

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Acting Secretary Chad Wolf
2707 Martin Luther King Jr Ave SE
Washington, DC 20528-0525

U.S Immigration and Customs Enforcement
Deputy Director and Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Director
Matthew T. Albence
500 12th St., SW
Washington, D.C. 20536

Messrs. Albence and Wolf:

Lawyers for Civil Rights (LCR) urges to you to follow public health guidance and take immediate action to curtail the worst impacts of the Coronavirus pandemic on immigrants, immigration court personnel, and immigration officers. The country is experiencing an unprecedented healthcare crisis that will hit immigrant communities with particular force. If current immigration enforcement policies continue unchanged, they will lead to an unmitigated health disaster that will likely cause thousands of additional deaths and break an already straining infrastructure. We are encouraged by some of the action taken by Department of Justice (DOJ) agencies such as the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) in postponing Master Calendar Hearings in immigration courts, including Boston, and we echo the recent letter from The National Association of Immigration Judges, American Immigration Lawyers Association, and American Federation of Government Employees Local 511 regarding immigration court closures. These are all good first steps, but they do not fully account for the risks, particularly to detained individuals. Thus, much more must be done.

LCR therefore calls on Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and all other Department of Homeland Security (DHS) agencies to take the following immediate actions to limit the spread of the virus and help ensure the safety for everyone:

- **Continue all non-detained cases with upcoming hearings or proceedings.**
- **Place a moratorium on all removal proceedings and execution of final orders of removal.**
- **Cease the transfer of those in state criminal detention to ICE detention facilities to reduce the likelihood of spread between facilities.**
- **Stop seeking detention for all new cases and immediately release all those in ICE detention not subject to mandatory detention.**
- **End all ICE raids on homes and workplaces during the pendency of this health crisis.**
- **Ensure that detention facilities have access to all appropriate medical, testing, and sanitary supplies – both for detainees and for medical personnel.**

These steps, which track recommendations from public health authorities, are necessary to maintain the integrity and protect the safety of all in the immigration system. Not taking these steps will cause the virus to spread across detainees, courts, and facilities in a manner, and with a speed, that the agencies' current capacity cannot manage.

We appreciate your immediate attention to this vital matter.

Sincerely,

Oren Nimni
Lawyers for Civil Rights

CC: Attorney General William Barr
Acting Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Mark Morgan
ICE Boston Field Office - Burlington