

# AILA: Trump Administration Erodes Integrity and Fairness in Immigration Courts

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**WASHINGTON, D.C.** - The American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) expressed its strong opposition to the Trump administration's plans to impose numeric quotas on immigration judges in order to speed up deportations. The unprecedented effort to compel judges to complete cases under stricter deadlines threatens the integrity of the immigration court system and the independence of the judicial branch. The immigration courts are administered by the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR), which is housed within the Department of Justice (DOJ).

"Subjecting judges to numeric case completion goals undermines one of the core principles of our judicial system - entitlement to a fair day in court. What the administration is proposing is akin to the assembly line justice that America has opposed in oppressive regimes around the globe," said Annaluisa Padilla, AILA President. "A system that evaluates immigration judge performance based on how fast they can churn through cases will simply pressure judges to rush through decisions, rather than give careful consideration to the law and facts in each case. Immigration judges already have among the highest caseloads of federal judges. Justice and fairness cannot be thrown out the window to meet an arbitrary quota."

"AILA members are in the immigration courts every single day," added Benjamin Johnson, AILA Executive Director. "They and their clients bear the brunt of a court system that is overworked, under resourced, and subject to the inherent conflict of interest that comes

from immigration judges being employees of the nation's chief law enforcement officer instead of part of an independent court system. This new proposal will only make an intolerable situation worse. It is an affront to the foundation of American justice, which was built on the principles of equality before the law and an opportunity to have cases decided by independent judges. Immigration judges are making important, often life or death, decisions every day: whether a mother and child will remain together or be torn apart, whether a father is returned to a country where he was persecuted, or whether the dreams of an immigrant will be allowed to grow and flourish, or die on the vine. The primary focus for judges must be to make the right decision. Creating an environment where the courts care more about speed than accuracy and where judges are evaluated and rewarded based on quantity instead of quality is simply unacceptable."

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*The American Immigration Lawyers Association is the national association of immigration lawyers established to promote justice, advocate for fair and reasonable immigration law and policy, advance the quality of immigration and nationality law and practice, and enhance the professional development of its members.*

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