

**House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security Member Day Hearing**  
**Testimony**  
**Rep. Judy Chu**  
**February 26, 2020**

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Chairwoman Roybal-Allard, Ranking Member Fleischmann and members of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security,

Thank you for holding this Member Day hearing today. I appreciate the opportunity to voice support for several policies, including opposition to the public charge rule, reversing the Administration's hateful Muslim ban, and reuniting families through clearing immigration visa backlogs.

On Monday, February 24<sup>th</sup>, the Trump Administration's discriminatory public charge rule went into effect. By changing the definition of "public charge," this rule acts as a wealth test for legal immigrants and makes it more difficult for them to get green cards or adjust their status if they have used, or are likely to use benefits such as Medicaid, housing assistance, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and other programs.

I am the author of the No Federal Funds for Public Charge Act (H.R. 3222) which would block any funding from being used to implement this discriminatory public charge. Immigrants who use public benefits that they have paid into through taxes should not be penalized for that when they apply for green cards or other adjustment of immigration status. Already, we are seeing a decrease in healthcare enrollment and communities fearful of using benefits that they are eligible for in case it might affect their immigration status or that of a loved one. I urge the Committee to include language in the DHS Appropriations to ensure that no federal funds are used to implement this cruel rule. Congress must send a clear message that we did not authorize this policy change in our immigration laws.

This Administration has also imposed travel bans that discriminate based on religion and national origin. Even though the first two bans were found unconstitutional, the Supreme Court upheld the third iteration of the ban that excludes people from predominantly Muslim majority countries in *Trump v. Hawaii*. This has given the President latitude to expand the ban, as he did last month when he added 6 more countries with significant Muslim populations to the travel ban. That is why in addition to introducing H.R. 2214, the No Ban Act, which would limit the President's authority to implement these broad bans, I introduced H.R. 810, to ensure no federal funds be used to implement the ban. The Muslim ban continues to tear families apart and cause misery and psychological trauma. Spouses and fiancés are separated. Weddings, funerals, graduations have all been missed. Over 5,000 adopted children of US citizens cannot join their families. I urge the Committee to include language ensuring that federal funds are not used to implement any iterations of the travel bans.

Lastly, I request that this committee include language to help relieve the family and employment immigration visa backlog. There are currently over 4 million people in the family immigration backlog waiting to reunite with their loved ones in the United States. The average wait time for a permanent resident to sponsor an unmarried son or daughter from Mexico is over twenty years. My bill, the Reuniting Families Act (H.R. 3799) takes steps to address our current immigration visa backlogs by modernizing our family immigration system and providing relief to families who have been separated for years. Specifically, the bill recaptures unused visas lost over the past two decades, ends the practice of counting spouses and children against the visa caps, and allows judicial discretion in granting visas. I request that these provisions of my bill be included in the FY2021 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations bill so that families can finally be reunited, and more visas can be allocated for immigrants who have already met the criteria to come to the United States.

Thank you again for allowing me to testify and I look forward to working with the committee on these important immigration priorities.