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## LIFT the BAR Act to Help Immigrant Families in Massachusetts

Immigrants of all statuses in the Commonwealth contribute more than \$10 billion in federal taxes every year - taxes that help fund the programs they cannot currently access.<sup>1</sup> Since 1996, federal restrictions have prevented most immigrants from obtaining benefits that can help their families' economic and social well-being. These programs are essential, especially in times of economic and public health crises when health disparities become more apparent. People with green cards must wait five years before they can access benefits, and other lawfully present individuals like [DACA holders](#) are not eligible for many federal programs at all.

**It is time to allow families access to these critical benefits.**

The **Lifting Immigrant Families Through Benefits Access Restoration** (LIFT the BAR Act) would allow lawfully present immigrants to access public programs like Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), housing assistance, and other services that help families stay healthy and safe. Eliminating these discriminatory exclusions will allow more lawfully present Massachusetts residents to obtain health and nutrition programs.

### The LIFT the BAR Act will:

- **Remove the arbitrary five-year bar eligibility restriction and expand access** to necessary state and federal public benefits for lawfully present immigrants including:
  - People who have had their green cards less than 5 years;
  - [Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals \(DACA\)](#) and [Temporary Protected Status \(TPS\)](#) holders;
  - victims of crime, trafficking, and child abuse
- **Allow flexibility** for states and localities to offer public assistance to residents with their own funds to create more inclusive programs;
- **Repeal barriers** to accessing benefits for immigrants who have a sponsor;
- **Align eligibility for child nutrition programs** ensuring that all kids have access to school breakfast and lunch programs regardless of immigration status;
- **Expand federal housing programs** to include lawfully present immigrants, including survivors of domestic violence and victims of crime and trafficking.

### LIFT the Bar Would Have a Significant Impact on Massachusetts

LIFT the BAR would create a stronger Commonwealth by allowing access to benefits for **17,000+ TPS holders, 5,000+ DACA Recipients, and tens of thousands of green card holders.**

While many children of immigrants are U.S. citizens and often eligible for benefits, children are less likely to be enrolled in benefits if their caregivers are not eligible for these benefits.<sup>2</sup> **Over 47,000 children in Massachusetts are impacted by the five-year bar and would benefit from expanding access.**<sup>3</sup>

**When more people can access basic services like healthcare, housing, and nutrition, it creates a stronger economy and healthier communities for all residents.** Expanding programs like SNAP and Medicaid can reduce health care costs<sup>4</sup> and boost the economy.<sup>5</sup>

**MIRA Coalition strongly supports H.R. 5227 LIFT the BAR Act  
introduced by Rep. Pramila Jayapal (D-WA).**

**Support LIFT the BAR by contacting your member of congress  
[HERE](#) and ask that they co-sponsor H.R. 5227 LIFT the BAR.**

**NOTE:** THIS FACT SHEET WAS LAST UPDATED IN OCTOBER 2021.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/immigrants-in-massachusetts>

<sup>2</sup> <https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/SNAP-Participation-Among-U.S.-Citizen-Children.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nccp.org/immigration-profiles/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/medi-cal-undocumented-adults/#text34>.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.rwjf.org/en/library/research/2018/09/snap-supports-children-and-families.html>