

REMOVING THE FIVE-YEAR BAR IS ESSENTIAL FOR CHILDREN IN MASSACHUSETTS TO THRIVE

Under current law, immigrants with legal permanent resident (LPR) status must wait five years before being able to access critical supports like Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, and Supplemental Security Income. Nationally, over 1.3 million children have an LPR status parent who is still within that five year window. No child can afford to wait five years to receive critical health and nutrition assistance. Congress must act to remove the five-year bar for immigrants and their families.

Over 47k children in Massachusetts are impacted by the five-year bar.¹

Although Massachusetts provides access to Medicaid and CHIP for LPR children and pregnant women during that five year waiting period, it provides no food assistance for LPR adults. It's important that the waiting period is removed entirely—when caregivers are able to fully access supports they can better care for themselves and their children.

What would removing the 5-year bar mean for children in immigrant families?

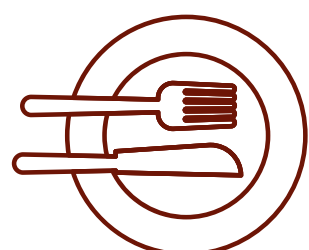
Essential health care, public benefits, and economic supports would be accessible to all eligible, lawfully present immigrants. Removing the bar would provide children the support they need for a healthy and happy childhood.²

Increasing Access to Health Care



Children with immigrant parents are twice as likely to be uninsured over children with U.S. citizen parents.³ Research has documented that child health is closely linked to that of their parents—even when children are U.S. citizens, they are less likely to be enrolled in benefits if their caregivers are ineligible for those same benefits.⁴

Reducing Hunger



Access to nutrition can have a serious impact on a child's mental and physical wellbeing, yet immigrant families disproportionately experience food insecurity.⁵ Participation in SNAP for children in immigrant families has dramatically decreased at rate nearly triple that of children with U.S. citizen parents.⁶

Supporting Economic Stability



A quarter of all children in immigrant families live in poverty— a higher rate than children with U.S. citizen parents.⁷ The pandemic has only exacerbated the economic and housing instability that immigrant families face.⁸

¹ National Center for Children in Poverty, State Immigration Policy and Children's Well-Being, <https://www.nccp.org/immigration-profiles/>

² Aileen Wang, Madalyn News, First Focus Campaign for Children, Fact Sheet: LIFT the Bar Act, https://firstfocus.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/FACT-SHEET_LIFT-the-BAR.pdf

³ Kaiser Family Foundation, Health Coverage of Immigrants, <https://www.kff.org/racial-equity-and-health-policy/fact-sheet/health-coverage-of-immigrants/>

⁴ Georgetown University Center for Children and Families, Health Coverage for Parents and Caregivers Helps Children, <https://ccf.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Covering-Parents-v2.pdf>

⁵ Allison Bovell-Ammon, Stephanie Ettinger de Cuba, et al., Trends in Food Insecurity and SNAP Participation among Immigrant Families of U.S.-born Young Children, Children's HealthWatch, <https://childrenshealthwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/0001.pdf>

⁶ Food Research & Action Center, New Data Reveal Stark Decreases in SNAP Participation Among U.S. Citizen Children Living With a Non-Citizen, <https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/SNAP-Participation-Among-U.S.-Citizen-Children.pdf>

⁷ The Annie E. Casey Foundation, One-Fourth of Kids in Immigrant Families Are Living in Poverty, <https://www.aecf.org/blog/one-fourth-of-kids-in-immigrant-families-are-living-in-poverty>

⁸ Hamutal Bernstein, Cary Lou, Wesley Jenkins, Urban Institute, Policymakers Can Prioritize Better Ways to Support Children of Immigrants through Housing Assistance, <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/policymakers-can-prioritize-better-ways-support-children-immigrants-through-housing-assistance>

CLASP
The Center for Law and Social Policy

