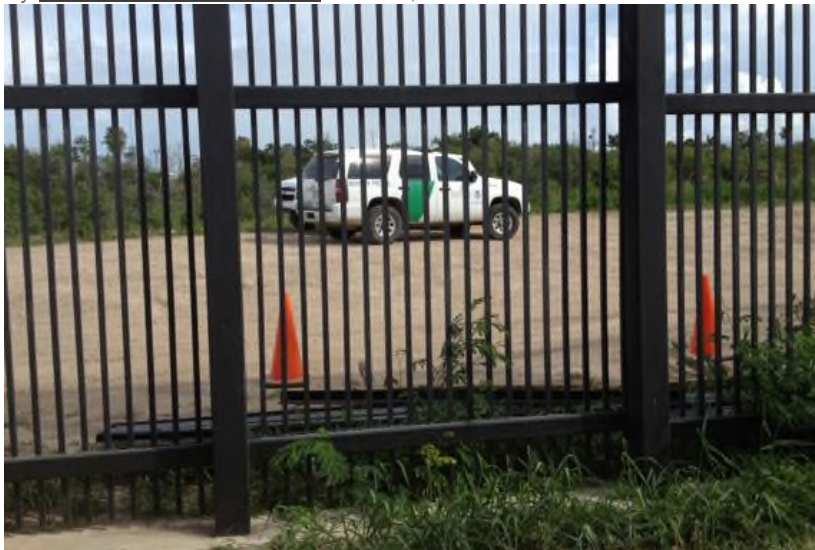


# Government Shutdown Contributing To Backlog Of Immigration Cases Across US

By REYNALDO LEAÑOS JR. • JAN 7, 2019



*The partial government shutdown is entering its third week and it's not helping the current backlog of immigration cases across the country.*

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The partial government shutdown is entering its third week and it's not helping the current backlog of immigration cases across the country.

There're an estimated 775,000 backlogged immigration cases throughout the U.S. and more than 100,000 of those cases are in Texas, according to the most [recent data from Syracuse University](#).

The backlog has been growing for years now and New York City immigration judge Amiena Khan, who is also the executive vice president of the [National Association of Immigration Judges](#) and is speaking on behalf of the organization, said the government shutdown is exacerbating the problem.

Khan said people within the “non-detained” docket, which are usually those in removal proceedings and are not waiting in detention, can't have their cases heard.

Once the government is up and running again, she'll be able to get back to the cases, except for the ones that missed their hearing dates during the shutdown.

“The reset means they go back to the end of the line,” Khan said. “Most judges nationwide are rescheduling right now in 2021.”

She worries that people who missed their court hearing during the shutdown might end up with weaker cases when they're finally back in court because they might lose track of witnesses.

Khan also said she sees the shutdown as another reason the immigration courts should not be housed by the Department of Justice.

“This structural flaw of being part, or being placed in a political branch of government, rather than a neutral court setting — protected from these political influences — is what is keeping the immigration courts from fully functioning,” Khan added.

She said other problems within the immigration courts contributing to the backlog are budgetary constraints, which translates to inadequate services in the court, not enough interpreters and more.

**Reynaldo Leanos Jr. can be reached at [reynaldo@tpr.org](mailto:reynaldo@tpr.org) or on Twitter at @ReynaldoLeanos**

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