

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF
GARDEN GROVE OPPOSING THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND
SECURITY'S PUBLIC CHARGE RULE CHANGE AS APPLIED
TO LEGAL PERMANENT RESIDENCY APPLICATIONS

WHEREAS, on August 14, 2019, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) published a change to the "public charge" rule, proposing that when considering an immigrant's application for legal permanent residency, DHS may consider an applicant's use, or likely use at any time in the future, of anti-poverty safety net programs that improve access to health care, nutrition, and housing security, as a factor for denying legal status to an immigrant; and

WHEREAS, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services currently only evaluates whether potential immigrants are likely to be a "public charge" when considering green card applications. Current policy evaluates only two types of public benefits in a public charge determination: cash assistance for income maintenance and institutionalization for long-term care at government expense; and

WHEREAS, under the proposed rule change, benefits that could be considered in a public charge determination would include medical assistance, food stamps (SNAP), federally subsidized public housing or housing vouchers, and Medicare Part D subsidies; and

WHEREAS, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities estimates that, under the proposed public charge test, more than 100 million people - about one-third of the total U.S. population - would fail the public-charge determination if they were required to take it today; and

WHEREAS, the proposed rule change in the process of consideration for visa or legal permanent residency status would severely discriminate against those with disabilities or chronic health conditions, impacting entire families based on the medical needs of a single family member; and

WHEREAS, the DHS recognizes the significant negative economic impact threatened by its proposed rule, explicitly stating that it "may have downstream and upstream impacts on state and local economies, large and small businesses, and individuals," and describing the risk to a wide range of economic activity from healthcare providers and pharmacies, manufacturers, landlords, grocery retailers, and agricultural producers; and

WHEREAS, the City of Garden Grove has been enriched and strengthened by the contributions of immigrants and our history is one of welcoming those seeking the opportunity for a better life and we continue to draw strength from that diversity, which includes one of the highest populations of Vietnamese Americans in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the City of Garden Grove is the fifth largest city in Orange County and the thirtieth largest city in California and has a population of over 175,000 people, of which approximately forty-four percent of all Garden Grove residents are immigrants, with their children also making up a sizable percentage of the population; and

WHEREAS, fostering a welcoming environment and treating all individuals with compassion and respect, regardless of race, ethnicity, place of origin, or citizenship status enhances Garden Grove's cultural fabric, economic growth, global competitiveness and overall prosperity for current and future generations; and

WHEREAS, in January 2017, the City of Garden Grove passed a Resolution that promotes community harmony and safety that is committed to sustaining a community where all of our residents feel welcome, safe and able to fully participate in, and contribute to our city's civic, economic and social life; and

WHEREAS, the City of Garden Grove continues to be committed to the principles of harmony, safety and compassion, and as part of this initiative will continue to provide important information and resources to our immigrant communities; and

WHEREAS, as a compassionate city Garden Grove must continue to stand against national policies and rules that target the health and safety of our immigrant neighbors and communities, regardless of status.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council that the City of Garden Grove opposes the Department of Homeland Security's proposed public charge rule change as applied to legal permanent residency applications because of the negative impact the proposed rule would have on our immigrant communities' access to vital services and cost-saving initiatives that keep families healthy and on the path towards economic self-sufficiency and success.