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**To:**

**Subject:** President Donald J. Trump Is Taking Action to Protect Our Social Safety Net and Promote Self-Sufficiency for Non-Citizens



Office of the Press Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 23, 2019

**PRESIDENT DONALD J. TRUMP IS TAKING ACTION TO PROTECT OUR  
SOCIAL SAFETY NET AND PROMOTE SELF-SUFFICIENCY FOR NON-  
CITIZENS**

*“To protect benefits for American citizens, immigrants must be financially self-sufficient.” –  
President Donald J. Trump*

**PROMOTING SELF-SUFFICIENCY: President Donald J. Trump is enforcing existing restrictions on welfare use by non-citizens in order to promote self-sufficiency.**

- President Trump signed a memorandum to ensure agencies fully enforce restrictions in place under current law on the use of income-based welfare programs by non-citizens.
  - Under current law, individuals sponsoring a non-citizen must take on financial responsibility for any income-based welfare benefits they receive.
- The President is directing agencies to issue guidance to ensure income-based welfare payments are recovered from the sponsor.
  - Agencies will ensure sponsors are advised of their financial obligations under the law.

- Cases where the sponsor fails to pay the lawfully required reimbursements will be referred for collection procedures in accordance with the law.
- The national policy signed into law by President Clinton in 1996 made clear that aliens should “not depend on public resources to meet their needs.”
- President Clinton signed legislation to require that the sponsor of a non-citizen be requested to reimburse any income-based welfare benefits the non-citizen receives.
  - This legislation, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996, was supported by Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-VT) and Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA).
- President Clinton also signed legislation requiring the sponsor’s financial resources to be considered when determining whether a non-citizen is eligible for income-based welfare.
  - This legislation, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, was supported by top Congressional Democrats.

**ABUSE OF THE WELFARE SYSTEM: Rampant welfare abuse by non-citizens is straining the social safety net and jeopardizing benefits needed by the most vulnerable American citizens.**

- Vast numbers of non-citizens and their families take advantage of our welfare programs.
  - 78 percent of households headed by a non-citizen with no more than a high school education use at least one welfare program.
  - 58 percent of all households headed by a non-citizen use at least one welfare program.
  - 50 percent of all non-citizen headed households include at least one person who receives health insurance through Medicaid.
- Welfare payments to sponsored aliens put further stress on our Nation’s safety net programs.

**MERIT-BASED IMMIGRATION: This is the latest step by the Trump Administration to ensure that those coming to our country are self-sufficient and do not strain our public resources.**

- Under our current immigration system, two-thirds of immigrants entering the United States do so based on family ties rather than on skill or merit.
- This follows the President's proposed housing rule that would require verification of the immigration status of anyone who seeks to access housing benefits.
- A merit-based immigration system would further ensure that immigrants make positive contributions to the United States.
- Americans widely agree with the President, with around 73 percent of Americans supporting requirements that immigrants be able to support themselves financially.

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