



NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: Lawrence Pacheco, Director of Communications
(720) 508-6553 office | (720) 245-4689 cell
Email: Lawrence.pacheco@coag.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Attorney General Phil Weiser challenges federal government’s drastic change to “public charge” rule as unfair, a harm to immigrant families

Aug. 14, 2019 (DENVER, Colo.) – Today, Attorney General Phil Weiser announced that Colorado has joined 11 other states in a federal lawsuit to block the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) proposed changes to the “public charge rule” from going into effect.

The rule, announced Monday, creates drastic consequences for immigrants who lawfully participate in common federal and state programs such as food stamps, subsidized housing, or Medicaid. DHS’s rule seeks to deprive lawful entry, including obtaining a green card, to anyone who has used or may use these benefits in the past, present, or future.

“This rule threatens to undermine America’s core commitment towards treating people fairly and equally,” said Weiser. “This is a clear attempt to instill fear in those seeking to legally become part of our country. No law-abiding immigrant should have to choose between receiving legally available support and being forced to go homeless, go hungry, or go without preventative health care. We will fight to protect America’s tradition of humane treatment of immigrants and for a better, fairer life for them in Colorado and the U.S.”

The lawsuit, filed in the U.S. District Court Eastern District of Washington, alleges that the new rule punishes immigrants for using public benefits for which Congress itself made them eligible. It further explains that the drastic change to the definition of public charge was made without clear reasoning and reverses a longstanding policy. This change will not only harm immigrants who currently receive public assistance, but will also punish immigrants who previously relied on programs like welfare or Medicaid, but no longer do.

Others states joining the lawsuit include Washington, Virginia, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, and Pennsylvania.

###