

Statement on the proposed “public charge” rule published by the Department of Homeland Security in the Federal Register.

The President’s Commission on Diversity & Inclusion at Eastern Michigan University joins the President’s Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration and the Community College Consortium for Immigrant Education in calling the proposed regulations harmful and counterproductive for immigrants and the nation. Labelling an immigrant who receives one or more public benefits a “public charge” will impact health, access, success, and well-being across the board for immigrant students, children, parents, and families. We believe that such regulations create a hostile environment that discourage enrollment and retention in post-secondary programs, enrollment in programs such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Medicare Part D Low Income Subsidy, and Housing Assistance. Fear of becoming labelled as such may lead to low-income immigrant students not accessing public benefits or forcing them to drop out altogether, even when they are eligible and have very real need.

The Commission calls on the EMU community to support and advocate for the full access of immigrant students to all levels of education and the pursuit of opportunity, without fear of reprisal or negative consequence. We affirm the imperative that no community can be home to some at the expense of belonging for others.

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