Office of the Press Secretary

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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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