

**January 6, 2012**

It has been an interesting 24 hours for immigrants in New England.

The Massachusetts Supreme Court has ruled that the state's state-funded health coverage program, Commonwealth Care, can not bar the eligibility of legal immigrants. Commonwealth Care was a model for the 2010 health reform law (though some contenders for the Republican nomination might disagree). In 2009, however, the Commonwealth Care program moved to restrict eligibility for legal immigrants as per the federal Medicaid rules – mimicking the '5-year bar'. The Massachusetts Supreme Court struck down the move, specifically noting that the federal policy was no excuse for "invidious discrimination" by the state.

Meanwhile, in Maine, a very different story is playing out. As part of Maine's budget process in 2011, eligibility cuts were made to the MaineCare program (as well as SNAP and TANF) which are now coming into effect. The cuts target legal immigrant populations, though some exceptions are made for some immigrant populations. Like the cuts overturned in Massachusetts, the Maine cuts are aimed at '5 year bar' populations. We can only hope the Maine Supreme Court follows the example of its southern neighbor.

Articles about the news in both states, from The New York Times and the Bangor Daily News, appear below.

- [The New York Times: Massachusetts Health Plan Extended to Immigrants](#)
- [Bangor Daily News: Immigrants may be hit hardest by MaineCare cuts, tighter food stamp rules](#)