

## Mary Ann Buggs: Fight Public Charge

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By LETTERS TO THE EDITOR  
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Some years ago, as a single mother, I used food stamps to help feed my two young children and myself. I considered it a Godsend at the time — and without it, we would have been severely strapped and unable to climb out of our poverty predicament.

Today, as an employee of the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano and volunteer at a Vallejo food pantry, I see many young struggling families receiving the same much-appreciated help — from CalFresh, as it's now called.

Unfortunately, the federal government published a proposed update to a long-standing rule called Public Charge that would make it extremely difficult for many immigrants to enter the United States or to receive green cards merely because they can be categorized as likely to use the very same benefits that helped me work my way out of poverty.

This cruel proposal is causing widespread fear and misunderstanding in the immigrant community. One in five community members that our Food Bank approached about applying for CalFresh say they are too afraid to apply because of this proposed rule. If this rule prevails, many will have to turn to the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano or their partner agencies, such as Faith Food Fridays in Vallejo for their basic food needs, and these resources are simply not set up to withstand the increased clientele.

If you have questions about this policy or you'd like to take action to fight it, we urge you to call your local food bank regarding the Public Charge rule which has not yet gone into effect.

— *Mary Ann Buggs/Vallejo*