



U. S. Department of Justice

Executive Office for Immigration Review

Office of the Chief Immigration Judge

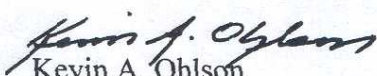
Chief Immigration Judge

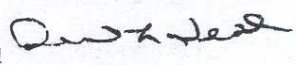
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October 22, 2007

MEMORANDUM TO: Craig S. Morford  
Acting Deputy Attorney General

THROUGH:   
Kevin A. Ohlson  
Director  
Executive Office for Immigration Review

FROM: David L. Neal   
Chief Immigration Judge  
Executive Office for Immigration Review

SUBJECT: Report on Pilot Program Placing Supervisory Assistant Chief  
Immigration Judges in Field Offices

In August 2006, former Attorney General Gonzales directed the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) to pilot a program placing supervisory immigration judges in field offices. Specifically, Directive #9 stated: "To test whether the Immigration Courts would benefit from having Assistant Chief Immigration Judges assigned regionally rather than at EOIR headquarters, the Acting Chief Immigration Judge will consider assigning one or more of the Assistant Chief Immigration Judges to serve regionally, near the Immigration Courts that he or she oversees, on a pilot basis." The directive also instructed the Chief Immigration Judge to report to the Deputy Attorney General and the Director of EOIR on whether the placement of supervisory immigration judges in the field improved managerial contact and oversight in those courts.

Pursuant to this directive, last year the Office of the Chief Immigration Judge (OCIJ) identified six field offices in which to place Assistant Chief Immigration Judges (ACIJ). These sites included the four largest Immigration Courts (New York, Los Angeles, Miami, and San Francisco) and the two courts that provide the best supervisory coverage for the southwest border region (San Diego and San Antonio). Four of the ACIJs were recruited from judges sitting in those courts, and the other two were ACIJs reassigned to field locations from EOIR headquarters. As a result of this realignment of supervisory authority, more than 60 percent of all immigration judges are now supervised by ACIJs in the field.

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Subject: Pilot Program Assistant Chief Immigration Judges in Field Offices

The reassignment of the ACIJs to field offices has been a success. First, the pilot program has resulted in improved oversight of the professional conduct of immigration judges because the field ACIJs have been able to monitor the performance of individual judges more closely. Second, it has improved communications between the field and headquarters, as field ACIJs readily convey the concerns and insights of each to the other. Third, this improved communication has increased the willingness of people to volunteer for important projects and initiatives, such as developing improved on-bench reference materials and creating a practice manual for immigration judges and the counsels and respondents who appear before them. Finally, the placement of ACIJs in the field has improved public confidence in the management of the immigration courts because the parties feel they have a more effective avenue to address their concerns about local court operations.

In light of the success of the pilot program in improving managerial contact and oversight in the courts, OCIJ has received approval from the Director to convert the pilot program into a permanent reassignment of these six ACIJs.