



**National  
Latina Institute  
for Reproductive  
Justice**



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contacts:

Virginia Lucy

[media@napawf.org](mailto:media@napawf.org)

Yamila Ruiz

[Media@latinainstitute.com](mailto:Media@latinainstitute.com)

### **U.S. Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal, Nanette Barragan, Senator Cory Booker Introduce Health Equity and Access under the Law (HEAL) for Immigrant Families Act of 2023**

*Bold Legislation Provides Health Care Access for Immigrant Families Regardless of Status or Length of Stay in U.S.*

WASHINGTON D.C. – Today, Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal (D-WA), Congresswoman Nanette Barragan (D-CA), and Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ), along with 56 co-sponsors in the House and 9 cosponsors in the Senate, introduced the Health Equity and Access under the Law (HEAL) for Immigrant Families Act of 2023 to ensure that more people have access to the resources we need to thrive—including comprehensive health coverage—no matter how long someone has been in the U.S. or the status they have been granted.

“We must finally guarantee health care to everyone as a human right — regardless of immigration status, income, employment, or anything else,” **said Rep. Jayapal**. “As a proud immigrant who came to this country alone at the age of 16, I know that the HEAL Act is an urgent, necessary, and just first step to eliminating senseless barriers to health care, making our communities healthier, and ensuring all immigrants get the care they need.”

“Every person deserves healthcare, no matter their immigration status,” **said Rep. Barragán**. “Healthcare is a human right, and we must remove the unnecessary barriers that prevent immigrant families from the medical care they need to live and thrive. The HEAL Act will help reduce racial health inequities and ensure everyone has access to quality healthcare in their communities.”

“Everyone, regardless of their immigration status, deserves access to comprehensive, quality health care,” **said Senator Booker**. “By creating a more equitable health care system, we can create healthier communities and a stronger, more resilient economy.”

This introduction of the HEAL Act of 2023 comes just in time for the 58th anniversary of Medicaid and Medicare and stands at the precipice of unceasing and intensifying political attacks on immigrants and health care access across the country. This includes the harshest [anti-immigration law](#) in the country and ongoing [abortion bans](#) that disproportionately affect women and [communities of color](#).

Current U.S. policies limit access to critical health coverage. Many immigrants must wait five years or longer before they can enroll in Medicaid or the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Undocumented immigrants are completely barred from these programs as well as from purchasing insurance from the Marketplace. The HEAL Act removes the five-year bar in Medicaid/CHIP, opens up the ACA marketplace, and expands access to Medicare so that immigrants can access the affordable health care they need.

“In the past year we’ve seen people’s freedom to make their own decisions about their bodies and lives come under constant attack. Latinos/xs often bear the brunt of extreme policies that rob us of the tools we need to stay healthy,” **said Lupe M. Rodríguez, Executive Director, National Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice**. “It’s time for real, sustained change. We need the HEAL for Immigrant Families Act to support families and individuals to thrive and live with health, dignity and justice. All of us, regardless of documentation status, should have access to the health care services we need so that we can take care of ourselves and our families. This is one step in the direction to get us there and we celebrate the sponsors of this bill for their courage and leadership.”

“For too long, restrictive and discriminatory health care and immigration policy in the United States has limited immigrant access to affordable, comprehensive health insurance,” **said Isra Pananon Weeks, Interim Executive Director and Chief of Staff, National Asian Pacific American Women’s Forum (NAPAWF)**. “Many immigrants who lack access to insurance often delay or forgo preventive or primary care. The HEAL for Immigrant Families Act is the bold change we are calling for to create healthier communities and help immigrants get the care they need by removing burdensome and unnecessary restrictions to accessing health insurance, barriers that force immigrants to choose between quality care and prohibitively expensive out-of-pocket costs.”

National Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice and NAPAWF have been joined by over 170 organization endorsers calling on Congress to pass The HEAL for Immigrant Families Act.

Barriers to federal health insurance programs disproportionately harm Black, Latinx, Asian American, Pacific Islander, Indigenous, and immigrants of color, and contribute to persistent inequities in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of health conditions. In 2019, among the nonelderly population, [25 percent of lawfully present immigrants and more than four in 10 \(46 percent\) of undocumented immigrants](#) were uninsured compared to less than one in 10 (nine percent) citizens.

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National Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice ([Latina Institute](#)) is the only national reproductive justice organization dedicated to building power to advance health, dignity, and

justice for 29 million Latinas/xs, their families, and communities in the United States through leadership development, community mobilization, policy advocacy, and strategic communications.

The National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum ([NAPAWF](#)) is the only multi-issue, progressive, community organizing and policy advocacy organization for Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) women and girls in the U.S. NAPAWF's mission is to build collective power so that all AAPI women and girls can have full agency over our lives, our families, and our communities.