

CORONAVIRUS IMMIGRANT FAMILIES PROTECTION ACT

Sponsored by Senators Hirono and Harris; Representatives Chu, Grijalva, and Correa

Supporting Organizations: Center for Law and Social Policy; Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights; Casa de Esperanza; National Immigration Law Center; National Immigrant Justice Center; United We Dream; Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum; Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC; Esperanza Immigrant Rights Project, CCLA Inc.; California Immigrant Policy Center; Tahirih Justice Center

To ensure that we successfully contain the coronavirus outbreak and rebuild our economy, it is vital that we make sure everyone in our country can access COVID-19 testing, treatment, public health information, and relief benefits, regardless of immigration status or limited English proficiency. The coronavirus does not discriminate. This legislation is intended to provide vulnerable populations harmed by the coronavirus pandemic meaningful access to the critical benefits in coronavirus relief bills.

Although Congress expanded COVID-19 testing through Medicaid, reports indicate that immigrants are [afraid](#) to seek medical care for the coronavirus in light of continuing immigration enforcement actions and the public charge rule. Despite USCIS's announcement that obtaining COVID-19 testing or treatment will not count as a penalty under the public charge rule, [fear and confusion](#) continue to deter immigrants, including those not subject to the rule, from getting the medical services they need. Congress also provided urgently-needed cash relief for lower-income Americans, but did not include immigrants who file taxes with an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN). In [2015](#), 4.35 million people paid over \$13.7 billion in net taxes using an ITIN, according to the American Immigration Council.

To help ensure that these critical services and resources are available to all Americans, the **Coronavirus Immigrant Families Protection Act** would:

- **Modify immigration policies that deter immigrants from seeking health services for the duration of the coronavirus emergency and for 60 days after the emergency ends, including:**
 - **Suspending the public charge rules, in-person ICE checks, the detention and removal of domestic violence and sexual assault survivors** who have pending immigration applications;
 - **Suspending immigration enforcement actions at or in transit to/from sensitive locations**, such as hospitals, courthouses, domestic violence shelters, food banks, and other sensitive locations; and
 - **Requiring fully telephonic bond hearings** to enable detained individuals to seek release.
- **Ensure that everyone has access to COVID-19 testing and treatment by:**
 - **Providing coverage of COVID-19 testing and vaccines under Medicaid** to everyone, regardless of immigration status, by defining it as treatment for an emergency medical condition;
 - **Making clear that accessing coronavirus-related services will not be counted against an individual** with respect to immigration status or in consideration for other federal programs; and
 - **Prohibiting discrimination** in any program funded by a coronavirus relief bill based on actual or perceived immigration status.
- **Provide \$100 million for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to provide language access and public outreach on coronavirus preparedness, response, and recovery to hard-to-reach populations—including minorities, those with limited English proficiency, and those with disabilities.**
- **Ensure access to coronavirus relief measures to vulnerable communities by:**
 - **Extending nutrition assistance through a Disaster-SNAP (D-SNAP) program** to allow individuals and families impacted by a pandemic to receive direct individual assistance from FEMA;
 - **Allowing immigrant taxpayers to access cash relief benefits** with an ITIN; and
 - **Automatically extending expiring work authorization and status for immigrants** during the coronavirus emergency for the same time period as was previously authorized.