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Experts predicted the blocking of the 'public charge' rule in favor of the undocumented





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Prosecutors filed lawsuits across the country to impose a mandate on the rule. (AP)

By SELENE RIVERA
WRITER

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The Angels - Panic among undocumented immigrants spread like wildfire across the nation in recent days, with the implementation of the public charge rule, ready to take effect on October 15. However, a federal judge in Manhattan blocked the regulations on Friday.

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The states of New York, Connecticut and Vermont and the city of New York submitted the claim alleging that this policy specifically harms immigrants from racial minorities.



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The new rule would deny the “green card” to anyone who is low-income, who obtains the Nutrition Assistance Program (Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program SNAP), Medicaid or even public housing.



Carlos Ramírez, associate professor of History at East Los Angeles College, argues that many of the laws dealing with immigration historically freeze in court with preliminary court orders, but the action can be a bit dangerous.

"The arguments must be very good to convince the judges that this affects the nation at the economic level damaging business, health risk and that it is a racist rule," says Ramirez.

According to Álvaro Huerta, a lawyer for the National Immigration Law Center, one of the organizations that recently filed a lawsuit on behalf of a dozen organizations against the rule in California, said that in fact the pro-immigrant organizations were hoping to that some judge consider it unconstitutional.



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"I think that many activists and experts against the rule were prepared, there were many comments in support of the arrest and the judges are also receptive to the arguments," says Huerta.

"It has been observed time and again that the Trump administration is crossing the line with rules that only benefit the privileged and white," adds Huerta.

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"We were hoping it was delayed or stopped. It's not just about the number of demands, but about making a good argument," he says.

Nationally the rule would harm an estimated 26 million people. In California you have an estimated 4.5 to 7 million.

"We must remember that the purpose of this rule is to confuse the community, add the element of fear," he says.



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Prosecutors filed lawsuits in more than 10 states to impose a freeze on the rule, while defenders were struggling to dispel misunderstandings about the policy change if it were to be implemented.

Immigrants already live in panic

For now, experts say, there has been a drastic drop in the registration of public benefits among immigrants without documents.

In the nonprofit organization, AltaMed, which provides health services in Los Angeles, fear is being seen.

"Patients who enter the clinic are nervous. The truths that they believed about the public charge are changing and they are afraid of what to do," says pediatrician Ilan Shapiro, medical director of health and wellness education at Altamed Health Service.

Although the organization's clinics do not have an exact number of people who have stopped taking services, Shapiro indicates that the whole family is affected, because it is a domino effect.

"Without medical attention, children are not going to have regular checkups or receive care when they get sick. A grandfather who is worried about public charge may stop seeing his doctor. Now a father does not work because he needs to stay home to take care of grandfather and children. The fear of accessing care impacts the whole family," adds the doctor.



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For now, AltaMed has trained its reception staff to help answer patient questions and inform them about local resources for legal assistance.

El Instituto Urbano informó que una de cada siete familias inmigrantes de bajos ingresos tenía miedo de acceder a los beneficios públicos, después de que la regla se propusiera por primera vez el año pasado.

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