



News Release JEFF SESSIONS UNITED STATES SENATOR | ALABAMA

Under Gang of Eight Proposal, Illegal Immigrants Will Draw Federal Benefits Years Sooner Than Advertised

Eligibility For State And Local Benefits Could Be Immediate

The Gang of Eight's proposal would grant green cards and citizenship to millions of illegal immigrants, providing them with guaranteed access to all welfare and entitlement programs. Sponsors of the legislation have not denied this fact, but simply replied that illegal immigrants will not become officially eligible for taxpayer-funded aid for 13 years.

However, several loopholes have been identified that reveal many illegal immigrants will gain access to public benefits far sooner than the 13-year timeframe advertised. Therefore, in addition to the enormous long-term costs, the proposal promises to impose substantial short-term costs as well:

- Illegal immigrants granted registered provisional immigrant (RPI) status could immediately become eligible for state and local public benefits in many states. This is because [state laws frequently extend benefits](#) including cash assistance, food assistance, and health care to anyone “lawfully present” in the U.S.¹ The legislation *explicitly forbids* DHS from considering whether an illegal immigrant is financially self-sufficient when that alien first applies for RPI status.² Therefore, when those here illegally who are unable to support themselves are legalized, much of the immediate fiscal burden will fall on state and local governments.
- Those granted RPI status will immediately become eligible for federal benefits through citizen and permanent resident dependents, with no requirement that they support their household as a condition of receiving or maintaining legal status.³
- The expansive DREAM Act provisions are open to illegal immigrants of any age and provide citizenship in as little as five years to potentially 2–3 million individuals who will become eligible for nearly all federal assistance.⁴
- Agriculture workers will get green cards in five years and become citizens in 10. Due to income and education levels, legalized ag workers would likely have higher rates of welfare use and receive more in net benefits from Medicare and Social Security than they contribute.
- Households headed by illegal immigrants will quickly become eligible for benefits through chain migration as well. And, because DREAM beneficiaries will be able to bring in parents, children, and spouses not subject to caps, net household benefits will increase substantially.

¹ For example, according to an HHS survey of various state and federal benefit programs, 22 states have their own cash assistance programs that lawfully present immigrants may qualify for. “Lawfully present immigrants broadly include [legally permanent residents], refugees, and asylees, as well as **other foreign-born persons who are permitted to remain in the United States either temporarily or indefinitely but are not LPRs**” (emphasis added).

² Page 63 of the bill specifies that Section 212(a)(4) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (also known as the public charge standard) shall not be considered for the initial RPI application.

³ Even six years from now, when RPIs renew and are supposed to finally demonstrate either work history or income level, there is a whole new set of loopholes: income is defined so broadly that it could theoretically include means-tested support; enrollment in a GED prep course satisfies the employment requirement; and the requirement that an alien be regularly employed can be waived due to “circumstances outside [his or her] control.”

⁴ There is no work or income requirement for DREAM Act beneficiaries to become citizens, and the Secretary can waive the two-year education requirement “on the basis of hardship.”