

Lawsuit says immigration courts are now deportation machines

Response to Attorney General Barr’s moves

By **ANDREW SELSKY**
Associated Press

SALEM — The immigration court system under the Trump administration has become a “deportation machine,” two groups said in a lawsuit filed in federal court in Portland on Wednesday.

The lawsuit filed by the Southern Poverty Law Center in Washington, D.C., and Innovation Law Lab of Portland, said that instead of being fair and impartial, judges in immigration courts answer to Attorney General William Barr and are pushed to deny applications for asylum.

“The immigration courts make life-and-death decisions every day: vulnerable people seeking asylum in the United States depend on a functioning court system to protect them from persecution, torture, and death. Yet, in the immigration courts, the tradition of judicial independence has been turned upside down,” the lawsuit against President Donald Trump and Attorney General William Barr says.

Melissa Crow, senior supervising attorney at the Southern Poverty Law Center and a lead attorney in the case, said that some parts of the United States have become “asylum-free zones” because immigration courts in 23 cities have denied more than 85% of applications for asylum, with El Paso having the



Eric Gay/AP Photo

Migrants who are applying for asylum in the United States go through a processing area at a new tent courtroom at the Migration Protection Protocols Immigration Hearing Facility in Laredo, Texas.

highest denial rate at 96.6%.

“We’ve come to call the current situation a deportation machine, and it really is because it is virtually impossible, particularly in some jurisdictions around the country, to effectively represent individuals in immigration court proceedings,” Crow told the Associated Press in a joint telephone interview with Stephen Manning, executive director of Innovation Law Lab.

The U.S. Department of Justice did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the lawsuit.

“The immigration court system is actually the central knot in the entire immigration policy debate,” Manning said, adding that the Trump administration uses the immigration courts’ dysfunctionality to justify increased detention and “totally inhumane practices” like forcing asylum

seekers from Central America to remain in Mexico or be flown to other countries.

Ilyce Shugall, who defended immigrants in immigration court for 18 years, was sworn in in 2017 as an immigration judge, but resigned last March.

“I swore to uphold the Constitution at my investiture. When the administration made it impossible to continue to do so, I resigned,” Shugall said Wednesday at a telephone news conference organized by the plaintiffs. The judge who swore her in also resigned.

To receive a satisfactory performance rating, immigration judges must decide approximately three cases per day and issue decisions on the merits of a case no more than 10 days after the final hearing, Crow said.

In some cases, judges would need to dig into the law and understand compli-

cated facts but they instead have an incentive to deny a case, which is faster than granting asylum, to meet their performance goals, Crow said. Not meeting goals under a metrics policy instituted by the Trump administration can result in a judge being fired, the lawsuit says.

Pushing the judges to go through cases faster is a dashboard on their computer that shows, in real time, progress in achieving the attorney general’s performance metrics. Meters showing red, yellow or green indicate whether their cases are proceeding fast enough.

“It was very stressful,” Shugall said. She eventually stopped opening the feature.

Some cases, on the other hand, are left dangling for as many as five years, making it harder for attorneys to find witnesses and evidence after all that time, Manning said.

Crow said this lawsuit has the potential to provide fairness to asylum seekers and others who have been the target of the Trump administration’s rhetoric and policies.

The law groups, which have represented immigrants, asked the federal court to require the attorney general to correct the dysfunction of the immigration court system.

The lawsuit also seeks an injunction restraining the Trump administration “from continuing to thwart the impartial adjudication of asylum claims” and to stop using the metrics policy on immigration judges.

Salmon die-off linked to extremely dry weather

By **CASSANDRA PROFITA**
Oregon Public Broadcasting

Extremely dry conditions have fueled a widespread die-off of fall Chinook salmon on the North Coast.

After two months of low rainfall, hundreds of adult fish on multiple coastal streams are dying from an unusual outbreak of a naturally occurring parasite before they get a chance to spawn.

According to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, extended low-water conditions have led to groups of salmon waiting to swim upstream in conditions that are conducive to the cryptobia parasite. The parasite doesn’t pose a risk to humans and only affects certain species of fish.

In response to reports from the public of dead pre-spawned fall Chinook salmon in the Wilson River near Tillamook, the agency surveyed the stream and discovered at least 200 dead fish.

To protect the remaining salmon, the agency closed the Wilson River to fishing earlier this month. Then the agency surveyed the Nehalem, Trask and Kilchis rivers and found similar numbers of dead salmon.

The agency has now closed all fishing for fall Chinook on the North Coast from the Nestucca to Necanicum rivers, including bays. Steelhead fishing seasons are not affected.

Robert Bradley, a district biologist for state fish and

wildlife, said the parasite has killed far more fish this year than it ever has before, and it’s cutting down an already depleted run of fall Chinook.

“The observed pre-spawn mortality is on top of a reduced run of fall Chinook this year,” Bradley said. “We need to protect the remaining spawners to help provide for future runs of fall Chinook on the North Coast.”

National Weather Service hydrologist Andy Bryant says some river flows on the North Coast have dropped to just 10% of normal in the past two months.

On the Wilson River, where the parasite outbreak was first detected, river flows would normally be around 2,000 cubic feet per second, but recently they’ve fluctuated between 200 and 400 cubic feet per second. The numbers are equally dismal on the nearby Nehalem River, which is normally flowing at 1,500 and 2,000 cubic feet of water per second this time of year. It’s now flowing at 150 to 300 cubic feet per second.

“Normally for the North Oregon Coast Range we’d be seeing quite a bit of rain and we just haven’t seen that,” Bryant said. “So the river has pretty much just stayed at the low flows we had seen earlier in the fall. With the lack of rainfall it hasn’t started to come up like it typically would.”

Bryant said conditions are abnormally dry across most of the state and across the entire Pacific Northwest.

State hospital temporarily halts civil commitments

Will prioritize people unfit to stand trial

By **SAM STITES**
Oregon Capital Bureau

The Oregon State Hospital is suspending all civil admissions until Dec. 27 to prioritize patients ordered by courts to receive competency restoration treatment.

The halt on civil commitments was announced in a letter Monday to the hospital’s statewide partners. It is effective immediately.

According to hospital spokeswoman Rebeka Gipson-King, the move is intended to help the hospital comply with a 2003 federal court ruling that requires criminal defendants ordered to receive treatment so they can meaningfully aid and assist in their own trial be admitted within seven days of a judge’s signature.

“We wanted to make sure that we were still able to meet our legal obligations to the people who are coming in under aid and assist within the seven days,” she said.

Gipson said hospital administrators chose Dec. 27 for the suspension to expire because that’s when they feel the hospital will be able to start reaccepting civil admissions and not be in danger of violating the seven-day rule.

As of Monday, the number of civil patients await-

ing admission to the hospital had increased from 15 in January to 43 this month.

The state hospital was sued early this year by advocacy group Disability Rights Oregon for not complying with the rule. In 2018, more than 200 patients had to wait longer than seven days, a problem which hospital administrators said was caused by an unforeseen influx of aid and assist patients the facility wasn’t equipped to handle.

Gipson-King said the suspension of civil admissions would force local hospitals and psychiatric care units to hold patients awaiting civil commitment a little longer than they might have expected.

“These are people whom a judge has said they aren’t able to take care of their own basic needs and civilly commits them to the Oregon Health Authority, so they’re already on a waitlist to get into the state hospital,” she said. “They’re already in an acute care hospital with staff trained to meet their needs as opposed to our (aid and assist) population who we’re also trying to accommodate.”

Melissa Eckstein, president of the Unity Center for Behavioral Health at Legacy Emanuel Hospital in Portland, said in a prepared statement that her organization is in conversations with Oregon Health Authority and state hospital leadership to address

needs for improved access to behavioral health care throughout the region.

Eckstein expressed hope that discussion will lead to positive change and faster, more comprehensive care for patients.

“This situation has a huge impact on operations at Unity Center for Behavioral Health. More than 25% of our current adult patients are waiting for a bed at the Oregon State

Hospital,” Eckstein wrote. “The lack of capacity at OSH is creating a patient flow crisis within Unity Center’s Psychiatric Emergency Services and long delays for patients who urgently need acute hospitalization for their safety and wellbeing.”

The Oregon Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group, Pamplin Media Group and Salem Reporter.

WANTED

Alder and Maple Saw Logs & Standing Timber

Northwest Hardwoods • Longview, WA

Contact: John Anderson • 360-269-2500

GAME MEAT PROCESSING



Debbie D's will be at **Cash & Carry** in Warrenton at **10:00 a.m. every Saturday** to pick up and deliver meat for processing.

20 lb. min • Each batch individual

Please call or leave message by Friday so we know to expect you!

DEBBIE D'S Jerky & Sausage Factory

2210 Main Avenue N. • Tillamook, OR • 503-842-2622

Bethany Lutheran Church
will sponsor a

Live Nativity

Acting out the birth of Jesus in a stable with animals

Saturday December 21st 5-7PM

On the Bethany Church lawn, across from Safeway



BETHANY FREE LUTHERAN CHURCH
451 34TH STREET · ASTORIA
503.325.2925

Follow us on Facebook!

FACEBOOK.COM/DAILYASTORIAN

Consult a PROFESSIONAL



LEOFINZI

Astoria's Best

Microsoft REGISTERED Refurbisher FAST, FRIENDLY & AFFORDABLE!

WINDOWS 7 SUPPORT ENDS JAN. 2020. FULL UPGRADE ONLY \$199

Mon-Fri 10-6, Sat 11-4
77 11th Street, Suite H
Astoria, OR • 503-325-2300

Astoria's Best.com

Q: What does the row of F1, F2, etc. keys do?

A:

- F1 Opens a help screen.
- F2 Rename a highlighted icon, file or folder.
- F3 Opens a search feature.
- F4 or F6 Opens the Address Bar.
- F5 Refreshes a web page or starts the Find feature.
- F7 Opens Claret Browsing or opens Spell Check.
- F8 Selects larger sections each time depressed.
- F9 Starts Send-Receive in Outlook.
- F10 Activates the Menu feature.
- F11 Full Screen, and back.
- F12 Save as, or Inspect window.

Depending on your computer, some functions may vary. Experiment!



JEFFREY M. LEINASSAR
DMD, FAGD



503/325-0310
1414 MARINE DRIVE,
ASTORIA
www.smileastoria.com

Q: What should I use to clean my baby's teeth?

A:

Remember baby's teeth are not only important but part of their health and development. Cleaning baby's teeth can be done by gauze, a finger swipe, or a small brush. Make it quick and fun!! Remember that a night-time bottle with milk has lactose (milk sugar) and juice has fructose or sucrose (sugar) and if it sits on teeth day after day problems are going to develop. Baby teeth are small with thin enamel so they are important to keep clean.

Clatsop Post 12

Friday, December 20TH AT 4PM

Past Commanders Tom & Jerrey Party

Clatsop Post 12 Holiday Dinner

Turkey with all the Trimmings

Dessert: Pumpkin Pie

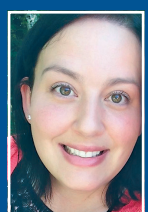
Free to all Veterans and their Families

Donations Gladley accepted!!!

6PM - "Karaoke Dave"



ASTORIA AMERICAN LEGION
Clatsop Post 12
1132 Exchange Street, Astoria • 503-325-5771



Heather Jenson
Advertising Representative

the Astorian

971-704-1716

www.dailyastorian.com

949 Exchange St.
Astoria, OR
503-325-3211

Q: What is the Consult a Professional section and how can it help my business?

A:

The Consult a Professional section in The Astorian is a great and affordable way to advertise your business and inform readers about the types of services you provide. All you need to do is come up with a question that a customer might ask about your line of expertise and then give a detailed answer to help educate them before they even walk through your door. We are offering great rates and package deals that help save you money!