



## **NAPAWF Applauds Obama Administration for Rules Change to Keep Families Together**

API women won a major immigrant rights victory last week when officials within the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced a proposed rule change that would allow undocumented immigrants to stay in the US while they apply for a waiver to remain with their families until they receive permission to obtain a green card. They would then return to their native country to get their green card with a visa that would allow them to return to the US more quickly than they can today. This simple rule change would greatly benefit API women and their families.

The National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum is the only national, multi-issue Asian and Pacific Islander (API) women's organization in the country dedicated to building a movement to advance social justice and human rights for API women and girls. As a co-leader of the National Coalition of Immigrant Women's Rights and the [We Belong Together](#) initiative, NAPAWF has been advocating for immigration policies that prioritize keeping women and their families together.

Under current immigration policy, undocumented persons who are married to US citizens or who have US citizen parents, are eligible to receive a green card. However, they must return to their home country in order to apply for a visa, which triggers a 3-year or 10-year bar to re-enter the US. This rule has created a catch-22 that has left many individuals that are eligible for green cards but who are unable or unwilling to leave their families for 10 years, with no chance of obtaining the green card for which they are eligible.

The proposed rule change wouldn't change existing law, lower the requirements for obtaining a green card, or eliminate the requirement that undocumented immigrants and their families prove "extreme hardship" to the US citizen due to the separation. However, a family unity waiver would remove one huge barrier and potentially allow hundreds of thousands of families to stay together.

Although this proposed rule change doesn't help those who are ineligible under current policies, such as same-sex couples who are not eligible to petition for legal status even for their legal spouses. Still, this rule is an important improvement for women than current policies and will enable more women and families to come out from the shadows and stop living in fear.