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# MARIN COUNTY

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## OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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Hello,

I want to update you on the status of proposed changes to immigration law currently being considered by the Department of Homeland Security related to Public Charge.

“Public charge” is an existing part of current immigration law where the government determines whether someone may become dependent on government assistance benefits as their main source of support. If so, the government can deny admission to the U.S. or refuse an application for lawful permanent residency. Current policy considers someone a “public charge” if they receive cash assistance or long-term institutionalized medical care. The proposed changes greatly broaden the scope to include programs like Medi-Cal, CalFresh, Medicare Part D, and Section 8 Rental Assistance to possibly negatively impact a person’s immigration status.

A report from the Immigration Policy Institute states that approximately 23,200 people in Marin, including 8,300 US-citizen children, live in families in where at least one member is receiving benefits that could potentially be included under the new Public Charge rules.

This proposed change is raising alarm and anxiety in the immigrant community and preventing families in need from signing up for health, nutrition, and other benefits and resources they are entitled to out of fear of being on a future public charge list.

The immigration law changes have not yet gone into effect and there is currently a period Public Comment on the changes. **It is important for comments to be filed by December 10, 2018.**

**As members of school communities privileged to serve families and children who are impacted by Public Charge, it is important that we express our concerns and voice our opposition to the proposed changes.**

The Marin County Office of Education website on [Immigrant Student and Family Resources](#) provides more information about public charge and a link for delivering [Public Comment](#) to the Department of Homeland Security.

Thanks for all you to keep all of children safe and secure in our schools.

Mary Jane Burke  
Marin County Superintendent of Schools