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TAHIRIH STATEMENT ON PUBLIC CHARGE IMPLEMENTATION

Today, the administration's public charge rule will go into effect. The Tahirih Justice Center is deeply disappointed by last month's [Supreme Court decision](#) that allows the rule to be implemented as legal challenges continue, making it harder for certain immigrants to obtain a Green Card if they have used a range of public benefits, like food stamps, non-emergency Medicaid, certain prescription drug subsidies, and housing vouchers.

"The public charge rule is yet another attack on immigrant communities and is especially harmful for survivors of gender-based violence who are subject to the rule," said Irena Sullivan, Tahirih Senior Immigration Policy Counsel. "Abusers commonly use threats of violence and deportation to keep survivors economically dependent on them and to prevent them from escaping. Many survivors fear deportation because the result is separation from young U.S. citizen children, and loss of child custody to an abuser. This rule rewards perpetrators by deterring impacted survivors from accessing much needed benefits to feed themselves and their children, basic health services, and housing. We should not be punishing survivors who are already traumatized and in need of a lifeline."

Fortunately, many survivors are indeed exempt from the rule, so it is critical for all immigrants to consult with experts before foregoing benefits unnecessarily. Also, survivors subject to the rule will not be penalized for use of benefits by their U.S. citizen children. More information on exemptions can be found on the [U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services' website](#).

Despite these exemptions, the impact of the public charge rule's existence cannot be understated. "We already see that immigrant survivors in need of critical services are forgoing help – in many cases, unnecessarily. A woman seeking legal advice contacted us, and specifically asked if we receive government funding. When she learned that we do, she became extremely hesitant to speak to us. She feared that using our services would put her at risk of being deemed a public charge and that her Green Card application may be rejected one day as a result. This broad chilling effect is being seen throughout immigrant communities, keeping the most vulnerable in the shadows."

Irena Sullivan is available for comment on this topic. Please contact dhajjar@mrss.com to arrange an interview.

About the Tahirih Justice Center

The Tahirih Justice Center is the largest national direct service and policy advocacy organization focused on assisting immigrant women and girls fleeing violence. Tahirih will continue to monitor policy shifts that impact women and girls fleeing violence and advocate for the United States to honor its legal obligations to protect those fleeing human rights abuses.