

Congressman Cuellar's Immigration Judge Language in Fiscal Year 2016 Omnibus Appropriations Bill

This Act includes \$426,791,000 for the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) and the Office of the Pardon Attorney (OPA), of which \$4,000,000 is derived by transfer from fee collections. Any plan to augment OPA staffing in fiscal year 2016 through the transfer or temporary assignment of non-OPA employees shall be subject to the procedures set forth in section 505 of this Act.

The agreement includes funds for 55 new Immigration Judge (IJ) Teams, enhancements in teleconferencing and information technology, and support for immigration enforcement initiatives. The funding is intended to support hiring and on-boarding all new judges and associated support teams by November 2016.

EOIR performance reporting.--EOIR is directed to submit monthly performance and operating reports to the Committees on Appropriations. The reports shall include information on hiring progress, to include: the current number of sitting IJs, distinguishing between those that are full- and part-time; the number of judges recalled from retirement or other employment status; the number of temporary judges, whether recruited from non-judge or other judicial ranks; and the numbers of attorneys, clerks and other staff on-board. The reports shall describe hiring progress by identifying vacant positions, target dates for filling those positions, their stage in the hiring pipeline (e.g., whether offers of employment have been made, and if so, whether candidates are in employment processing, training, or other pre-employment

status), and the current average time for hiring a new immigration judge.

The report shall also include case processing information, broken out by Department of Homeland Security priority code, as follows: the number of initial case receipts and number of associated case completions, noting whether they represent IJ Decisions or Other Completions; average case processing time; and, for each case code, the number of pending cases and the average case age. Finally, the report shall include summary data on the number of IJ decisions for Voluntary Departures and Removals, including the number of removal decisions made in absentia, and the impact of EOIR implementation of electronic registry, filing, and case information applications on productivity and backlog reduction.