



Common Terms Used in Removal Proceedings:

Bond: In some cases, an immigration judge may allow a detained person to pay a set amount of money to be released while their immigration case continues. The bond may be returned if the person attends all required hearings through the conclusion of their case.

Credible Fear Interview (CFI): An initial screening interview to determine whether a person may qualify for asylum. For example, telling an immigration official, "I am afraid to return to my home country," "I would like a fear-screening interview," or "I fear persecution or torture," can pause expedited removal and allow further review by an asylum officer.

Department of Homeland Security (DHS):

The federal government agency that oversees ICE and other immigration agencies. DHS serves as the parent organization for U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

Deportation (Removal): This is the formal process of removing a noncitizen from the United States. An individual may be removed for various reasons including violating the terms of their immigration status, being in the U.S. without status, or committing certain crimes.

Detention Center: A jail or facility where ICE holds people while their removal proceedings are pending or while they are trying to deport them.

Federal Court: A court that is separate from immigration court. Federal judges can review whether ICE and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) are following the law and the U.S. Constitution.

Habeas Petition: A legal petition filed in federal court asking a judge to decide whether the government can keep someone detained. Habeas is a constitutional right that allows detainees to challenge unlawful detention.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE):

An agency within the Department of Homeland Security that may arrest and detain and deport people for violations of immigration law.

Stay of Removal: A court order that pauses a deportation while a judge decides what happens next. If you already have a removal order, under some circumstances, you can apply to have that removal order paused.

Temporary Restraining Order (TRO):

An emergency federal court order that can temporarily stop a deportation or transfer while a federal judge reviews a habeas case.

Voluntary Departure: When ICE or an Immigration Judge allows some individuals to leave the U.S. at their own expense within a set time instead of receiving a formal deportation order. This option has serious consequences and should be discussed with an immigration attorney. Leaving the country without permission while removal proceedings are pending can also have serious consequences.

Warrant: A legal document authorizing an arrest or a search. A warrant signed by a judge (judicial warrant) can authorize entry into homes or private areas of a business to make a criminal arrest or search. A warrant signed by a DHS employee (administrative warrant) can authorize detention of an individual suspected of an immigration violation but does not authorize a search in a private location.

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