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Congress of the United States
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COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
AND INFRASTRUCTURE

March 31, 2026

Mr. Daren K. Margolin
Director
Executive Office for Immigration Review
U.S. Department of Justice
5107 Leesburg Pike
Falls Church, Virginia 22041

Dear Director Margolin:

I write to you to request information and express my concerns about the impending closure of the San Francisco Immigration Court in San Francisco, California.

In January, employees and judges received notice that the San Francisco Immigration Court would close by the end of this year. Remaining personnel and many cases will be transferred nearly 30 miles away to the Concord Immigration Court in Concord, California, a city I represent in Congress.¹ Notably, the Concord court opened in 2024 in part to relieve pressure on the San Francisco court; however, the Concord court never reached its stated capacity of 21 judges.² If this San Francisco closure proceeds, the Concord court will be one of only two federal immigration courts in the entirety of Northern California—a region called home by over 12 million people. Individuals with cases before these courts are following legal asylum and immigration processes, and this closure will place additional logistical hurdles on individuals who already face enormous obstacles to securing their legal rights.

Since January 2025, the number of judges at both the San Francisco and Concord immigration courts have dwindled. San Francisco's court, which began 2025 with 21 judges, now has just four judges after 14 were fired and four were pressured into early retirements.³ According to the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC), the San Francisco and Concord courts currently have a combined backlog of 177,827 cases,⁴ and court dates are already being scheduled years in the future. Given the low capacity and enormous caseload of these two courts, further reducing options for migrants pursuing legal asylum cases in the Bay Area would be irresponsible.

In an effort to better understand your decision to close the San Francisco Court, please provide the below information by April 14, 2026:

¹ <https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/sf-immigration-court-closing-21280208.php>

² <https://www.justice.gov/d9/2024-01/eoir-to-open-concord-ic-notice-01222024.pdf>

³ <https://www.kqed.org/news/12068148/san-francisco-immigration-court-down-to-four-judges-after-new-departures>

⁴ <https://tracreports.org/phptools/immigration/backlog/>

1. What data did your agency use to come to the decision to close the San Francisco Immigration Court? Please provide that data, in addition to data on the current backlog at the San Francisco and Concord courts, the average time to a merits hearing at these courts, court caused continuation rates, and in absentia rates.
2. What courts other than the Concord court will receive cases currently pending at the San Francisco court?
3. What is the timeline for transfer of cases to Concord or other courts?
4. How will respondents and counsel be notified of new hearing locations and dates?
5. Will there be automatic continuances for cases affected by the transfer?
6. Will there be expanded remote or hybrid hearing options?
7. How does your agency plan to reduce the enormous backlog of pending cases at immigration courts in California and nationwide, while ensuring that everyone with a case gets the fair and legal process to which they are entitled?
8. Does your agency plan to physically expand the Concord Immigration Court or hire additional judges in order to accommodate increased demand?
9. How will your agency ensure that migrants with cases before the Concord court feel safe and welcome when attending their scheduled hearings? Will your agency ensure that federal immigration enforcement agents present at the court are transparent about their agency, badge number, and name and refrain from wearing facial coverings and openly carrying firearms?
10. Are additional immigration judges being hired or reassigned to handle the transferred docket to the Concord court?
11. What is the projected backlog attributable to consolidation?

Additionally, I would like to request a meeting with Assistant Chief Immigration Judge Julie Nelson of the San Francisco Immigration Court to discuss these matters further. Thank you in advance for your timely consideration and response.

Sincerely,



Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress