Taking Food Off the Table
Effects of the New Public Charge Proposal on SNAP Recipients

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Public Charge

- A term used by immigration officials for more than 100 years
- A person who “is likely to become primarily dependent on the government for subsistence, as demonstrated by either the receipt of public cash assistance for income maintenance, or institutionalization for long-term care at government expense.”
- “Public charges” can be denied lawful permanent residence (green cards) or entry into the U.S.
- Current policy: DHS only considers cash benefits in public charge determinations.
- Proposed policy: DHS wants to also consider non-cash benefits (SNAP, WIC, CHIP, LIHEAP, housing assistance, EITC, Medicaid, ACA subsidies)
Potential chilling effect

- Population directly affected: Approximately 500,000 people who apply for change of immigration status each year
- Population indirectly affected: More than 20 million people who lived in a household with an undocumented immigrant or an immigrant with temporary status
Anecdotal evidence of a chilling effect

The Washington Post

Immigrants are going hungry so Trump won't deport them

By Calilta Lewey March 16, 2017 Email the author

Harlem residents choose free groceries at the Food Bank For New York City. (John Moore/Getty Images)

The New York Times

Spooked by Trump Proposals, Immigrants Abandon Public Nutrition Services

Rosa, second from right, an unauthorized immigrant living with her family in New York, used to receive about $90 a month from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Fearing deportation, she has stopped taking the benefits. (Bebeto Matthews/Associated Press)

By Emily Baumgaertner March 6, 2018
Estimating the SNAP population affected by the DHS public charge proposal:

1. **Lower bound (no chilling effect):**
   - Only those living in a SNAP household with a non-citizen who is applying for adjustment of status – approximately 500,000 people every year
   - Approximately 2% of the non-citizen population in the CPS

2. **Upper bound (full chilling effect):**
   - Everyone living in SNAP households with at least one non-citizen
   - More than 12 million people

Results adjusted for SNAP under-reporting in the CPS using the Urban Institute TRIM model
Lower bound preliminary estimates

If only SNAP households with a status changer cancel SNAP:

- Nearly 500,000 people lose access to more than $200 million in SNAP benefits
- Median annual SNAP benefit lost would be $1,600
- More than 100,000 citizen children lose access to SNAP
- Nearly 30,000 people fall into poverty
- More than 10,000 children fall into poverty, most of whom are U.S. citizens
Upper bound estimates (full chilling effect)

If all households with at least one non-citizen cancel SNAP:

- 12.5 million people lose access to more than $8 billion in SNAP benefits (more than 10% of the total SNAP benefit budget)
- Median annual SNAP benefit lost would be $2,500
- Nearly 5 million citizen children lose access to SNAP
- More than 1 million people fall into poverty
- More than 600,000 children fall into poverty, most of whom are U.S. citizens
Lower bound economic impact

- $400 million decrease in total economic activity
- $60 million decrease in retail food expenditures
- $160 million decrease in expenditures on nonfood goods and services
  (households shifting cash income from nonfood to food)
- Approximately 2,000 jobs lost
  (full-time, part-time, and self-employed)
- Upper bound estimated total impact exceeds $15 billion
Conclusion:

- More than a third of the people losing SNAP benefits under the new DHS public charge proposal are U.S. citizen children.

- Focusing on SNAP understates the poverty and economic impact.

- Medicaid, ACA subsidies, WIC, CHIP, LIHEAP, housing assistance, and EITC also included in the proposal.

- Undocumented parents increasingly fearful that any interaction with the government will lead to arrest and deportation.

- Depending on the extent of chilling effects, child poverty rate may increase.
MAY 8, 2017

**CPSP Looks at the Poverty Impacts of the Trump Administration’s Proposal to Eliminate the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)**

The CPSP estimated the poverty effects of President Trump’s March 2017 proposal to eliminate the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, also known as LIHEAP, that helps low income households pay their utility bills and keep the heat on in the winter. We found that eliminating LIHEAP would move more than 200,000 people into poverty, hurting the rural poor the most. Read our brief to learn more.

JAN 24, 2018

**The House Budget Proposal to Cut SNAP by 40% Would Impact 24 Million People**

In an effort to reduce spending and deficits, lawmakers are considering major reforms to entitlement programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Cuts to the safety net have drastic consequences for low-income Americans. The CPSP estimated the potential impacts of the House budget proposal to cut SNAP by 40% and found that such a cut would impact 24 million people and cause the poverty rate among SNAP recipients to increase by up to 10.9%. Read the full brief to see all of our results.
Thank you.