



**DIVERSE
ELDERS
COALITION**

305 Seventh Avenue
15th Floor
New York, NY 10001

T 646-653-5015
F 212-366-1947

diverseelders.org
facebook.com/diverseelders
twitter.com/diverseelders

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

National Asian Pacific Center
on Aging

National Hispanic
Council on Aging

National Indian
Council on Aging

SAGE (Advocacy & Services
for LGBT Elders)

Southeast Asia Resource Action
Center

The Honorable Kirstjen M. Nielsen
Secretary of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

October 23, 2018

Dear Sec. Nielsen,

I am writing today on behalf of the Diverse Elders Coalition, a national advocacy organization working to improve aging for racially and ethnically diverse people, American Indians and Alaska Natives, and LGBT people. We strongly oppose the public charge rule USCIS-2010-0012-0001 proposed in the Federal Register on October 10, 2018 and urge you to withdraw it.

Older immigrants comprise 15% of the adults age 65 and older in the United States. If authorized, this rule would directly impact many of the programs that those older adults rely on, such as Medicaid and the Medicare Part D Low Income Subsidy, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, and housing assistance. A policy deterring older adults from accessing these vital programs will lead to even more elders in our communities living in poverty, not having enough to eat, and compromising their health and well-being, all of which result in greater costs to taxpayers.

The proposed rule would also have a powerful and devastating impact on the people who provide care for older adults. An increasing share of paid caregivers for older adults are immigrants, and many immigrants in the direct care workforce are themselves over age 55. As the United States population gets older, the needs of older adults will continue to grow. By 2050, the population aged 65 and over is projected to be 83.7 million, almost double the 65+ population in 2012¹. The need for direct-care workers, many of whom are immigrants, will likewise grow. Immigrants strengthen our communities and provide vital care to older adults, saving millions in taxpayer dollars. Our communities also benefit from the contributions of younger immigrant workers, who pay into Social Security and Medicare for decades, thereby strengthening the financing of these programs for us all.

No one should be forced to choose between accepting government assistance and living in safety with the people they love. Please withdraw this rule, which unduly punishes older adults and immigrant communities in the United States and would weaken the fabric of our nation for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Jenna McDavid
National Managing Coordinator
Diverse Elders Coalition

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1. Ortman, Jennifer M., et al. "An Aging Nation: The Older Population in the United States." May 2014. United States Census Bureau. <http://bit.ly/2NyWpWu>