



The federal government shutdown stretched into its 24th day Monday, making it the longest shutdown in American history, as Congress and President Donald Trump remained stalemated over Trump's request for billions of dollars in border wall funding. HYOSUB SHIN / HSWIN@AJC.COM

Immigration courts in Atlanta and across the nation slowed by government shutdown

300 immigration judges furloughed, thousands of hearings postponed

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By [Jeremy Redmon](#)

Three quarters of the nation's Immigration Court judges have been furloughed and most of their hearings in Atlanta and across the country are being postponed amid the federal government shutdown, compounding a backlog in deportation and asylum cases that already tops 1 million, according to the National Association of Immigration Judges.

About 300 of the U.S. Justice Department's roughly 400 Immigration Court judges have been placed on unpaid leave, said Ashley Tabaddor, the association's president and an immigration judge based in Los Angeles.

The result: Immigration Courts in Atlanta and elsewhere have stopped hearing thousands of cases for people who are not being detained, meaning they could see their hearings postponed for several years. There are 26,447 immigration cases pending in Georgia, according to the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse at Syracuse University.

“The impact is going to be tremendous. It is a huge, huge disruption in the orderly processing of cases that have been taking years just to get to where they are now,” said Tabaddor, whose association advocates for giving the judges independence from the Justice Department. “From the perspective of the judges, it is just an extra stress and extra anxiety of ‘How are we going to deal with this?’”

Meanwhile, hearings for people being held in immigration detention centers are proceeding as scheduled.

Officials at the Justice Department's Executive Office for Immigration Review, which oversees the nation's immigration judges and courts, did not respond to requests for comment Monday.

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