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## DOJ Ignores Set of Recommendations to Strengthen Immigration Court System Efficiency and Effectiveness

*AILA Doc. No. 18042015 | Dated April 23, 2018*



**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – In response to a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) and the American Immigration Council [received a partially redacted report written by Booz Allen Hamilton](#) and commissioned by the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR). The comprehensive report investigated a range of immigration court issues including judicial performance reviews, Legal Orientation Programs (LOP), and procedural mechanisms, such as administrative closure, that can be used to streamline caseloads. These issues significantly impact how justice is administered and the efficiency of the courts. Booz Allen Hamilton recommended important steps the courts should take to ensure efficient proceedings and due process. But, the administration has done the opposite.

“The Trump administration seems to have ignored or countermanded every recommendation in this 2017 report, to the detriment of due process and equal rights under the law,” said Benjamin Johnson, AILA Executive Director. He continued, “This report calls for emphasizing process over outcome and prioritizing judicial integrity. Yet, in stark contrast, the administration’s approach has been aimed at stripping the independence from

immigration judges, undermining access to counsel, and curtailing tools that facilitate due process. It would behoove the government to carefully review this report, which it has had in hand for over a year, and start making some rational decisions that align with America's values."

Beth Werlin, Executive Director of the American Immigration Council stated, "This is another example of the need for more transparency, including disclosure under FOIA. This independent report may not have come to light if we had not forced the agency to make it public. Transparency is vital to ensure our government is operating honestly and fairly. Further, this report confirms that the administration's claims of adopting policies to increase efficiency and effectiveness in the courts are insincere. We continue to advocate for policies, like many recommended in the report, that will ensure a fair day in court and an efficient process." Among its recommendations, the report includes the following:

- A judicial performance review model that emphasizes fair process and judicial independence, not quotas and deadlines.
- Better access to attorneys as a solution to delays and inefficiencies in court processing.
- Expansion of know your rights and legal representation programs, such as the Legal Orientation Program.
- Broadening the hiring pools and outreach programs to increase diversity of experience among the judges.
- Limiting the use of video conferencing to procedural matters.
- Use of "administrative closure" as a helpful process that could be used to close cases awaiting adjudication in other agencies or courts.

**Press inquiries:**

- George Tzamaras, AILA Senior Director for Communications and Outreach, 202-507-7649, [gtzamaras@aila.org](mailto:gtzamaras@aila.org)
- Belle Woods, AILA Associate Director, Communications and Outreach, 202-507-7675, [bwoods@aila.org](mailto:bwoods@aila.org)
- Maria E. Frausto, American Immigration Council Senior Communications Manager, 202-507-7526, [mfrausto@immcouncil.org](mailto:mfrausto@immcouncil.org)

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## Related Resources

- [FOIA Response: Booz Allen Hamilton Report on Immigration Courts \(4/6/17\)](#)

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**American Immigration Lawyers Association**

1331 G Street NW, Suite 300

Washington, DC 20005

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