

Anti-Poverty Advocates Condemn the RAISE Act as an Affront to Working Families

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Aug. 4, 2017—Yesterday, Senators David Perdue (R-GA) and Tom Cotton (R-AR) released the [Reforming American Immigration for Strong Economy Act \(RAISE Act\)](#), which would drastically reduce legal immigration to the United States.

Backed by the Trump Administration, the proposal would cap refugee admissions, cut total immigration in half by eliminating diversity visas and cutting family-based visas, and create a new visa system that awards points to potential immigrants based on characteristics such as speaking English and having higher education levels. The bill also includes troubling provisions that would threaten the health and wellbeing of hard-working immigrants and their families by barring them from basic health care and nutrition assistance and creating barriers to naturalization simply for needing this help.

In response, more than 180 organizations from the anti-poverty, health, civil rights, anti-hunger, disability, faith-based and children's advocacy communities released this statement condemning the proposal:

“The RAISE Act is yet another attack on low-income communities of color, in this case immigrants and their families. The proposal would keep families apart and close the doors of opportunity to people who come to the United States to work their way up and provide a better future for their families. It ignores the contributions of hard-working immigrants, who represent a range of skills and income levels, and threatens the health and wellbeing of entire families.

“The bill seeks to punish all members of a household—including U.S. citizen children—by denying them access to health care and nutrition assistance for up to five years simply because one family member entered on a points-based visa. This proposal is unconstitutional because it discriminates against citizens based on their family status and presents an egregious and unprecedented assault on the rights and wellbeing of U.S. citizens, many of whom are children whose healthy development is critical to our nation's future prosperity. Moreover, it would create additional barriers to immigrants seeking to naturalize, preventing some who have used health care or other help with basic needs from becoming citizens and penalizing their sponsors, creating a chilling effect that could make more immigrants and their families reluctant to access critical supports. By demonizing families for simply needing health care and other supports, the proposal directly contradicts what we have learned from the past months of the Congressional debate: that Americans believe that our nation benefits when everyone can get the health care they need.

“This bill would do nothing to help working Americans. Rather, it will only weaken our economy and our communities. Furthermore, this attempt to restrict the rich diversity that immigration brings to our country—and to devalue immigrants who work hard in a range of critical jobs—pulls the veil off the harsh nativist agenda that has already been shown in the cruel and arbitrary surge in enforcement activities targeting our immigrant neighbors.

“We urge Members of Congress and our allies to reject this harmful proposal. Instead, we must work together to push for immigration reform that upholds our American values of inclusivity and respect for people from all economic backgrounds.”

This joint statement is signed by the following organizations.

National Signatories

Agricultural Missions, Inc.
Agroecology Research-Action Collective
American Psychological Association
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee
Amnesty International USA
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Asian American Farmers Alliance
Asian Americans Advancing Justice
Association of Asian Pacific Community Organizations (AAPCHO)
Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs
Bread for the World
Catholic Charities
Center for Community Change
Center for Law and Social Policy
Center for Medicare Advocacy
Center for Public Interest Law
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
Children's Advocacy Institute
Children's HealthWatch
Church World Service
Coalition on Human Needs
Community Catalyst
Community Food and Justice Coalition
Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)
ECE PolicyWorks
Fair World Project
First Focus Campaign for Children
Food Chain Workers Alliance
Food Policy Action
Food Research & Action Center
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Friends of the Earth
Human Impact Partners
Hunger Free America
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Jewish Labor Committee
Justice for Immigrants
Justice in Aging
Latinos for Healthcare Equity
Mark Winne Associates
Mi Familia Vota
MomsRising
MPower Change
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
National Center for Law and Economic Justice
National Council of Jewish Women
National Domestic Workers Alliance

National Family Farm Coalition
National Health Law Program
National Hmong American Farmers, Inc.
National Immigrant Justice Center
National Immigration Law Center
National Latino Farmers & Ranchers Trade Association
National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
NIAC Action
Northwest Forest Worker Center
Our Revolution
ParentsTogether Action
People For the American Way
Pesticide Action Network
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Project Inform
Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities Coalition
Rural Coalition
Rural Development Leadership Network
Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law
School Sisters of Notre Dame - CPP Immigration Committee
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
Southern Poverty Law Center
SparkAction
Sustainable Agriculture Education Association
T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights
The Arc of the United States
The Children's Partnership
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
Voices for Progress
We Belong Together
18MillionRising.org

State Signatories

Abanitu Organics (NC)
Advocates for Children and Youth (MD)
Alabama Food Bank Association
Alabama State Association of Cooperatives
Alternatives to Hunger/Bellingham Food Bank (WA)
American Federation of Government Employees Local 3354 (MO)
Anti-Hunger & Nutrition Coalition (WA)
AR Hunger Relief Alliance
Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families
Asian Law Alliance (CA)
BioRegional Strategies (NM)
California Association of Food Banks
California Council of Churches IMPACT
California Food Policy Advocates

California Immigrant Policy Center
California Institute for Rural Studies
CaliforniaHealth+ Advocates
Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee, Inc. (MA)
Catholic Charities of Worcester (MA)
Center for Civil Justice (MI)
Center for Family Farm Development, Inc. (GA)
Center for Public Policy Priorities (TX)
Children Now (CA)
Children's Alliance (WA)
Colorado Center on Law and Policy
Columbia Legal Services (WA)
Community Agroecology Network (CA)
Community Alliance for Global Justice (WA)
Connecticut Legal Services
D.C. Hunger Solutions
Dane Sanctuary Coalition (WI)
Edmonds Food Bank (WA)
Empire Justice Center (NY)
End Hunger Connecticut
Farmworker Association of Florida
Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Rural Training Center (GA)
Florida Impact, Inc.
Florida Legal Services, Inc.
Food for Maine's Future
Health and Welfare Council of Long Island (NY)
Hispanic Health Council (CT)
Hunger Free Colorado
Hunger Solutions New York
Immigrant Service Providers Group/Health (MA)
Indiana Institute for Working Families
Jewish Family Service of Seattle
Justice Committee Albany Province of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet (NY)
Kansas Appleseed
Kentucky Equal Justice Center
Kids Forward (WI)
Laundry Workers Center (NY)
Law Foundation of Silicon Valley
Legal Council for Health Justice (IL)
Legal Services of Southern Piedmont (NC)
Lighthouse Family Resource Center (CA)
Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry (DC)
Louisiana Budget Project
Make the Road New York
Maryland Hunger Solutions
Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute
Michigan League for Public Policy
Mississippi Center for Justice
NC Child
Nebraska Appleseed Center for Law in the Public Interest

New Haven Peoples Center
New Jersey Anti-Hunger Coalition
New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty
NH Hunger Solutions, Inc.
North Carolina Justice Center
Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance
Northwest Harvest (WA)
Northwest Health Law Advocates
Nourish Pierce County (WA)
Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon
Pennsylvania Council of Churches
PLBA Housing Development Corporation (AL)
Port Townsend Food Bank (WA)
Public Justice Center (MD)
Rally to Save the Valley
Rights and Democracy of Vermont
Rural Advancement Fund of the National Sharecroppers Fund
SC Appleseed Legal Justice Center
Services, Immigrant Rights, and Education Network (SIREN) (CA)
Sisters of the Most Precious Blood of O'Fallon, MO
Social Action Linking Together (VA)
South Kitsap Helpline (WA)
St. Anthony Foundation (CA)
Statewide Poverty Action Network (WA)
Tennessee Justice Center
Texans Care for Children
The Farmworker Association of Florida, Inc.
The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts
The Latino Health Insurance Program, Inc. (MA)
The Legal Aid Society (NY)
The New York Immigration Coalition
The Urban Justice Center (NY)
Trinity Parish Episcopal Church (DC)
Tukwila Pantry (WA)
URI Feinstein Center for a Hunger Free America (RI)
Utahns Against Hunger
Virginia Poverty Law Center
Voces de la Frontera
Western Center on Law & Poverty
Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice
Wisconsin Family Ties, Inc.
Worcester State University (MA)