



Policy and Immigrant Access to Public Benefits

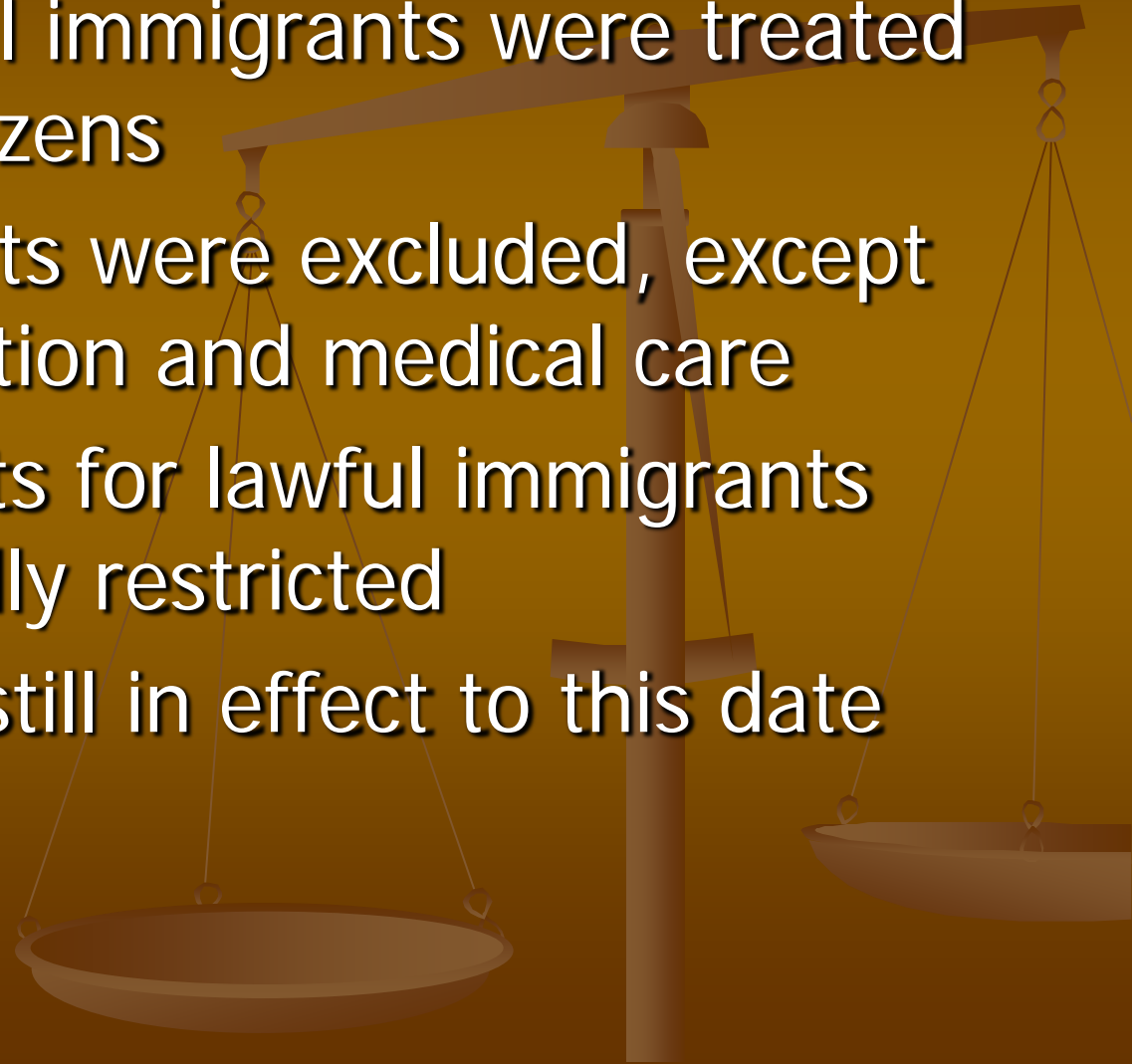
Vanessa Cajina

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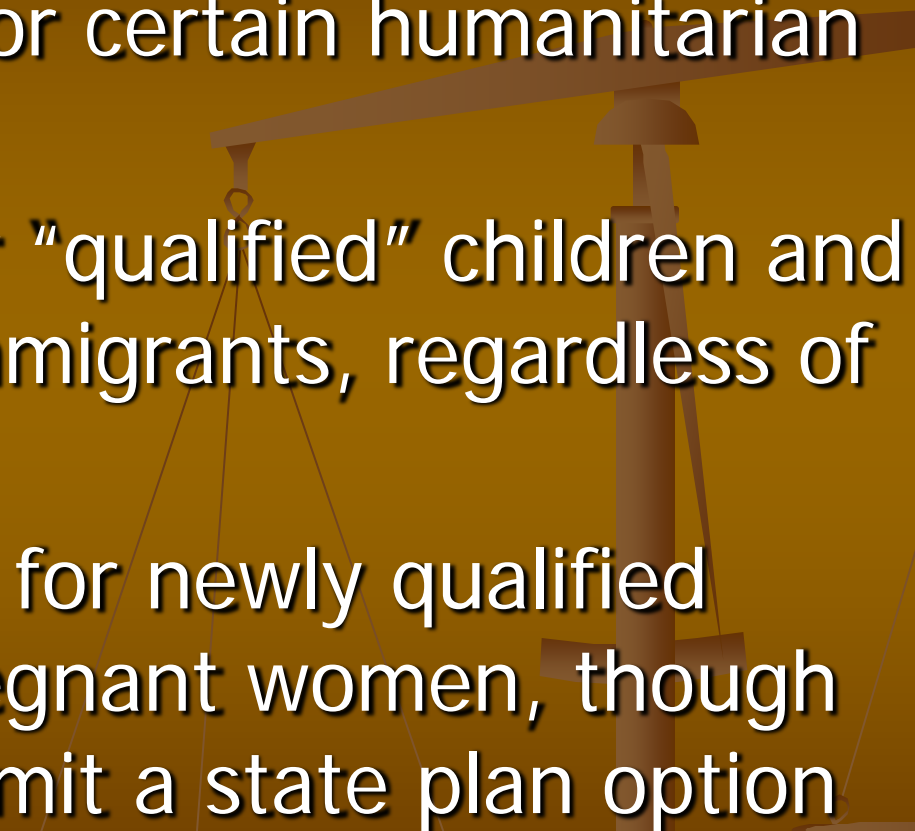
2010 California Symposium on Poverty

Immigrants and Access to Public Benefits: a brief history

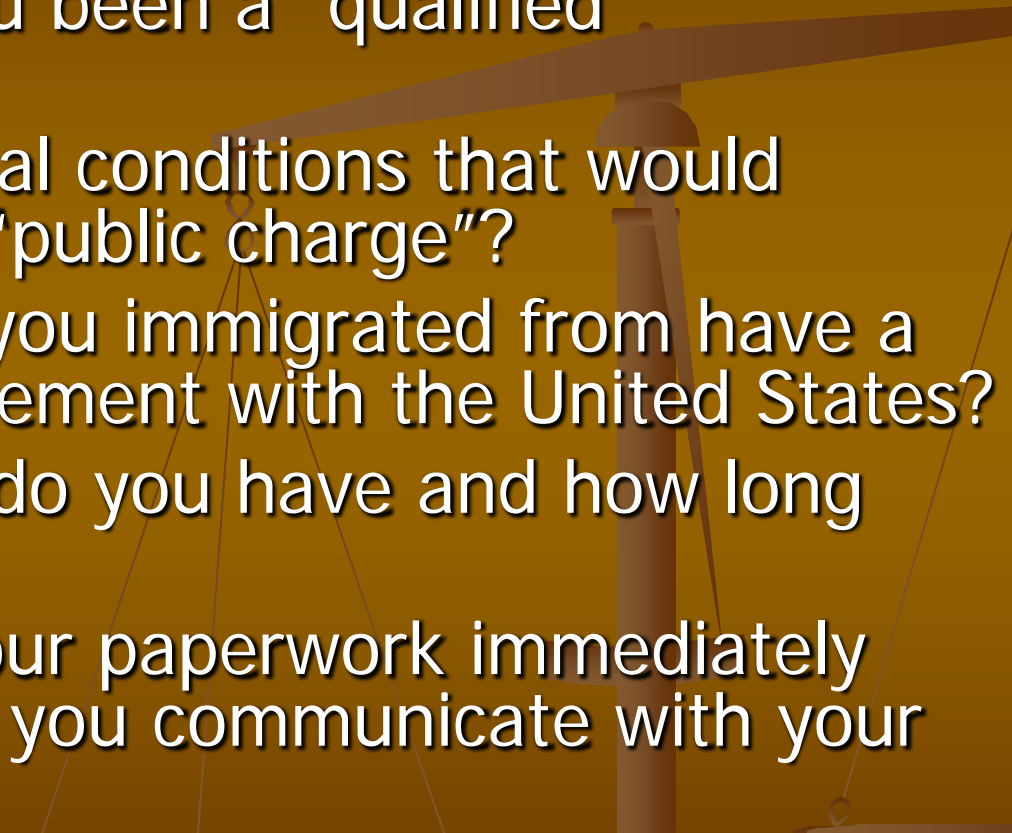
- Federally, lawful immigrants were treated the same as citizens
- Other immigrants were excluded, except for some education and medical care
- In 1996, benefits for lawful immigrants were dramatically restricted
- "5-year bar" is still in effect to this date



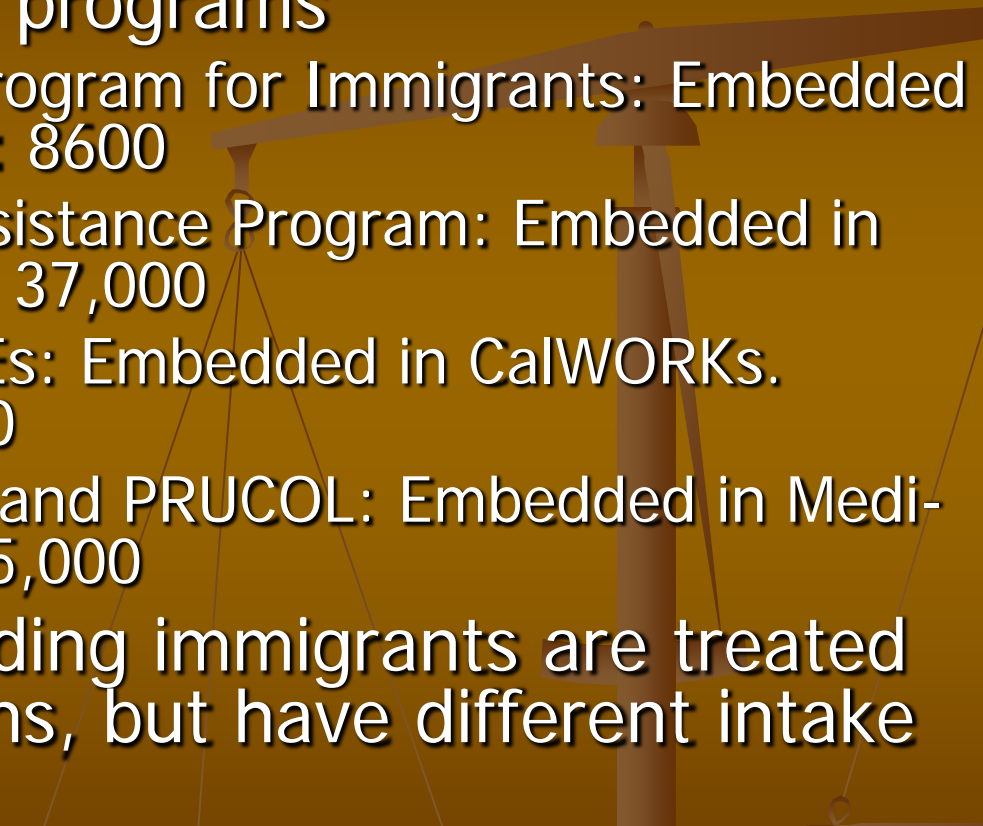
Some Benefits Have Been Restored

- Social security for certain humanitarian immigrants
 - Food stamps for “qualified” children and humanitarian immigrants, regardless of entrance date
 - Medicaid/SCHIP for newly qualified children and pregnant women, though states must submit a state plan option
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But Immigration Is Really Complicated!

- How long have you been a "qualified immigrant"?
 - Do you have special conditions that would exempt you from "public charge"?
 - Does the country you immigrated from have a humanitarian agreement with the United States?
 - What kind of visa do you have and how long have you had it?
 - Do you have all your paperwork immediately available, and can you communicate with your eligibility worker?
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How California Is Different

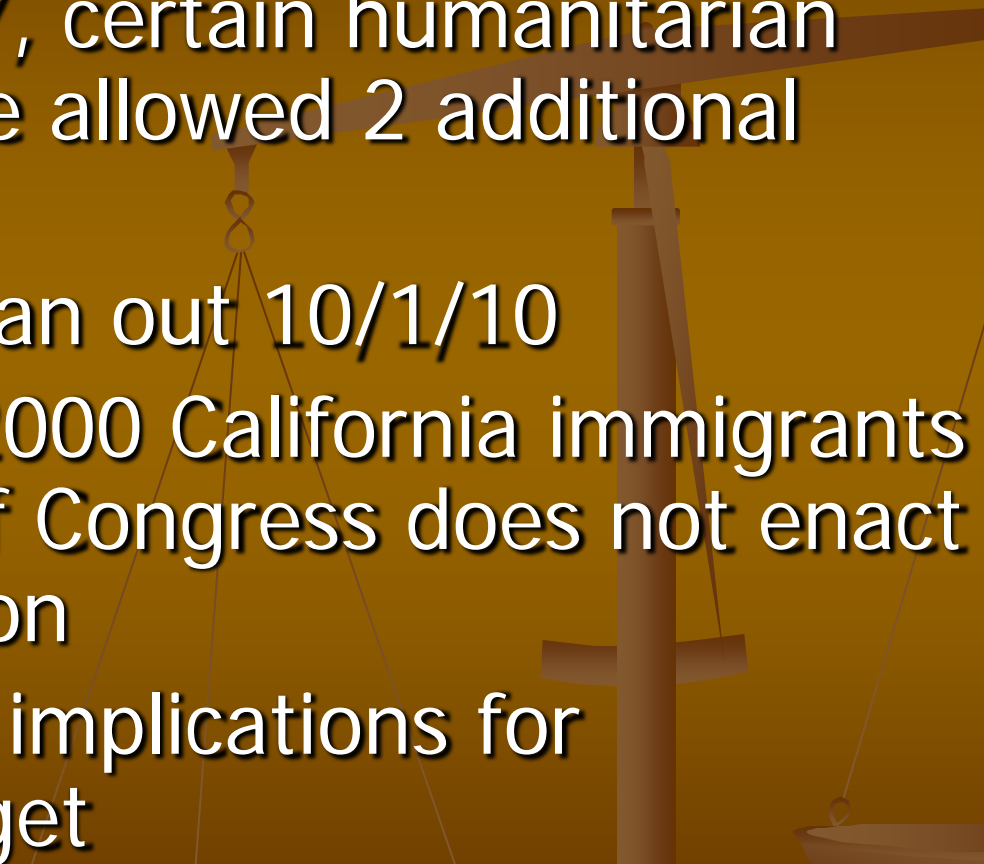
- State replacement programs
 - Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants: Embedded in SSI. Enrollment: 8600
 - California Food Assistance Program: Embedded in SNAP. Enrollment: 37,000
 - CalWORKs for RNEs: Embedded in CalWORKs. Enrollment: 24,000
 - Medi-Cal for NQIs and PRUCOL: Embedded in Medi-Cal. Enrollment: 65,000
 - Some lawfully residing immigrants are treated the same as citizens, but have different intake processes
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California's Budget Crisis



- We just “bridged” a \$20 billion deficit with more out-year deficits.
- Included in the Governor’s proposal were the elimination of:
 - CAPI
 - CFAP
 - CalWORKs for RNEs
 - Medi-Cal for Newly Qualified Immigrant adults
- The Legislature successfully staved off these proposals this year, but how much longer can we stay afloat?

Current Federal Issues

- In October 2007, certain humanitarian immigrants were allowed 2 additional years of SSI.
 - This extension ran out 10/1/10
 - Approximately 2000 California immigrants will fall off SSI if Congress does not enact another extension
 - This could have implications for California's budget
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Questions?

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