



To: Michigan journalists
From: Michigan Immigrant Rights Center and partners
Date: May 8, 2025
Regarding: Key issues for Michigan immigrant families in the federal budget reconciliation debate

As congressional committees begin their work to develop a budget “reconciliation” bill, we are focused on a range of priority threats to the health and wellbeing of immigrant families. The libertarian [Cato Institute confirms](#) that, while immigrants account for more than 7% percent of the U.S. population, immigrants accounted for just 3.5% of all safety net spending. Yet extremist groups and their allies in Congress have targeted immigrant families for safety net cuts.

Because immigrants and their families account for [27% of people in the U.S.](#), these proposals could have a devastating effect nationwide. The [Migration Policy Institute estimated](#) in 2023 that immigrants account for more than 1/7 (196,000, or 14%) of the 1.4 million Michigan residents living in families with incomes below the federal poverty line, so proposals targeting immigrant families would have dangerous consequences for our state.

This memo provides an overview and flags questions we encourage journalists to pose as the budget reconciliation process advances.

DENYING MEDICAID TO LAWFULLY PRESENT IMMIGRANTS

People who are undocumented are not eligible for Medicaid coverage. In fact, even new “green card” recipients must wait five years before qualifying. Yet extremists have urged congressional Republicans to go further, denying Medicaid to all lawfully-present immigrants. Legislation last year (HR 7772, Grothman) was cosponsored by some of the House’s most radical members and interest groups are actively pushing this proposal.

This is the nuclear option, with the potential to deny health care to tens of millions of people who are lawfully present, nationwide. And research shows that [when parents have coverage, their children are more likely to be insured](#), so making immigrant parents uninsured will effectively deny health care to millions of U.S. citizen children in immigrant families.

Beyond the human impact, the proposal poses a real threat to the health care system’s viability. Denying lawfully-present immigrants and their families coverage does not mean they will not need care. It just means that they will be unable to get preventive care, so manageable

conditions will worsen, requiring emergency care and shifting the cost of care to hospitals and other providers.

Reporters should be asking Michigan lawmakers:

- Do you know how many people in your state / district would lose health care if you vote to terminate the Medicaid eligibility of lawfully-present immigrants?
- Do you know how such a proposal will affect our state's health care provider network? How many clinics and hospitals will be forced to close? How many health care industry jobs will be lost?

PENALIZING STATES FOR USING STATE FUNDS TO COVER IMMIGRANTS INELIGIBLE FOR MEDICAID

As noted above, federal law not only denies Medicaid coverage to people who are undocumented, but also to people who are lawfully present, including people with green cards during their first five years in the United States.

Bills have already been introduced in both chambers of Congress ([HR 1195](#), Hudson / [S 253](#), Cassidy) to deny states administrative funding to support the coverage of immigrants ineligible for federally-funded Medicaid. Importantly, that includes people who are lawfully present, as well as people who are undocumented. The Foundation for Government Accountability and other extremists have urged Congress to go farther.

Their proposals would reduce the federal government's share of Medicaid funding for states that use state funds to cover immigrants ineligible for federally-funded Medicaid. Practically, these proposals would deny states funds to cover U.S. citizens and federally-eligible immigrants because those states chose to use their own funds to cover immigrants.

This proposal is legislative blackmail, holding federal funding to cover US citizens and other people who are federally-eligible for Medicaid hostage to force states to change the way they use their own funds.

Reporters should be asking lawmakers:

- Have you asked the state lawmakers representing your congressional district whether and how they would respond to a new law holding Michigan Medicaid funding hostage to change state policy?
- Do you know how many US citizens would lose coverage under proposals like this?
- Do you know how such a proposal will affect our state's health care provider network?

DENYING SNAP TO LAWFULLY-PRESENT IMMIGRANTS

Like Medicaid, people who are undocumented are ineligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly “Food Stamps”). And adults with green cards and other lawful immigration statuses cannot get SNAP for the first five years of their U.S. residency. Children who are lawfully present can qualify for SNAP without the waiting period, as can refugees and other lawfully-present immigrants.

Despite the fact that undocumented immigrants are already denied federally funded SNAP assistance, congressional Republicans and radical groups have proposed denying food to additional lawfully-present immigrants and U.S. citizens in immigrant families.

With food prices persistently high and [food security already out of reach for 1/3 of Michigan children](#), such a proposal would have a real impact on state families. Hunger is not colorblind – [Black and Latine children are as much as three times as likely](#) as white children to live with food insecurity. Because immigrant families are overwhelmingly families of color, enactment of wider SNAP restrictions on lawfully-present immigrants and U.S. citizens in immigrant families would widen racial disparities in food insecurity.

Finally, SNAP drives economic growth across the country, especially in states like Michigan with substantial agricultural sectors. Eligibility restrictions affecting large numbers of people in immigrant families would have real consequences for farms, food manufacturers, and neighborhood retailers.

Reporters should be asking lawmakers:

- Do you know how many Michigan children would lose SNAP if Congress widens the exclusion of additional lawfully-present immigrants?
- Do you know how such a proposal will affect food security, given persistently high food prices?
- Do you know how such a proposal will affect our state’s agriculture and food businesses and the jobs they produce?

DENYING THE CHILD TAX CREDIT TO CHILDREN IN IMMIGRANT FAMILIES

The Child Tax Credit (CTC) lifts millions of children out of poverty every year, providing critical support for rent, transportation, and other basic needs. About [90% of children in immigrant families are U.S. citizens](#), and most of the remainder have green cards or other lawful statuses. But a proposal advanced by congressional Republicans would [deny the CTC to an estimated 4.5 million children](#) in immigrant families – again, U.S. citizens and lawfully-present immigrants – sharply increasing child poverty, especially in families of color.