



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF IMMIGRATION JUDGES

Hon.A. Ashley Tabaddor, President
606 S. Olive St., 15th floor
Los Angeles, CA 90014
(213) 534-4491
AshleyTabaddor@gmail.com
www.naij-usa.org

Via Email only bstevens4115@gmail.com
Elizabeth Stevens, President
Federal Bar Association, Immigration Law Section

March 15, 2018

Dear Ms. Stevens,

On behalf of the National Association of Immigration Judges (NAIJ), I write to endorse the Federal Bar Association's proposed legislation in support of an independent Immigration Court.

As you know, NAIJ has been actively researching and discussing the creation of an independent "Article I" Immigration Court for many years. We strongly endorse having the Immigration Courts become a separate entity from the Department of Justice.

It is inherently problematic to place any court in a law enforcement department. The Immigration Court has proven to be no exception. The apparent conflicts of interest have time and time again proven to be actual conflicts of interest between protecting the integrity of the court and the independence of the Immigration Judges from infringement by the perspectives and positions of a law enforcement agency. The Immigration Court has been used as a political pawn by various administrations on both sides of the aisle. From the streamlining regulations to the surge dockets to the mass details of immigration judges to "border courts," we have repeatedly seen encroachment on the integrity of the Immigration Court system. And now, the unprecedented move by the Agency to tie individual judge performance evaluations to case completion quotas and deadlines has shattered any veneer of judicial independence.

We are happy to join with the American Bar Association (ABA), the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA), the American Adjudicature Society, and numerous other organizations in endorsing the concept of the Immigration Court becoming an "Article I" court.

We look forward to working with you in helping to realize this important goal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Ashley Tabaddor".

A Ashley Tabaddor
President, NAIJ