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December 8, 2025

The Honorable Pam Bondi
Attorney General
Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Bondi:

As the Ranking Member of the Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies (CJS) Subcommittee of the House Committee on Appropriations, I write to express my strong concerns about the report of the firing of eight New York – Federal Plaza Immigration Court judges on Monday, December 1, 2025.¹ Your firing of nearly one-quarter of the judges serving at this court—including the assistant chief immigration judge—without any stated cause raises serious concerns about the court’s ability to continue adjudicating immigration cases and providing fair hearings, as well as the hyper-politicization of the Department of Justice (DOJ).

Immigration courts throughout the United States currently face a backlog of almost 4 million cases, a figure that, according to DOJ’s own data, has consistently increased since at least 2015.² The CJS Subcommittee highlighted concerns about this backlog during both the first Trump Administration and the Biden Administration. And yet, under the second Trump Administration, “more than 100 immigration judges out of 700 have been fired or pushed out” this year.³ Not only have these workforce reductions worsened the case backlog, they have also placed pressure on remaining judges to complete greater numbers of cases, very likely at the expense of thoughtful consideration of the merits of each and every case—at the expense of due process and justice.⁴

¹ Ley, A. (2025, December 1). Trump administration fires 8 immigration judges in New York. *New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/12/01/nyregion/immigration-judges-fired-trump.html>.

² U.S. Department of Justice Executive Office for Immigration Review. (2025, December 2). *Workload and adjudication statistics*. <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/media/1344791/dl?inline>.

³ Raymond, N. (2025, December 2). Trump administration fires numerous New York immigration judges. *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/legal/government/trump-administration-fires-numerous-new-york-immigration-judges-2025-12-02/>.

⁴ Acacia Center for Justice. (2025, October 1). *Immigration courts caught in the balance: escalating asylum denials and a dwindling judges corps*. <https://acaciajustice.org/immigration-courts-caught-in-the-balance-escalating-asylum-denials-and-a-dwindling-judges-corps/>.

Further, these actions and the resulting delays in proceedings penalize immigrants and their family members who are trying to follow the law by applying for legal status and showing up for their hearings.

For years on the campaign trail, the President promised that his administration would focus on people who “are criminal and have criminal records, gang members, [and] drug dealers.”⁵ The “mass deportation” campaign of the last year has shown otherwise.⁶ Some of the recent enforcement actions taken at 26 Federal Plaza are among the most egregious examples: Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents, violating a longstanding policy, now make arrests outside of courtrooms where individuals are following the legal process to remain in the country.⁷ Children have been ripped away from their parents.⁸ Unidentifiable federal agents have assaulted court observers and journalists.⁹ And now, the Executive Office for Immigration Review has fired immigration judges serving at the Federal Plaza Immigration Court—non-partisan civil servants whose job is to *uphold* the law—for no apparent reason.

Given these serious concerns, please provide responses to the following questions:

- 1) Please provide the cause for the termination of each individual immigration judge.
- 2) Please provide the performance ratings for each of these terminated individuals.
- 3) How many of these terminated individuals were on probationary status?
- 4) Were any of these individuals hired under preferences, including veterans’ or military spouses’ preference?
- 5) What is the current number of pending immigration cases at 26 Federal Plaza and how many cases were assigned to each of the terminated judges?
- 6) Please also provide the number of cases that will now require appearance dates later than 2026 as a result of the reassignment of these cases.
- 7) Does DOJ intend to replace these individuals?
 - a. If so, when does DOJ expect to do so, and under what timeline? Please provide the number of individuals hired to fill these newly opened positions who are receiving a recruitment or retention bonus as advertised on the Department’s join.justice.gov website and on [USAjobs.org](https://usajobs.org).
 - b. If not, please explain why not and whether there will be further reductions to staffing at this facility.

⁵ Nelson, L. (2016, November 13). Trump: criminals will be deported first. *Politico*. <https://www.politico.com/story/2016/11/donald-trump-immigrants-criminals-231293>.

⁶ Samuels, B. (2025, December 1). White House doubles down on mass deportation pledge in wake of National Guard shooting. *The Hill*. <https://thehill.com/homenews/administration/5628455-mass-deportations-trump-pledge/>.

⁷ Fractenberg, B., & Hogan G. (2025, November 3). Five months of fear, fury and heartbreak at 26 Federal Plaza. *The City*. <https://www.thecity.nyc/2025/11/03/5-months-immigrants-ice-26-federal-plaza-photos/>.

⁸ Fractenberg, B., & Hogan G.


⁹ Fractenberg, B., & Hogan G.

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- 8) Please provide any and all changes the DOJ has made since January 20, 2025 to chief judges, assistant chief judges, and other judicial supervisory leadership for each of the immigration courts with jurisdiction over charging documents.
- 9) Please provide the total number of immigration judges terminated nationwide since January 20, 2025.
 - a. Please provide the numbers of immigration judges terminated since January 20 who were terminated for cause and not for cause.
 - b. Please explain how these terminations have helped to decrease the backlog facing immigration courts.

I look forward to your prompt response as soon as possible but not later than December 18.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grace Meng', with a stylized, flowing script.

Grace Meng
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies