

What is the relationship between the history of migration and reproductive justice? For many women who were only a few months pregnant when they arrived in the United States in the early 20th century, their pregnancies became subject for deportation when they went to public hospitals to give birth. Public Charge Laws enacted from 1891 stipulated that anyone hospitalized in the United States with a disease contracted prior to landing could be deported. Pregnancy was one such “disease.” My project, “Time Change: Pregnancy, Temporality, and Deportability in the United States” explores how immigration enforcement and obstetrics intersected to police migrant women, and determine which women and fetuses were deserving of care. Drawing on government records at the National Archives, the project explores the weaponization of medical technology and the racialization of reproduction. I aim to trace a new genealogy of state control of reproduction through the way law and medicine combined to racialize migrant women through their pregnant bodies.