



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL

Legislative Summary

Res 31854

Record No.: Res 31854

Type: Resolution (Res)

Status: Adopted

Version: 1

Ord. no:

In Control: City Clerk

File Created: 11/13/2018

Final Action: 11/30/2018

Title: A RESOLUTION rejecting the Federal Administration's proposed public charge rule change as applied to legal permanent residency applications by immigrants because of the harm to, negative impact on, and chilling effect on immigrant communities' access to vital services and cost-saving initiatives that keep families healthy and on the path towards economic self-sufficiency and success.

Notes:

Date
Filed with City Clerk: 11/30/2018

Mayor's Signature: 11/30/2018

Sponsors: González

Vetoed by Mayor:

Veto Overridden:

Veto Sustained:

Attachments: Summary and Fiscal Note

Drafter: jodee.schwinn@seattle.gov

Filing Requirements/Dept Action:

History of Legislative File

Legal Notice Published:

Yes

No

Ver- sion:	Acting Body:	Date:	Action:	Sent To:	Due Date:	Return Date:	Result:
1	City Clerk	11/13/2018	sent for review	Council President's Office			
	Action Text:		The Resolution (Res) was sent for review. to the Council President's Office				
	Notes:						
1	Council President's Office	11/16/2018	sent for review	City Council			
	Action Text:		The Resolution (Res) was sent for review. to the City Council				
	Notes:						
1	City Council	11/19/2018	referred	City Council			
	Action Text:		The Resolution (Res) was referred. to the City Council				
	Notes:						
1	City Council	11/26/2018	adopted				Pass

Action Text: The Motion carried, the Resolution (Res) was adopted by the following vote, and the President signed the Resolution:

Notes: Motion was made and duly seconded to adopt Resolution 31854.

In Favor: 7 Councilmember Bagshaw, Councilmember González, Council President Harrell, Councilmember Herbold, Councilmember Johnson, Councilmember Juarez, Councilmember O'Brien

Opposed: 0

- | | | | | |
|---|------------|------------|------------------------------------|------------|
| 1 | City Clerk | 11/28/2018 | submitted for
Mayor's signature | Mayor |
| 1 | Mayor | 11/30/2018 | Signed | |
| 1 | Mayor | 11/30/2018 | returned | City Clerk |
| 1 | City Clerk | 11/30/2018 | attested by City Clerk | |

Action Text: The Resolution (Res) was attested by City Clerk.

Notes:

CITY OF SEATTLE

RESOLUTION 31854

1
2
3
4 A RESOLUTION rejecting the Federal Administration’s proposed public charge rule change as
5 applied to legal permanent residency applications by immigrants because of the harm to,
6 negative impact on, and chilling effect on immigrant communities’ access to vital
7 services and cost-saving initiatives that keep families healthy and on the path towards
8 economic self-sufficiency and success.
9

10 WHEREAS, on October 10, 2018, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) published
11 a change to the “public charge” rule, proposing that when considering an immigrant’s
12 application for legal permanent residency, DHS may consider an applicant’s use, or likely
13 use at any time in the future, of anti-poverty safety net programs that improve access to
14 health care, nutrition, and housing security, as a factor for denying legal status to an
15 immigrant; and

16 WHEREAS, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services currently only evaluates whether
17 potential immigrants are likely to be a “public charge” when considering green card
18 applications. Current policy evaluates only two types of public benefits in a public charge
19 determination: cash assistance for income maintenance and institutionalization for long-
20 term care at government expense; and

21 WHEREAS, under the proposed rule change, benefits that could be considered in a public charge
22 determination would include medical assistance, food stamps (SNAP), federally
23 subsidized public housing or housing vouchers, and Medicare Part D subsidies; and

24 WHEREAS, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities estimates that, under the proposed public
25 charge test, more than 100 million people – about one-third of the total U.S. population –
26 would fail the public-charge determination if they were required to take it today; and

1 WHEREAS, according to New American Economy, Seattle’s metro area immigrant residents
2 paid \$8.0 billion in federal and local taxes in 2016 – a significant contribution to funding
3 the very programs the proposed rule would penalize them for accessing; and

4 WHEREAS, the proposed rule change in the process of consideration for visa or legal permanent
5 residency status would severely discriminate against those with disabilities or chronic
6 health conditions, impacting entire families based on the medical needs of a single family
7 member; and

8 WHEREAS, the proposed change also includes a “wealth test,” providing preferential treatment
9 for those determined to be in a high-income bracket and also allowing discretionary
10 admission for applications who provide a “public charge bond” of no less than \$10,000
11 (with the final amount established on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of
12 immigration officers). These provisions compromise the fairness of the immigration
13 process by allowing the wealthy to skip ahead of the many who have been waiting for
14 years, while also opening the door to abuse, corruption, and bias; and

15 WHEREAS, although the rule does not apply to all immigrants like asylees, refugees, certain
16 nonimmigrant visa holders, and other categories, the chilling effect and confusion in the
17 immigrant community will be large. This chilling effect on enrollment is already causing
18 harm, with individuals asking for disenrollment from health care services or forgoing
19 participation in programs that address food and/or housing security. There is a precedent
20 for this chilling effect; in the years after 1996, when changes to the rules defining
21 immigrant eligibility for benefits were made, fears about public charge exclusions caused
22 enrollment rates of immigrants eligible for benefits to drop by as much as 37 percent; and

1 WHEREAS, the DHS itself details the tremendous non-monetary damage that could result from
2 the proposed rule, including: “worse health outcomes, including increased prevalence of
3 obesity and malnutrition, especially for pregnant or breastfeeding women, infants, or
4 children, and reduced prescription adherence; increased use of emergency rooms and
5 emergent care as a method of primary health care due to delayed treatment; increased
6 prevalence of communicable diseases, including among members of the U.S. citizen
7 population who are not vaccinated; increases in uncompensated care in which a treatment
8 or service is not paid for by an insurer or patient; and increased rates of poverty and
9 housing instability; and reduced productivity and educational attainment;” and

10 WHEREAS, the DHS also recognizes the significant negative economic impact threatened by its
11 proposed rule, explicitly stating that it “may have downstream and upstream impacts on
12 state and local economies, large and small businesses, and individuals,” and describing
13 the risk to a wide range of economic activity from healthcare providers and pharmacies,
14 manufacturers, landlords, grocery retailers, and agricultural producers; and

15 WHEREAS, this proposed rule change perpetuates stereotypes and biases that are not based in
16 data and would dangerously exacerbate under-enrollment in life-saving and preventative
17 health programs. Mixed status families, U.S.-born children with non-citizen parents, are
18 less likely to receive SNAP or Medicaid compared to non-mixed status families.
19 Nationwide, one million Latinx children, 95 percent of whom are U.S. citizens, are
20 eligible for Medicaid or CHIP but are not enrolled; and

21 WHEREAS, advocates from the healthcare sector have expressed grave concerns about the
22 negative impacts of this rule on hard fought gains in reducing healthcare access
23 disparities. In Washington State, the uninsured rate declined from 14 percent in 2013 to

1 5.4 percent in 2016, resulting in a drop of uncompensated care in Washington from
2 \$2.368 million to \$932 million. Each single percentage-point decline in the uninsured rate
3 is associated with a \$167 million drop in uncompensated care. Under-enrollment would
4 likely reverse this trend via an uptick of uninsured immigrant households and result in an
5 increase in uncompensated care, creating a significant financial threat to many hospitals
6 and supportive services; and

7 WHEREAS, food and nutrition advocates have expressed concern about the impact on women,
8 infants, and children. If the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Food and Nutrition
9 Service is or is perceived to be included in the public charge proposed rule, the positive
10 impacts of WIC would be lost for mothers and their young children. Outcomes of WIC
11 participation – a cost-saving, preventative health strategy – include healthier, more
12 nutritious diets, increased rates of immunization, 44 percent reduction in rates of low
13 birth rate, lower rates of anemia in children, and children’s increased readiness to learn;
14 and

15 WHEREAS, the impact of the proposed rule change for SNAP enrollment would also include
16 loss of economic activity for local retail businesses where SNAP recipients purchase
17 food. In Washington State, a 20 percent reduction in immigrant households enrolled in
18 SNAP would result in 74,700 families not receiving SNAP benefits. This would translate
19 to \$185.8 million of lost economic activity while spending in health care via Medicaid or
20 Medicare would likely increase by \$104.5 million; and

21 WHEREAS, Washington State has 3,285 homeless families with children and approximately 14
22 percent are immigrant families. Participation in rental assistance programs can be the
23 difference between homelessness and having a safe, warm place to live. Children

1 experiencing homelessness have disparate health and academic impacts; they are twice as
2 likely to suffer from respiratory infections, at three times the risk of being hospitalized
3 for asthma and are almost twice as likely to disengage from education and work
4 opportunities. Access to rental assistance, therefore, can prevent the significant health and
5 educational impacts associated with homelessness, and supporting young people to obtain
6 their high school diplomas is one of the strongest protective factors against adult
7 homelessness; and

8 WHEREAS, the proposed public charge rule would also likely negatively impact the overall
9 enrollment in health care services, access to energy assistance programs, public
10 assistance income, supplemental security income, Pell Grants for postsecondary students,
11 and participation in free and reduced lunch programs for K-12 students; and

12 WHEREAS, this proposed rule change represents yet another attempt by the Trump
13 Administration to radically reshape the American legal immigration system, redefine who
14 is “worthy” of being an American, and echoes America’s history of arbitrary, race-based
15 immigration policies that profoundly alter what America looks like as a country; and

16 WHEREAS, any policy that forces millions of families to forgo using critical public services for
17 fear of harming their immigration status, or that punishes families for having used public
18 benefits, is nothing short of cruel and in direct contrast to the stated goals of Seattle-King
19 County Public Health, which “works to protect and improve the health and well-being of
20 all people in King County as measured by increasing the number of healthy years that
21 people live and eliminating health disparities”; and

1 WHEREAS, a national effort under the Protecting Immigrant Families Campaign has mobilized
2 thousands of individuals across the country to stand against the proposed cruelty of the
3 public charge rule change; and

4 WHEREAS, The City of Seattle commends the leadership of Protecting Immigrant Families –
5 Washington Coalition members Asian Counseling and Referral Service, Children’s
6 Alliance, Columbia Legal Services, Entre Hermanos, Latinos Promoting Good Health,
7 MomsRising, Northwest Health Law Advocates, and OneAmerica for their work to
8 connect, educate, and mobilize Washington State families on the proposed rule change;
9 and

10 WHEREAS, as a Welcoming City, Seattle must continue to stand against national policies and
11 rules that target the health and safety of our immigrant neighbors and communities,
12 regardless of status; and

13 WHEREAS, the DHS will accept public comments on the proposed public charge rule change
14 until December 10, 2018; NOW, THEREFORE,

15 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE, THE**
16 **MAYOR CONCURRING, THAT:**

17 Section 1. The City of Seattle supports the efforts of local and national leaders and local
18 government that call on the federal government to abandon the Department of Homeland
19 Security’s October 10, 2018 proposed rule that will cause harm to every community across the
20 country.

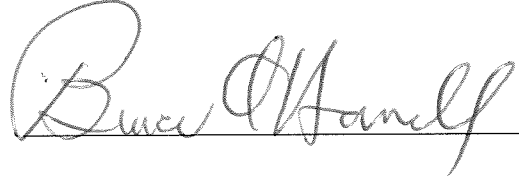
21 Section 2. The City of Seattle reaffirms its commitment and support to the immigrant
22 community. The City will continue to provide vital City services to Seattle residents, regardless
23 of citizenship status, that help build strong, healthy, ready-to-learn individuals.

1 Section 3. The City of Seattle will continue to work with local and national partners to
2 help dispel myths and anxiety as well as educate the public about what the proposed public
3 charge rule change means and how to engage in submitting a public comment.

4 Section 4. The City Council will consider, consistent with Council Rules, submitting a
5 joint public comment on the proposed public charge rule on or before December 10, 2018, and
6 will request the Office of Intergovernmental Relations to transmit the City Council's public
7 testimony to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and any other relevant federal agency.

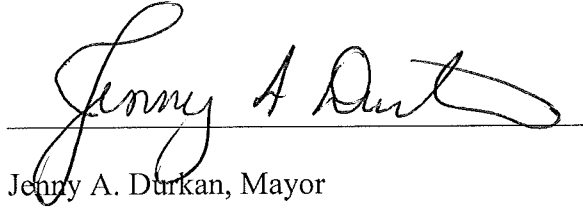
8 Section 5. The City of Seattle encourages all residents to contact and thank Senators
9 Maria Cantwell and Patty Murray, and Representatives Pramila Jayapal and Adam Smith for
10 speaking out against the proposed rule change and acting in the interest and protection of their
11 constituents.

1 Adopted by the City Council the 26th day of NOVEMBER, 2018,
2 and signed by me in open session in authentication of its adoption this 26th day of
3 NOVEMBER, 2018.

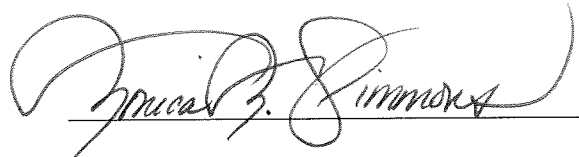
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5 President _____ of the City Council

6 The Mayor concurred the 30th day of November, 2018.

7 
8 Jenny A. Durkan, Mayor

9 Filed by me this 30th day of NOVEMBER, 2018.

10 
11 Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk

12 (Seal)