



## United States Senate

March 25, 2020

The Honorable William Barr  
Attorney General  
United States Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20530

James McHenry  
Director  
Executive Office for Immigration Review  
5107 Leesburg Pike, 18<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Falls Church, VA 22041

Dear Attorney General Barr and Director McHenry:

I write to request that the Department of Justice temporarily suspend immigration court hearings during the COVID-19 pandemic. The National Association of Immigration Judges, the American Immigration Lawyers Association and the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Professionals Union have jointly called for this temporary measure, expressing their uniform concern that keeping the courts open at this time puts public safety at risk.

Health experts are recommending adherence to social distancing guidelines and several state governments and federal agency officials have ordered workers and their families to stay home. Despite this, the Department of Justice continues operating more than fifty immigration courts all over the country. This forces judges, court personnel, and immigrants, including countless children and refugees, to put their – and the general public's – health at risk. Critical matters, such as bond hearings for adult detainees and emergency hearings for children, should be handled telephonically. The benefit of reducing the risk to public health outweighs pressing forward with non-critical matters during this pandemic.

In a show of unity, organizations representing immigration judges, government attorneys and immigration lawyers, have all asked the Department to immediately suspend all immigration hearings and allow critical bond matters to proceed telephonically. I support this request and I urge the Department of Justice to do the same.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dianne Feinstein". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator