DOJ Wants to Suspend Certain Constitutional Rights Because of Coronavirus

Trump's Department of Justice (DOJ) wants chief judges to be able to hold people and suspend other constitutionally-protected rights indefinitely without trial during pandemics like coronavirus and other national emergencies, according to a report by Politico's Betsy Woodruff Swan.

POLITICO reviewed documents that show the DOJ quietly asked Congress to draft legislation.

> *The move has tapped into a broader fear among civil liberties advocates and Donald Trump's critics — that the president will use a moment of crisis to push for controversial policy changes. Already, he has cited the pandemic as a reason for heightening border restrictions and restricting asylum claims. He has also pushed for further tax cuts as the economy withers, arguing it would soften the financial blow to Americans. And even without policy changes, Trump has vast emergency powers that he could deploy right now to try to slow the coronavirus outbreak.*
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> *The DOJ requests — which are unlikely to make it through a Democratic-led House — span several stages of the legal process, from initial arrest to how cases are processed and investigated.*
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> *POLITICO*

> *The DOJ has requested Congress allow any chief judge of a district court to pause court proceedings "whenever the district court is fully or partially closed by virtue of any natural disaster, civil disobedience, or other emergency*

> *situation," according to draft language obtained by Politico. This would be applicable to "any statutes or rules of procedure otherwise affecting pre-arrest, post-arrest, pre-trial, trial, and post-trial procedures in criminal and juvenile proceedings and all civil processes and proceedings." They justify this by saying currently judges can pause judicial proceedings in an emergency but that new legislation would allow them to apply it "in a consistent manner."*
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> *Rolling Stone*

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