



**The National Association of Immigration Judges
Renews Its Call on EOIR to Immediately Implement Remote Televideo Hearings**

September 21, 2020

The National Association of Immigration Judges (NAIJ) renews its call on the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) to immediately implement remote televideo hearings. Immigration courts are operating at only a fraction of their capacity because of the steadfast refusal of EOIR management to implement remote video conference hearings. The backlog of immigration cases is ballooning and the mission of the immigration courts has been severely compromised because EOIR has consistently refused to embrace readily available technological solutions to keep the courts operating while striving to protect the health and safety of court personnel and stakeholders during the pandemic. Now six months into the pandemic, the only technology solution EOIR has adopted to keep the courts operating safely during the pandemic is remote conference calling for represented parties with judges and court staff forced to physically appear in court. This solution is inexcusably inadequate.

EOIR has failed to follow the lead of the federal, state, and administrative courts across the country which swiftly implemented remote hearings in a telework setting in order to keep their courts operating and judges, staff, and the public safe and away from courthouses.

Throughout the pandemic, EOIR has attempted to run the detained immigration court dockets from the physical courthouses. The results have been predictably poor. The number of detained court hearings have dropped precipitously while at the same time EOIR has been forced to make emergency court closures across the country. Judges, court staff, and the public have been exposed to the coronavirus and forced to self-quarantine. And now, EOIR is steadily reopening non-detained courts across the country by again bringing judges, staff, and the public back to courthouses ill-prepared to protect individuals against the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The results are again predictable. Relatively few case completions, more emergency court closures, more quarantines, and more risk to all involved.

It is well past the time for EOIR to exercise leadership, in conjunction with the immigration court community, in implementing technological solutions that will adequately safeguard everyone's health while meeting the mission of the court. To that end, NAIJ urges EOIR to adopt remote hearings in a telework setting that will both safeguard the health of individuals involved while meeting the critical mission of the court to adjudicate immigration cases fairly and expeditiously under our nation's immigration laws.