

Study: Immigration cases crowd U.S. courts



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U.S. prosecutions of illegal immigrants are soaring so quickly that such cases are now dominating the federal courts, a study released this week said. A statistical analysis of the federal courts' caseload compiled by Syracuse University's Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse showed that the number immigration cases jumped from 3,746 in March 2007 to 9,350 in March of this year. Immigration cases currently make up more than half of the federal court system's caseload, The Los Angeles Times reported Wednesday. The surge in immigration cases is the result of an effort by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security called Operation Streamline which, officials said, will be beefed up by adding 64 attorneys and 35 staff members to prosecutorial efforts along the U.S. border with Mexico. "This is an effort to use the federal criminal justice system in immigration enforcement," Syracuse professor Susan Long, who led the caseload analysis, told the Times. "What it means is that immigration cases are dominating the federal court system these days. The volume of cases is really huge." Operation Streamline is part of a response by the Bush administration to failed congressional attempts to overhaul immigration laws, the report said.