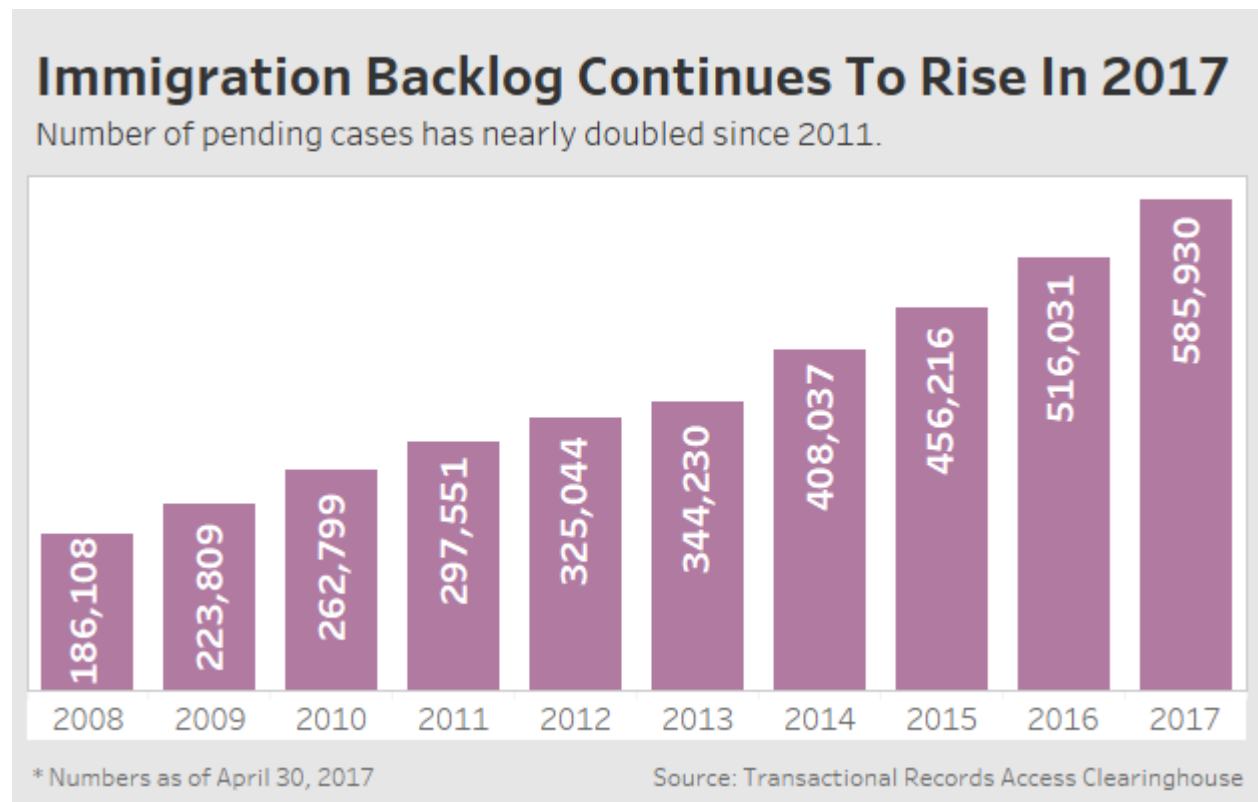


Immigration Court Backlog Growing, Despite Hires: Report

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Law360, New York (May 16, 2017, 9:03 PM EDT) -- The number of pending cases in immigration courts has hit a new record of over 580,000, according to a Monday report from a Syracuse University research organization, which noted the backlog is persisting despite a recent hiring push for immigration judges.

There were 585,930 pending immigration court cases as of April, according to the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse, which is a Syracuse University data organization. The group also tracks the average time cases have been sitting in immigration court, and as of last month, it was 670 days.



Some courts are more backlogged than others, and have later hearing dates. In San Francisco, for example, there are 41,979 pending cases, and the latest hearing date scheduled so far was for July 2022, according to TRAC.

“[T]he existing large backlog and extraordinary wait times mean that some individuals are not scheduled to have their day in court until after President Trump's current four-year term in office has ended. And we are only a little more than 100 days into his four-year term,” the group noted.

The backlog remains even though there's recently been something of an immigration judge hiring spree. According to TRAC, 79 immigration judges were sworn in since the fall of 2015.

“But there is little evidence that this increase in hiring is sufficient to handle the incoming caseload, let alone make a dent in the court's mountainous backlog,” the organization contended.

Currently, there are 318 immigration judges across the country, according to Nathan Berkeley, a spokesperson with the [Executive Office for Immigration Review](#). The agency was recently authorized for 10 new immigration judge positions, he noted, “bringing the agency total of authorized immigration judges to 384.”



“EOIR currently has approximately 50 immigration judge candidates at various stages of the hiring process,” Berkeley said. “EOIR also plans to post immigration judge vacancy announcements this fiscal year.”

He noted that the EOIR “does not comment on third-party reports.”

Just last week, the EOIR announced that it had sworn in seven immigration judges, and the agency [said in early April](#) that it had added 14 immigration judges who will be stationed in Texas, New York, Florida and other states.

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.

--Additional reporting by Kelly Knaub. Editing by Aaron Pelc.

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