

Immigration Agency Boosts Ranks, Swears In 14 More Judges

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Law360, New York (April 10, 2017, 11:12 PM EDT) -- The [Executive Office for Immigration Review](#) has sworn in 14 fresh immigration judges who will be stationed in Texas, New York, Florida and other states, the agency announced Monday.

According to the announcement, Chief Immigration Judge MaryBeth Keller oversaw the swearing in during a ceremony Friday at the agency's headquarters in Virginia. Former Attorney General Loretta Lynch appointed the new judges, according to the notice.

"We are happy to welcome these 14 appointees to our growing immigration judge corps," Keller said in a statement. "These new immigration judges will enhance the agency's ability to process detained cases, our highest priority, while also strengthening the agency's capacity to address its broader pending caseload."

The immigration judges will be serving in San Antonio; Imperial, California; New York City; Florence, Arizona; Miami; Omaha, Nebraska; Los Angeles; Boston; and Atlanta.

The announcement came not long after the [U.S. Department of Justice sent immigration](#) judges to six detention centers not too far from the Mexican border and to major cities across the U.S. in the wake of President Donald Trump's executive order calling for the construction of a border wall and an increase in immigration enforcement.

Those judges were sent by the DOJ's Executive Office for Immigration Review to immigration detention centers in Dilley, Karnes City, Laredo, and Livingston, Texas; Jena, Louisiana; and Chaparral, New Mexico, according to a notice issued by the EOIR.

The agency said that move is part of its implementation of Trump's Jan. 25 two executive orders — one is aimed at pushing ahead with building a border wall along the U.S.-Mexico border, and the second requires more stringent enforcement of immigration laws, reducing or eliminating funding for so-called sanctuary cities, and reviving a controversial information sharing program.

Notably, President Donald Trump's recent federal employee hiring freeze does not affect federal immigration judges, the EOIR has said. Kathryn Mattingly, a spokeswoman for the U.S. Department of Justice branch, has confirmed to Law360 that immigration judges fall under an

exception in the executive memorandum for positions involving national security and public safety.

Previously, the EOIR in February said it [had sworn in](#) 12 immigration judges who will hear cases in California, Colorado, Florida, New York, Texas and Virginia. And [in September](#), the EOIR swore in 15 new immigration judges in immigration courts in Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Massachusetts, Nebraska, New York, Oregon and Utah.

--Additional reporting by Kelly Knaub and Kelcee Griffis. Editing by Philip Shea.

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