



# INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF PROFESSIONAL & TECHNICAL ENGINEERS AFL-CIO & CLC

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**PAUL SHEARON**  
President

**MATTHEW S. BIGGS**  
Secretary-Treasurer

April 8, 2020

Hon. Nancy Pelosi, Speaker  
United States House of Representatives  
H-232 The Capitol Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Hon. Nita M. Lowey, Chairwoman  
House Committee on Appropriations  
H-307, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Robert Scott, Chairman  
House Committee on Education and Labor  
2176 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Jose Serrano, Chairman,  
House Appropriations Committee – Subcommittee on  
Commerce, Justice, Science, & Related Agencies  
H-310 The Capitol Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Hon. Jerrod Nadler, Chairman  
House Judiciary Committee  
2138 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515-3210

Hon. Zoe Lofgren, Chairwoman  
House Judiciary Committee – Subcommittee on  
Immigration & Citizenship  
6320 O'Neill House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, and Chairpersons Scott, Nadler, Lowey, Serrano, Lofgren:

As officers of the National Association of Immigration Judges (NAIJ) and the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE), the parent union of NAIJ, we write to you to request the inclusion of funding in the forthcoming COVID-19 relief bill that provides the Department of Justice's Executive Office of Immigration Review with telework information technologies necessary for Judges to work remotely.

Our request for emergency supplemental funding supports our call for in person immigration court hearings to be handled by the Immigration Judges remotely in accordance with telework policies so that Immigration Judges can resume proceedings on priority matters. DOJ and EOIR's decision to keep immigration courts open for detained hearings risks not just our members' health, but those of government attorneys, respondents' counsel, court staff, detainees, and the public. Groups joining our call for the emergency temporary closure of immigration courts during this pandemic include AFGE Local 511, representing the ICE Office of Principal Legal Advisors; the immigration attorneys bar; legal services organizations; and numerous civil and human rights organizations.

Therefore, we ask that the following emergency supplemental appropriations be included in the next relief bill:

- Requested amount is \$2,500,000 for "Immigration Judges and Support" under the heading "Executive Office of Immigration Review"
- "For purchase of equipment to enhance and facilitate remote telework capabilities" and "for purchase of telework-compatible information technology for digital audio recording capabilities"
- Provided that these funds "shall be used to allow remote telework-compatible adjudicatory and case processing capacity for the detained proceedings and for institutional hearings"

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As we make this request, our members who are assigned to work on the detained docket at the U.S Immigration Court are reporting that their workplaces lack basic recommended protective measures to prevent exposure to COVID-19. While necessary sanitation materials and protective equipment are desperately needed, the evidence-based policy response to the pandemic supports aggressive social distancing and remote telework, which EOIR can implement while still ensuring priority detained proceedings continue and detainees' liberty concerns are met. This request is also reinforced by our recommendation for the fourth COVID-19 relief legislation to mandate the maximum use of telework by authorizing all federal, including essential employees, to perform their duties remotely whenever possible to minimize and prevent the spread of COVID-19.

As we continue our call for the temporary emergency closure of the Immigration Courts in order to mitigate any further risk of COVID-19 transmission in our members' workplace, we look to Congressional leaders as advocates for workers and public health. Thank you for your consideration. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call IFPTE Legislative Representative Faraz Khan at 301-275-6038. NAIJ and IFPTE stand ready to assist in any way we can during this national emergency.



Hon. A. Ashley Tabaddor  
President  
NAIJ



Paul Shearon  
President  
IFPTE



Matthew Biggs  
Sec.-Treasurer/Legislative Director  
IFPTE

