10 to Dec. 10, 2018.

- The rule will have a disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable in our society including children, older adults, and families living paycheck to paycheck.
- We object to a society where the opportunity to work hard and support a loving family is only open to the affluent.
- The rule has created a chilling effect. Families who disenroll from benefits in fear of losing immigration status may not get the help they need until it's too late.
- We all stand to lose if immigrants are driven by fear to forego preventative care, and delay medical treatment until it is too late, taxing our already overburdened emergency rooms.
- Studies show that promoting integration, not barriers, makes American communities stronger and safer--the rule will undermine these important goals that impact all of American society.
- As people of faith from many traditions, we are called to protect families, children, and the vulnerable. We believe in human dignity and the value of all people, regardless of where they come from or how much money they have in their pockets.
- People of faith believe that families need to be together and that they should be supported and protected.
- My organization is standing with immigrant families by submitting a comment opposing this proposed rule. We call on others to join us in this moral imperative.

Faith Quotes to Guide Public Charge Messaging

Christianity:

- "Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God..." "We love because God first loved us." **(1 John 4:7-2)**
- "Do no wrong and do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, or the widow" **(Jeremiah 22:3)**
- "Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.'" **(Matthew 19:14)**
- "The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." **(Mark 12:31)**

Islam:

- "Those who believe, and adopt exile, and fight for the Faith, in the cause of Allah as well as those who give (them) asylum and aid- these are (all) in very truth the Believers: for them is the forgiveness of sins and a provision most generous." **(Surah Al-Anfal, 74)**

The Interfaith Immigration Coalition will continue to add to this toolkit as new resources become available. Please check back often.

The public comment period is open from Oct. 10 to Dec. 10, 2018.

- “Was not the Earth of God spacious enough for you to flee for refuge?” **(Quran 4:97)**

Judaism:

- “You shall not pick your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger; I the Eternal am your G-d.”
(Leviticus 19:10)
- “You shall not subvert the rights of the stranger or the fatherless; you shall not take a widow’s garment in pawn. Remember that you were a slave in Egypt and that your Eternal G-d redeemed you there; therefore do I enjoin you to observe this commandment.”
(Deuteronomy 24:17-18)
- “Cursed be the one who subverts the rights of the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. And all the people shall say, Amen.”
(Deuteronomy 27:19)

Papal Quotes:

- “The family is the greatest treasure of any country. Let us work together to protect and strengthen this, the cornerstone of society”- Pope Francis, Tweet, January 2015
- “We see each child as a gift to be welcomed, cherished, and protected.”-Pope Francis, 2015 Mass in the Philippines
- “ A society which abandons children and the elderly severs its roots and darkens its future.”- Pope Francis, Tweet, May 2014
- “We have to state, without mincing words, that there is an inseparable bond between our faith and the poor. May we never abandon them.” - Pope Francis, *The Joy of the Gospel*
- “Love of neighbour is a path that leads to the encounter with God, and that closing our eyes to our neighbour also blinds us to God”- Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est (God is Love)*, #16

Sample Social Media

Public charge graphics:

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1exT742xgtUojP5OC_8B64sOTm3Xh_Ria

Interfaith campaign hashtags:

- #PublicCharge
- #ProtectOurFamilies
- #CommentsForFamilies
- #100KComments

The Interfaith Immigration Coalition will continue to add to this toolkit as new resources become available. Please check back often.

The public comment period is open from Oct. 10 to Dec. 10, 2018.

Twitter:

We can't let the Trump administration force families to choose between the food, housing, and healthcare they need and the people they love. Act today to stop the proposed #PublicCharge rule. #ProtectFamilies

People of faith know the best way to build a strong country is to #ProtectFamilies and ensure they have food, medical care, shelter, and other necessities to thrive. #PublicCharge cruelly targets the most vulnerable members of our communities.

We have a shared moral obligation to #ProtectFamilies in our nation, especially vulnerable families. The federal #PublicCharge proposed rule attacks immigrant families and puts our country's future at risk.

People of faith are called to protect families, children, and the vulnerable. We believe in human dignity and the value of all people, regardless of where they come from or how much money they have in their pockets. #PublicCharge #CommentsForFamilies

People of faith have come together to advocate for family unity in our immigration system. The proposed #PublicCharge rule is another attack on families. Act today to #ProtectFamilies

The proposed #PublicCharge rule will force families to forego basic needs like food and healthcare. Hurting families threatens our country's future & violates our moral obligation to protect the vulnerable. Act today to #ProtectFamilies #CommentsForFamilies

One in four children have at least one immigrant parent. Attacking immigrant families puts our children and our nation's future at risk. We must #ProtectFamilies! #100KComments

Facebook:

The administration's proposed #PublicCharge rule attacks immigrant families and forces them to choose between the food, housing, and healthcare they need and the people they love. The faith community has spoken out to support family unity. This is another attempt to destabilize immigrant families and harm communities. We have a shared moral obligation to #ProtectFamilies in our nation. Act now to oppose this unjust public charge rule by submitting a comment. #CommentsForFamilies

One in four children in the United States have at least one immigrant parent. The Trump administration's proposed #PublicCharge rule attacks immigrant families and puts our children and our nation's future at risk. Take action by submitting a comment #ProtectFamilies #CommentsForFamilies

The Interfaith Immigration Coalition will continue to add to this toolkit as new resources become available. Please check back often.

The public comment period is open from Oct. 10 to Dec. 10, 2018.

We object to a society where the opportunity to work hard and support a loving family is only open to the highest bidder at the expense of hardworking families. #ProtectFamilies Stop #PublicCharge

My [ORGANIZATION, CHURCH, ETC.] is submitting a comment to oppose #PublicCharge. We know the best way to build a strong country is to #ProtectFamilies and ensure people have the food, medical care, shelter, and other necessities to thrive. Join us! #100KComments #CommentsForFamilies

Public Charge Op-ed Template

My faith calls on me to oppose changes to public charge

Start with a statement of your faith values

For example: *As a [MEMBER OF A RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION], I was raised to follow teachings that call me to treat my neighbor as myself, to do no harm, to help the vulnerable rise up, and not to hold them down. I was taught to recognize and honor the inherent dignity of every human being. That sacredness of each human life comes without condition, regardless of the country a person happens to be born in, or how much money a person has in their pockets.*

Make a statement about the proposed changes to public charge

For example: *These values, which are the heart of not just [RELIGION], but interfaith teachings, are the foundation I've built my life on. And I believe they are the same values of a strong and prosperous nation. The administration's recent public charge proposal is a step away from these core faith teachings. In this proposal, our government would make it harder for families to maintain or obtain green cards by counting receipt of an expanded list of public benefits against them. These are public benefits that our government has made available to them, recognizing the importance of supporting all American families, again, regardless of origin. In short, it will force families to pick between protection from deportation and the public benefits they need to stay healthy.*

End with a statement of opposition and action

For example: *As a [MEMBER OF A RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION] I am called to reject this proposal and I call all other people of conscience to join me. The law requires the government give the people 60 days to submit comments, to make our voices heard. This is our opportunity to affect the outcome and hopefully, prevent the proposed rule from becoming a law that would be profoundly harmful to children, parents, families, our communities, and our country. Participation in the public comment period is how we put our faith in action. I, for one, won't be silent.*

How to Organize an Interfaith Public Comment Event!

The Interfaith Immigration Coalition will continue to add to this toolkit as new resources become available. Please check back often.

The public comment period is open from Oct. 10 to Dec. 10, 2018.

Use this guide for ideas about how to gather faith communities together before the rule is published to raise awareness and/or after the rule is published to submit comments. Having community members sit together to draft and submit comments is a powerful action! Be creative and share photos of public comment events on social media! **Note:** Always consider safety and get permission before sharing photos/names of immigrants and families impacted by the proposed rule.

Sample Agenda for Interfaith Public Comment Event!

This is a general event agenda, **do not hesitate to modify it to fit your needs!** Feel free to get creative and include interpreters, music, poetry, skits when planning your agenda. Whatever you decide to do, it is recommended that several different people take different pieces of the agenda to encourage leadership, while a person designated as the chair opens and closes the event. Try to keep each speaker's time under five minutes. Make sure to practice the entire agenda at least once or twice, but don't be alarmed by any imperfections – they're what will make the event feel genuine, meaningful, and even sacred.

The goal of this campaign is to encourage faith communities across the country to submit comments on the proposed public charge rule. As people of faith, we understand that a person's worth is not dependent on their income or social status. All families deserve stable environments to thrive. Access to government programs not only provides that stability, it's also instrumental in allowing them to integrate into their new communities successfully. We are called to help on those who are less fortunate and commenting on this rule is the most direct way we have to push back on these proposed changes. Having community members sit together to draft and submit comments is the way to push back!

1. **Opening Prayer or Reflection** – Focus on the moral call to support and protect immigrant families. Use this moment to tie our values and the prophetic voice to the work we are doing to support our immigrant brothers and sisters. You are welcome to use the gathering prayer included in this section or create your own.
2. **Credential & Purpose** – Describe who you are, what you are doing, and why you've organized this event.
3. **Share Stories** – Have two or three immigrants, family/friends, or allies (teachers, pastors, social workers, etc.) briefly talk about their experiences. Make sure they understand the risks of sharing their stories with the public and take precautions to protect them if necessary (change their names or have friends or family members share their stories on their behalf).
4. **Provide Positive Research Findings** – Spend three to five minutes strengthening your argument by providing data. Use data provided by the Migration Policy Institute, Center for Migration studies, and others to jumpstart your search. Refer to the information provided in this guide to educate the audience on what the rule is and how it will impact communities.

The Interfaith Immigration Coalition will continue to add to this toolkit as new resources become available. Please check back often.

The public comment period is open from Oct. 10 to Dec. 10, 2018.

5. **Make an Ask** – This is when you ask your participants to make a comment on the public charge regulation. Before you make the ask, ensure they will have some form of way to submit their comment. This could be, by ensuring there is public wifi at your event, having a computer station for them to sit down and write their comments, iPads are fully charged and have access to the internet, or any creative way you will give access to your participants to submit their comment is ready to go. Once you've ensured your participants will be able to submit their comments make the ask! Give your participants a moment to gather their thoughts so they can know what their comments will be. You can also share sample comments the toolkit provides. Once your participants know what they want to write began helping them log on the website you want them to make their comments on.
6. **Call to Action** – *Our goal is to obtain 100,000 comments before the comment period closes.* Ask participants to encourage their family and friends to comment on the rule. Take names of those who would be to host their own public charge commenting event and give them the [Public Comment Mini-Toolkit](#) to start the planning process.
7. **Closing Prayer and/or Reflection** – Repeat step one and thank everyone for coming. Consider using the prayers found in this guide.

While planning the event, don't forget to:

- Promote the event
- Estimate a headcount
- Invite local, state, and national policy makers
- Invite media outlets
- Consider the need for interpreters
- Confirm the location is accessible
- Choose the best date and time possible
- Offer food and beverages, if possible
- Rehearse
- Take photos
- Have someone cover the event on social media, via Facebook Live and Twitter

Gathering Prayer:

God of the journey, God of the traveler, we gather today to pray for those who leave their homes in search new beginnings and possibilities. May they know Your presence is with them when they encounter us.

We pray that those who seek to make a home in this country will find us welcoming and willing to help them find a path toward citizenship.

We pray that our leaders may find the wisdom and courage to reject irrational fears and enact immigration laws that do justice for our country and for those who would immigrate here.

The Interfaith Immigration Coalition will continue to add to this toolkit as new resources become available. Please check back often.

The public comment period is open from Oct. 10 to Dec. 10, 2018.

We pray that those who fan the flames of fear and discrimination against immigrants may be touched with your divine compassion.

Amen

--The Archdiocese of Chicago, adapted

Reading 1: Leviticus 19:33-34

"Our faith demands of us concern for the stranger in our midst. When strangers sojourn with you in your land, you shall not do them wrong. The strangers who sojourn with you shall be to you as the natives among you, and you shall love them as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt."

-OR-

Reading 2: Sufi Parable, *adapted*

"Past the seeker, as he prayed, floated images of the terrorized immigrants, the children in cages, and the families hiding in shadows. And seeing them the holy one went down into deep prayer and cried, 'Great God, how is it that a loving creator can see such things and yet do nothing about them?' . . . Out of a long silence came a voice. And God said, 'I did do something. I made you.'"

Responsorial

All: Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees, to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed.

Reader: We reject the proposed rule that may force millions of families to choose between obtaining and maintaining immigration status and food or health care. These policies rob our brothers and sisters of their inherent dignity by exacerbating the injustices of hunger, unmet health needs, child poverty, and homelessness.

All: Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees, to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed.

Reader: Any policy that forces a pregnant woman or mother of an infant to avoid enrolling herself and her child in critical nutrition assistance for pregnant and breastfeeding women, infants, and preschoolers is dehumanizing and runs counter to our faith traditions.

All: Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees, to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed.

The Interfaith Immigration Coalition will continue to add to this toolkit as new resources become available. Please check back often.

The public comment period is open from Oct. 10 to Dec. 10, 2018.

Reader: Man-made laws that push eligible legal immigrant families to forgo the Earned Income Tax Credit that reduces their poverty violate the mandates of God.

All: Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees, to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed.

Reader: When our societal actions cause children to face more poverty and hardship, we wound the Body of Christ.

All: Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees, to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed.

The Gospel according to Matthew 25:40-46 (Christian)

“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’ Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’

They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’ He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’”

Reflection:

When have I been indifferent to the suffering of God in the immigrant? Do I excuse myself from action?

“There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice, but we must never fail to protest it.” - Elie Wiesel

Final Prayer

Lord of justice and mercy, both strong and loving, creator of the earth and humankind, we praise you for your omnipotence and we thank you for your presence in our lives. Lord, we ask that you teach us to love our neighbor, so that we may obey your commands. We ask that you teach us to have compassion for our neighbors who may be different from us, so that we truly understand what it is to love. We ask that you give us strength to speak for those who cannot speak for themselves. Lord, we wish to do your will: to promote justice and live faithfully. We ask these things in the name of our Redeemer.

The Interfaith Immigration Coalition will continue to add to this toolkit as new resources become available. Please check back often.

The public comment period is open from Oct. 10 to Dec. 10, 2018.

Amen.

—Carissa Van Haitsma, Office of Social Justice, Christian Reformed Church

Sample Press Release For Public Comment Events

DATE

For Immediate Release

Contact: NAME, PHONE NUMBER

Local [FAITH GROUPS/COMMUNITY GROUPS] Host Comment-Writing Event Opposing Public Charge and Reaffirming Welcome to Immigrant Families in [NAME OF TOWN]

Your City Name, State Abbreviation – Leaders from [ORGANIZATION/CONGREGATION] hosted an event to write comments opposing changes to the public charge rule. They were joined by [LIST IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY GROUPS AND OTHER SPECIAL GUESTS, ESPECIALLY CLERGY, OR ELECTED OFFICIALS].

[QUOTE FROM IMMIGRANT LEADER OR OTHER SPECIAL GUEST].

[PARTICIPANT QUOTE ABOUT PROPOSED PUBLIC CHARGE OR REACTION TO THE EVENT]. All expressed their hope that adding their comment would register the national opposition to changing the public charge.

The proposed changes to the public charge rule would affect millions of hardworking families, and even long-time residents of [CITY/TOWN NAME]. The expansion of definition of who is a public charge would limit the opportunity to become a permanent resident to the wealthiest immigrants.

###

This is where you could put a small blurb about your community/coalition/organization.

Tools for Organizers

- Public Charge Mini-Toolkit for Organizers: <https://cliniclegal.org/public-charge/mini-toolkit>
- Public Charge One-Pager for Organizers (**COMING SOON**)
- Mobilizing Faith Communities to Protect Families Video (**COMING SOON**)

Other Ideas for Action

- Write an op-ed to spread the word about public charge and share interfaith perspectives.

The Interfaith Immigration Coalition will continue to add to this toolkit as new resources become available. Please check back often.

The public comment period is open from Oct. 10 to Dec. 10, 2018.

- Hold a public charge prayer vigil to engage and activate your community.
- Organize your community and partners to hold a Twitter storm or other social media campaign to raise awareness.
- Engage your state and local officials in discussions through a town hall or letter writing campaign. Your mayor, state attorney general, or other officials can and should submit comments opposing the proposed rule.

Public Charge Resources

Interfaith and General Resources:

- [CLINIC public charge webpage](#)
- [Protecting Immigrant Families webpage](#)
- CLINIC: [Defend Immigrants by Taking Part in the Federal Rulemaking Process](#)
- Kaiser Family Foundation: [Proposed Changes to “Public Charge” Policies for Immigrants: Implications for Health Coverage](#)