

With New Immigration Judge Quotas, AG Sessions Hijacks U.S. Justice System to Hurt Immigrants

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As the Trump administration and Attorney General Jeff Sessions continue to escalate their attacks on immigrants and our nation's justice system, the National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC) condemns the Department of Justice's implementation of a quota system that will punish immigration judges for not completing cases quickly enough and force them to expedite life-or-death decisions.

As NIJC has expressed since this policy was first proposed in 2017, implementing case quotas in the immigration courts demonstrates a dangerous misunderstanding of immigration judges' role in the U.S. immigration system. Immigration judges should have one goal: the fair adjudication of each case that comes before them. That is the only metric that should count for any judicial system, and especially in immigration court, where lives are on the line every day.

Ashley Huebner, a managing attorney who oversees NIJC's Asylum Project, offered the following comment in response to the quota announcement:

"At NIJC, we have witnessed the errors that occur in immigration proceedings when judges do not have sufficient discretion to manage their dockets in the way they deem best. The quota judges now must reach—700 case completions per year—is as unrealistic as it is dangerous. While there are many ways that Congress and this administration could improve the efficiency of the immigration court system, forcing judges to meet an arbitrary quota within an underfunded and backlogged court system will only result in limiting due process, curtailing judges' deliberations, and denying immigrants adequate time to find lawyers and gather evidence.

"With this quota policy, this administration is essentially hijacking the immigration courts to achieve its goal of deporting as many immigrants as possible, as quickly as possible. Such appropriation of any part of the U.S. justice system should alarm Americans."

As the Attorney General continues to limit due process protections for immigrants in removal proceedings, the importance of competent legal representation is increasingly critical. NIJC encourages attorneys to take action against these due process restrictions by accepting a *pro bono* asylum matter for representation. For more information, visit <https://www.immigrantjustice.org/be-pro-bono-attorney>.

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