



AMERICAN
IMMIGRATION
LAWYERS
ASSOCIATION

38th Annual AILA California Chapters Conference and Webcast

The AILA Southern California Chapter invites you to sharpen your legal expertise and get up to date on current issues affecting immigration practice, all while taking in the beautiful coastal views of Long Beach! This three-day event begins with practice management sessions and a happy hour the evening of Thursday, November 13, and runs through the morning of Saturday, November 15. During the conference, our expert panelists will cover hot topics in all substantive areas of immigration law. The program also features opportunities for specialized credit in elimination of bias, technology, competency, wellness, and ethics. We hope to see you all in Long Beach in November!

Note: Digital recordings of each session will be provided to all conference registrants. This will give attendees the ability to watch (or rewatch) any panels presented during the live conference.

**November 13-15, 2025
Westin Long Beach Hotel
Long Beach, CA**

Times listed on the program are Pacific Time (PT). All times are subject to change without notice.

Thursday, November 13, 2025

Practice Management and Legal Challenges Track

4:05 pm – 4:15 pm **Welcome Address**

4:15 pm – 5:15 pm **Sanity Through the Chaos: Personal and Practice Management Tools and Tips
(Competency)**

The practice of immigration law can often feel overwhelming, requiring practitioners to balance professional demands with personal well-being. Panelists will address strategies for maintaining stability, both in practice and in life, by focusing on sustainable approaches to managing the challenges of the profession. They also will provide insights on:

(DL) = Discussion Leader

** = Invited Speakers, Not Confirmed*

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- Client communication: establishing and maintaining ar expectations
- Staff management: exercising effective leadership and navigating difficult decisions
- Billing practices: recognizing and affirming professional value
- Workday structure: optimizing productivity while safeguarding mental health

5:15 pm – 5:30 pm **Networking Break**

5:30 pm – 6:30 pm **Attacks on Attorneys: Consequences of the Administration’s Targeting of Our Profession (Ethics)**

Immigration attorneys, advocates, and nonprofit agencies have been explicitly targeted by the Trump administration. This is being done in a variety of ways, including executive actions, pretextual investigations, withholding funds, and propaganda. Panelists will examine how our profession is being attacked and how we can respond individually, as an organization, and as a community. Topics will include:

- The administration’s demonizing of “vexatious” attorneys
- Potential criminal liability (real and imagined)
- Challenges of running a practice in the current environment
- Impact on access to justice

6:30 pm – 8:00 pm **Registration and Exhibits**

Conference Happy Hour

Join us for a festive happy hour with colleagues and friends! Enjoy drinks, conversation, and the opportunity to network. This special gathering is proudly co-sponsored by the AILA Southern California Chapter.

Friday, November 14, 2025

Removal/Family Track

8:00 am – 9:00 am **Updates and Strategies for Responding to Massive Enforcement**

The Trump administration’s mass deportation efforts have hit California hard. Far more people are being apprehended and detained, including those with no criminal convictions. Enforcement is happening not only on the streets, at worksites, and at people’s homes, but also at immigration courts and USCIS, whose statutory missions are not enforcement, but to ensure fair case decisions. Hear from AILA practitioners and policy experts about the latest enforcement actions and practice tips in this rapidly changing environment. The briefing will cover:

- Processing delays and relationship changes due to delays
- Arrests of people in immigration courts and how to protect your client
- DHS plans to increase detention
- Asylum dismissals at USCIS and immigration courts
- The transition in USCIS’s mission to enforcement
- Arrests at USCIS interviews

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- Dramatic shifts in rank-and-file judges

9:00 am – 9:20 am

Networking Break

9:20 am – 10:20 am

Changing USCIS Policies and Priorities: Naturalization, Denaturalization, and More

In light of all of the new policy memorandums and practice changes at local field offices, it is important now, more than ever, to prepare clients properly for field office interviews, and to prevent issues that could lead to denaturalization proceedings in the future. Panelists will cover the following:

- Preparing clients and when it can go south for adjustment and naturalization
- Timeframes for adjudication by field office
- Ethical considerations in preparing cases
- Good moral character policy memorandum
- Changes to naturalization test
- When denaturalization is possible (civil v. criminal) and what to expect

10:20 am – 10:45 am

Networking Break

10:45 am – 11:45 am

Detention in 2025 and Beyond

The Trump administration's expansion of noncitizen arrests, detention, and removal to third countries raises constitutional, due process, and humanitarian concerns, adding to the responsibilities of immigration attorneys in representing clients. Arbitrary arrest without warrants results in detention and separation from family and employment. Detention affects the individual's emotional, mental, and physical well-being, and it leads to reduced access to counsel and limitations on the ability to obtain evidence for removal cases. In turn, removal without consent to a country where one is not a citizen, and with which one has no ties, is a devastating event. Recent BIA and U.S. Supreme Court decisions have further increased the risk of detention and limited the ability to contest third country removals. Panelists will address these topics, focusing on the following:

- Policies on arrests at courthouses and other sensitive locations
- *Matter of Q. Li* and *Matter of Yahure Hurtado*: effects on mandatory detention and eligibility for bond
- Litigation challenges to arrest, detention, and bond denial
- Challenging third-country removals

11:45 am – 1:20 pm

Lunch Break (included with registration)

12:05 pm – 1:05 pm

Lunch Session

Hot Topics in Family-Based Cases

Panelists will address the latest developments in family immigration. They will focus on recent policy changes and practical strategies to navigate current challenges. Panelists will provide insight into these developments, and impart tips and practical tools on how attorneys can better serve clients during this rapidly changing legal landscape.

- Increases in I-130 interviews and use of NTAs for denials

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- Carrying the burden of proof on “admission”
- Parole revocation
- Processing delays and relationship changes due to delays
- Public charge considerations and strategies to avoid RFEs
- Post-denial options for family-based petitions

1:25 pm – 2:25 pm

Hot Topics in Asylum: What is Going on Now for Those Seeking Asylum?

Panelists will explore recent changes in asylum policy and law and how to manage asylum cases in the current climate. The most relevant updates on asylum litigation and recent attorney general decisions pertaining to asylum claims will be discussed. In addition, panelists will address evolving issues relating to statutory bars to asylum and the recent pretermission guidance, and they will advise on the practical impacts of these legal developments.

- Pretermission guidance
- Litigation updates
- Recent AG decisions
- Border policies, circumvention of lawful pathways, and TRIG as bars
- Updates on how asylum cases are handled at USCIS

2:25 pm – 2:50 pm

Networking Break

2:50 pm – 3:50 pm

SIJS, U Visa, and T Visa Updates: The Latest for the Most Vulnerable Clients

Join our panelists as they explore the latest SIJS, U visa, and T visa policies and case law. Panelists will examine recent policy rollbacks, new adjudication trends, and litigation efforts shaping access to these protections. They also will impart practical tips for addressing legal challenges and learn innovative strategies for navigating these processes effectively.

- Termination of SIJS Deferred Action/EADs
- Litigation updates
- Use of derogatory information
- Derivative access under scrutiny
- NTA risks and arrests

3:50 pm – 4:10 pm

Networking Break

4:10 pm – 5:10 pm

Words Matter: Advocating for Justice by Confronting Bias (Elimination of Bias)

As advocates, we have a heightened responsibility to consider how our words impact others. Unconscious bias can harm our clients directly, and negatively impact the wider advocacy movement. How we present our clients, state facts, and speak with each other can mirror the government's rhetoric and reinforce stereotypes about noncitizens and colleagues, even if this is not our intention. Panelists will address how to be better advocates and supportive colleagues through more thoughtful and intentional language.

- Communicating with opposing counsel, IJs, and USCIS adjudicators
- Writing declarations and attorney support letters and briefs
- Effectively discussing cases with clients and colleagues

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Business Track

8:00 am – 9:00 am

Employment-Based Pathways for Persons in Temporary or Precarious Statuses

Employment-based visas remain an underused pathway for undocumented individuals and those with DACA, TPS, or country-specific parole, despite their potential to lead to more stable and lawful immigration status. Panelists will examine eligibility criteria for both immigrant and nonimmigrant work visas, and they will explore strategies for addressing legal barriers unique to each group.

- Achieving optionality with beneficiary employee's career trajectory and managing
- Determining eligibility for immigrant and nonimmigrant employment-based visas available to undocumented individuals, DACA recipients, TPS holders, and those with country-specific parole
- Updates and best practices for navigating the expedited §212(d)(3) waiver process, including how to prevent common delays and issues
- Exploring cap-exempt H-1B visa options for individuals employed by institutions of higher education, nonprofits, and government-affiliated research organizations
- Strategies for transitioning to lawful permanent resident status after reentering the U.S. on a nonimmigrant visa with an approved §212(d)(3) waiver
- Case examples of individuals in precarious immigration status successfully obtaining employment-based visas

9:00 am – 9:20 am

Networking Break

9:20 am – 10:20 am

Navigating Consular Processing in the Trump Age

With increased vetting and changing U.S. Department of State policies, it is important to stay up to date these developments to provide clients with the best chance for approval at the consulates. Additionally, strategies surrounding denials grow more complex in light of recent federal court decisions. Panelists will discuss ongoing trends in consular processing, and they will present strategies on how to handle complex cases and denials.

- L-1 trends
- Readjudication of approved I-797s at the consulate
- Trump Travel Ban and limited waivers
- "Catch and revoke" and §214b denials for arrests
- Visa stamp issuance trends and administrative processing, including continuous vetting and social media monitoring
- Inadmissibility trends
- Border and TCN applications
- Strategies and tools for resolving visa denials, including litigation and consular nonreviewability

10:20 am – 10:45 am

Networking Break

10:45 am – 11:45 am

Recent NTA Issuance Trends and Their Impact: Legal Strategies and Updates

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Recent months have seen a marked increase in the issuance of Notices to Appear (NTAs), affecting not only individuals who fall out of status but also nonimmigrants who have timely filed change of status or extension applications. Adjustment of status applicants, too, are increasingly at risk of being placed in proceedings while their petitions remain pending with USCIS. This has brought the world of business immigration and removal defense closer than ever. These developments highlight the need for practitioners to stay current on policy shifts, prosecutorial discretion practices, and the procedural tools available in removal proceedings.

- Current trends, recent policy shifts, and agency discretion: How USCIS and DHS are issuing NTAs across nonimmigrant categories (H, L, F, J, O, etc.) and for adjustment of status applicants
- “Lawful nonimmigrant status” versus “period of authorized stay:” the implications for removability and unlawful presence
- Termination frameworks: differences between mandatory termination and discretionary termination, and their applicability
- When administrative closure, as a docket management tool, is the more effective remedy to allow USCIS adjudications to proceed
- Litigation and advocacy strategies: how to protect clients with pending change of status, extension, or adjustment filings
- Best practices for advising clients on NTA risks across nonimmigrant statuses and preparing them for potential EOIR proceedings

11:45 pm – 1:20 pm **Lunch Break (included with registration)**

12:05 pm – 1:05 pm **Lunch Session
PERM Trends**

Panelists will provide an essential guide to navigating DOL and USCIS for PERM cases under the current administration. The discussion will provide critical insights for a new employment landscape that allows for more work outside the office. It will also look at new challenges in recruitment and applicant review in light of changing federal and local employment laws.

- 9141 versus 9089, including how to handle travel, telecommuting, and remote positions
- Recruitment and applicant review: navigating wage transparency laws and advising clients on managing aggressive applicants
- RFIs, audits, and denials

1:25 pm – 2:25 pm **Hot Topics in Business Immigration**

Recent policy developments at USCIS, along with a marked increase in Requests for Evidence (RFEs), Notices of Intent to Deny (NOIDs), and denials, have significantly reshaped the landscape for business immigration attorneys. These challenges extend to all visa types, with a particular focus on significant changes to the H-1B program. Panelists will provide practitioners with the most current strategies for preparing visa applications and navigating complex procedural hurdles, including crucial guidance on the latest USCIS policies, including:

- Preparing nonimmigrant and immigrant visa applications: what to include, and how to strategize for potential litigation

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- USCIS policy updates and implementation: anti-American, good moral character, and discretion
- Use of B-1s
- RFEs, NOIDs, and denials
 - Nonimmigrant visas: biometric appointments and background checks
 - Immigrant visas: EB-2 NIW and EB-1, I-140 ability to pay, beneficiary qualifications
 - Adjustment : bona fide marriage documents, employer/sponsor documentation
 - Navigating signature requirements

2:25 pm – 2:50 pm

Networking Break

2:50 pm – 3:50 pm

Updates in Workplace Enforcement

Our expert panelists will provide a critical overview of the latest developments in worksite enforcement. The discussion will delve into current trends in I-9 compliance, the nuances of various enforcement actions—from "knock and talks" to judicial warrants and raids—and the critical importance of advising both employers and employees on their rights during site visits. Additionally, panelists will offer a timely update on TPS litigation and its impact on I-9 compliance. This is an indispensable session for staying ahead of the curve in a rapidly changing enforcement landscape.

- I-9 audits and trends
- Knock and talks, notices of inspection, admin and judicial warrants, raids
- Advising employers and employees, site visits including routine and work-from-home roles, know your rights
- The latest on TPS litigation, termination, and impact on I-9 compliance

3:50 pm – 4:10 pm

Networking Break

4:10 pm – 5:10 pm

Extraordinary Ability and National Interest in 2025: Emerging Trends in EB-1 and NIW Adjudications

Stay ahead of the curve by joining this essential discussion on the emerging trends in EB-1 and National Interest Waiver (NIW) adjudications. Panelists will share insights on the latest USCIS approval trends, as well as successful strategies for overcoming increasingly challenging, and often AI-generated, Requests for Evidence (RFEs). Attendees will learn strategies to effectively demonstrate an applicant's eligibility for these complex case types, and how the government's latest perspective on eligibility presents both unique challenges and creative opportunities for legal arguments.

- Current statistics with USCIS' approval rates
- Success strategies for overcoming hard RFEs
- Legal strategies to show an applicant's eligibility for these tough case types
- How the government's archiving of certain web pages (e.g., the "frozen in time" critical and emerging technologies list) poses challenges and opportunities

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Saturday, November 9, 2024

Litigation Track

- 8:00 am – 9:00 am **California in the Crosshairs: The Role of California in the Current Immigration Crisis**
Panelists will examine California’s pivotal role in the current immigration crisis, and its impact on its local communities. They will address everything from the use of National Guard troops and community raids to the economic consequences. Panelists also will delve into funding threats and threats of intimidation against organizations and advocates, as well as explore the crucial role of the courts.
- The impact on California communities
 - Funding threats against the state, representation programs, and nonprofits
 - Intimidation and investigation of organizations and advocates
 - Role of our courts, from local to the Ninth Circuit
 - APA challenges to USCIS rulemaking and policy changes, and other federal court strategies
 - Local agency updates
- 9:00 am – 9:30 am **Networking Break**
- 9:30 am – 10:30 am **Habeas Corpus Petitions**
Join this crucial and timely discussion on the use of habeas corpus petitions for detained clients. Panelists will analyze the current state of case law, providing a detailed look at the U.S. Supreme Court’s landmark *Campos-Chaves* decision and its implications for defective notices to appear (NTAs). This nuts-and-bolts session will provide practitioners with the practical knowledge needed to effectively identify when to use habeas petitions and when temporary restraining orders (TROs) are an appropriate legal tool.
- Understanding habeas corpus
 - *Campos-Chaves* and defective NTAs
 - TROs in immigration cases
 - Practical strategies
 - Navigating complexities and finding a mentor
- 10:30 am – 11:00 am **Networking Break**
- 11:00 am – 12:00 pm **Updates on BIA Decisions**
The Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) has issued a number of decisions in recent months that impact critical aspects of removal proceedings. This panel of experts will examine the content and impact of these decisions, including:
- Decisions impacting immigration court procedures, including pretermission, the exercise of discretion, credibility determinations, and fee waivers
 - Decisions retracting and replacing precedents on the cognizability of particular social groups for purposes of the refugee definition
 - Decisions requiring mandatory detention and limiting bond eligibility

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- Decisions on evidentiary requirements for various forms of relief from removal

12:00 pm

Conference Concludes

Specialty Sessions Track

8:00 am – 9:00 am

Mobilizing with Advocacy and Using Congressional, Liaison, and Media Strategies

With practices of government agencies constantly shifting, practitioners should consider a broad range of strategies on how to deal with them. These strategies include utilizing members of Congress and their immigration case workers to hold the agency accountable, working through liaison channels to contact agencies, and, when appropriate, working with the media to promote your client's story. These tools are also effective for broadening your overall ability to influence, and even change, policies and practice through advocacy.

- Case summary
- Working with congressional offices and case workers
- Partnering with AILA national and your chapters to engage Congress on policy
- Navigating the back channels of liaison to move your case
- Using media and telling your story

9:00 am – 9:30 am

Networking Break

9:30 am – 10:30 am

I Want to Practice Immigration Law! Self-Care for Challenging Times (Wellness)

Panelists will highlight the resilience required to practice immigration law in today's hostile climate, and they will share candid insights on sustaining a meaningful practice while facing relentless challenges. Participants will be guided through wellness practices—including meditation and breathing exercises—that they can use to restore balance, build endurance, and stay grounded in the work.

- Share candid perspectives from experienced practitioners on sustaining meaningful careers despite relentless pressures
- Navigating vicarious trauma
- The importance of self-care
- Resources for clients experiencing trauma

10:30 am – 11:00 am

Networking Break

11:00 am – 12:00 pm

Opportunities and Risks: AI and Other Technologies in Immigration Practice (Technology)

Panelists will take a critical look at the evolving role of AI and other technologies in immigration practice, focusing on both the opportunities and the significant risks involved. The discussion will cover the attorney's duty of technical competence and how to ethically utilize technology within the attorney-client relationship. Practitioners will gain insight into the legal and ethical challenges posed by AI, including its impact on due process and the fine line between AI-assisted drafting and the unauthorized practice of law. The session will also address paramount concerns regarding client confidentiality and security, making it an essential guide for navigating the technological future of immigration law.

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- The duty of technical competence
- Ethically utilized technology in the attorney-client relationship
- AI and due process
- AI and drafting and unauthorized practice of law
- Client confidentiality and security

12:00 pm

Conference Concludes

Conference Program Committee

Megan Guzman, Conference Planning Committee Co-Chair, Orange, CA
Nicholas Mireles, Conference Planning Committee Co-Chair, Los Angeles, CA
Evangeline Abriel, Santa Clara, CA
Scott Idiart, Ann Arbor, MI
Tiffany Martinez, San Francisco, CA
Yunuen B. Mora, San Diego, CA
Edith Nazarian, Woodland Hills, CA
Andrew K. Nietor, AILA Board of Governors, San Diego, CA
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Abhinav Tripathi, Santa Clara, CA
Maria Alejandra Zavaleta, San Francisco, CA

Emmie R. Smith, AILA Director of Professional Development, Washington, D.C.

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