February 18, 2022

Dear Coordinators & Directors,

Below you will find updates and information on the following topics: I. Federal policy: House Republicans introduce immigration reform bill; new proposed Public Charge Rule; II. State policy: Proposed AB-540 expansion, SB-1141; Gov. Newsom’s Health For All plan; III. UCImm updates: introducing new UCSB Staff Attorney; and IV.ICYMI: CHIRLA CDN workshop for UC students; USCIS has a new mission statement; new bill proposing independent immigration courts; and project funding opportunity from The Center for Inclusion and Belonging.

I. FEDERAL POLICY

**Republican Congresswoman introduces an immigration reform bill**

Last week, Congresswoman Maria Elvira Salazar and other House Republican introduced the "Dignity Act," an immigration reform bill "consisting of 3 core principles: stopping illegal immigration, providing a dignified solution for immigrants living in America, and strengthening the American workforce and economy." The bill would: expand border security and enforcement; create a 10-year "Dignity Program" wherein certain undocumented immigrants "will be provided a chance to work, earn legal status, pay restitution [$10,000], and get right with the law;" create an additional 5-year "Redemption Program" that "will offer a chance at redemption and to earn more permanent legal status;" would expand and modernize the H-2A Agricultural Guest Worker program "to adequately respond to workforce needs;" and includes the H-2B Returning Worker Exception Act "to ensure that small and seasonal businesses can fulfill their labor needs."

Unsurprisingly, this Republican proposal is not clean immigration reform. See link above and this article for more details.

**DHS proposes new Public Charge Rule**

The Department of Homeland Security has posted a new draft public charge rule, which means that the proposed regulation could appear in the Federal Register within the next few days. Analysis of the rule is forthcoming.

**Protecting Immigrant Families ("PIF")** will host an informational webinar Wednesday, February 23, at 1pm - register here.
II. STATE POLICY

Proposed AB-540 expansion, SB-1141

This week, Senator Limón (with support of the CCC Chancellor’s Office) introduced a bill to expand AB-540 eligibility. The bill would do two things: 1. Change the threshold to qualify the nonresident tuition exemption from three to two years of full-time attendance; and 2. remove the two-year cap on full-time enrollment in credit courses. You can view the proposed edits (“compare versions”) here.

Newsom’s plan closes the gap for Health for All access regardless of immigration status

Governor Newsom recently announced that he plans to expand health care access to all income-eligible California residents regardless of legal status, starting Jan. 1, 2024. The plan could impact an estimated 764,000 undocumented immigrants.

Beginning May 1, 2022, all qualifying individuals over 50 will become eligible for Medi-Cal regardless of immigration status, and undocumented individuals under 26 years of age can already qualify.

III. UCIMM UPDATES: New Staff Attorney serving UCSB

We are happy to welcome Amber Spring, our newest UCImm Staff Attorney! Amber is a UCSB alum who brings a wealth of experience from her work at Kids In Need of Defense ("KIND"), Central American Resource Center ("CARECEN"), and Immigration Center for Women and Children ("ICWC"). Welcome Amber!

IV: ICYMI

- CHIRLA’s California Dream Network ("CDN") team will present their "Leave No Dream$ on the Table" workshop on Wednesday, Feb 23 at 3PM, where they will discuss resources available to undocumented UC students (flyer attached). UCImm’s Davis Legal Fellow Ariel Bailey will be discussing legal services.
- USCIS Announces New Agency Mission Statement: “USCIS upholds America’s promise as a nation of welcome and possibility with fairness, integrity, and respect for all we serve.”
- Immigration Court Bill: San Jose Rep. Zoe Lofgren has introduced a bill that would allow immigration courts to gain independence from the DOJ, which is led by the U.S. attorney general - the nation’s top law enforcement officer and a political appointee. You can urge Congress to Support the Real Courts, Rule of Law Act of 2022 here.
- The Center for Inclusion and Belonging has posted an Open Call for Bridging Communities Projects - honorariums and a fellowship will be awarded.

As always, please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Thank you,
The UC Immigrant Legal Services Center team