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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 11, 2018

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**MAYOR EMANUEL, CITY OF CHICAGO SUBMIT COMMENT
IN OPPOSITION TO PRESIDENT TRUMP'S 'PUBLIC CHARGE' RULE CHANGE**
Trump administration's proposal is unlawful, would be harmful to Chicago residents

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today announced that the City of Chicago submitted a comment to the federal government in opposition to the Trump Administration's proposed "public charge" rule change, as it would cause harm to the city and its immigrant residents. The City of Chicago and the City of New York also led a coalition of more than thirty local governments in submitting a separate comment to explain why the proposed rule is unlawful.

"Chicago is and will remain a welcoming city that works to provide its residents with resources, not stand by while they are taken away," said Mayor Emanuel. "This proposed rule is just the latest example of the Trump Administration's unlawful attempts to unfairly target and endanger the most vulnerable among us; we will continue to oppose this and any action that would make it more difficult for immigrants to adapt to their new lives and contribute to the social and cultural fabric of Chicago."

On October 10, 2018, the Trump Administration's Department of Homeland Security published a proposal to expand the test that it applies to determine whether an immigrant is likely to become a "public charge." Under longstanding policy, a "public charge" is an immigrant who is primarily dependent on the government for subsistence. The proposed rule seeks to greatly expand the definition of "public charge" to, for the first time, include non-cash benefits such as food stamps, medical care and housing assistance. The use of these benefits would be considered to not only determine which immigrants may be barred from entry into the United States, but also those lawfully present who wish to become permanent residents.

As outlined in the comment, the City of Chicago has more than 500,000 foreign-born residents from all over the world who are lawfully living and working within its communities. This change would likely result in many of these immigrants and their families withdrawing from federal assistance programs, or choosing not to enroll, even if they are eligible.

In addition, immigrants who are exempt from the "public charge" determination, including refugees and those who have sought asylum, may also decide to opt out of receiving public services based on confusion or fear of jeopardizing the immigration status of themselves or of a family member. The comment explains that Chicago is already hearing reports of a chilling effect based on the proposed

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rule. Chicago's Department of Family & Support Services has reported that some of the city's delegate agencies, including providers of Head Start, Early Head Start, and SNAP benefits, are seeing declines in enrollment and participation.

The comment also explains that the proposed rule's inclusion of federal medical insurance programs in the "public charge" determination would have negative health consequences and would shift health care costs to local governments such as the City of Chicago. As immigrants stop using available federal health programs, they will look to local programs to fill this gap or refrain from seeking basic health care services altogether, causing a rise in more expensive, emergency care for unmanaged chronic conditions, or other conditions that could have been detected through routine exams.

The effects of the proposed rule would extend beyond the immigrant community; a rise in untreated communicable diseases could affect the health of Chicagoans citywide. In addition, the loss of revenue from federal aid programs would be felt by local business owners and service providers.

The comments were prepared by attorneys in Chicago's Affirmative Litigation Division, which represents the city in a broad range of investigations and litigation matters in both federal and state courts to protect the interests of the city and the rights, health and safety of its residents.

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