

ALIENS BILL ALIENATES RUDY, WHO SEES 140M HIT

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Body

WASHINGTON Congress is moving to complete an immigration **bill** that could punch a \$ 140 million hole into New York City's strained budget and cut off legal **aliens** from dozens of federally funded programs.

Mayor Giuliani planned a trip to Washington this week to add his voice to immigrants' rights groups that argue the **bill** unjustly would punish legal noncitizens, threaten public health and heap costly bureaucratic burdens on states, cities and social service agencies. "Cutting off benefits is patently unfair to these taxpaying residents," Giuliani said in a letter fired off over the weekend to Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-Utah).

"Denying these immigrants the opportunity to participate in job training, child care and education programs aimed at increasing their self-sufficiency and productivity is shortsighted and bad public policy," the mayor said.

A House-Senate conference committee is expected to meet as early as this week to sort out differences between **bills** passed by each chamber.

Both require **aliens** who fall on hard times to look to relatives or employers who sponsored their entry for help. Sponsors' incomes will be added to those of the immigrants to decide eligibility for many federally funded programs with income limits, such as Medicaid effectively shutting most out.

It would be up to agencies receiving the funds to sort out who is eligible. Giuliani said that chore and the expense of replacing services to immigrants barred from federal benefits could cost the city "in excess of \$ 140 million annually."

The Congressional Budget Office calculated the benefit crackdown could save federal taxpayers up to \$ 7 billion over seven years.

Rep. Lamar Smith (R-Tex.) said cutting benefits will "encourage immigrants to work and contribute to their community, and not live off the taxpayers." But Cecilia Munoz of the National Council of La Raza said the **bills** threaten immigrants' access to "dozens of programs which nobody thinks of as welfare."

The measures differ over whether legal **aliens** could be treated in federally subsidized communicable disease clinics. But New York City health officials fear that exemption was too little to protect the public.

Fred Winters of the Health Department said diseases like tuberculosis most often are discovered "in other kinds of health care" which **aliens**, stripped of Medicaid, would be less likely to receive. Those intimidated by complex new rules also may avoid treatment "because they are afraid they might get deported."

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