

February 27, 2020

Director James McHenry
Executive Office for Immigration Review
5107 Leesburg Pike
Falls Church, VA 22041

Dear Director McHenry:

The American Historical Association expresses grave concern over reports from Syracuse University's Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC) that the Executive Office of Immigration Review omitted from its September 2019 anonymized data release close to 1,000,000 records.

These apparently missing records include more than 1000 records of applications for relief, ranging from adjustment of status, suspension of deportation, asylum, and asylum withholding, filed by immigrants in the course of Immigration Court proceedings. According to TRAC, these records are not exempt for disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, which EOIR contends explains their absence from the September 2019 data release.

The American Historical Association lacks sufficient information to evaluate TRAC's claim. But we take these reports seriously. As the largest organization of professional historians in the world, the AHA is well aware that the integrity of the federal records system is imperative to facilitating the production and dissemination of thorough and reliable history on which a thriving democracy depends.

The EOIR has neither responded to TRAC's request for a fuller explanation for the discrepancies nor addressed what TRAC alleges in a November 4, 2019 letter to you are "gross irregularities" in the anonymized data release. The AHA therefore urgently requests that the EOIR respond to TRAC's letter as soon as possible. It also requests that the EOIR make public its quality control procedures for the purpose of instilling in the historical community confidence that no records have been deleted and that all future anonymized data releases will be complete.

Sincerely,



James Grossman
Executive Director