

February 28, 2017

The Honorable John F. Kelly
Secretary of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Kelly,

The American Historical Association energetically protests the recent shabby and completely unwarranted treatment of Professor Henry Rousso by American immigration authorities last week. Professor Rousso, a renowned scholar of modern France and the Holocaust, is director of research at France's National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS). Last Saturday, February 25, he flew from Paris to Texas to give a keynote address for a conference at Texas A&M University, but was held at the airport and nearly deported back to France by customs agents who accused him of trying to enter the country illegally. Only the prompt action of TAMU officials, including the university president, enabled Professor Rousso to complete his journey as planned and give his talk.

The excellence of American universities depends in part on their ability to bring in foreign scholars, from graduate students to senior professors, to interact with their domestic colleagues. The poor treatment of distinguished historians like Professor Rousso constitutes a direct threat to the historical discipline in the United States. Already the ripple effects of this unfortunate action are making foreign colleagues hesitate to plan trips to America. As one history professor in the United Kingdom commented, "Many non-American scholars like myself absolutely love interacting with colleagues in the States because we recognize that there is so much superb research being done there and so many excellent colleagues. We would be really sad if we felt we couldn't continue to visit the cutting-edge institutions in the States."

The Rousso case is a clear example of how the recent crackdown on immigration by the Trump administration threatens the free exchange of scholarly ideas. In order to prevent further damage to America's global scholarly presence, the American Historical Association requests an investigation of this incident, a formal apology to Professor Rousso, and some reasonable assurance that this won't happen again.

Sincerely,



Tyler Stovall, President
American Historical Association

Cc: The Honorable Chuck Grassley, Senate Judiciary Committee, *chairman*
The Honorable Dianne Feinstein, Senate Judiciary Committee, *ranking member*
The Honorable John Cornyn, Senate Subcommittee on Border Security and Immigration, *chairman*
The Honorable Dick Durbin, Senate Subcommittee on Border Security and Immigration, *ranking member*
The Honorable Ron Johnson, Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, *chairman*
The Honorable Claire McCaskill, Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, *ranking member*
The Honorable Bob Goodlatte, House Judiciary Committee, *chairman*
The Honorable John Conyers, House Judiciary Committee, *ranking member*
The Honorable Jim Sensenbrenner, House Subcommittee on Immigration and Border Security, *chairman*
The Honorable Zoe Lofgren, House Subcommittee on Immigration and Border Security, *ranking member*
The Honorable Michael McCaul, House Committee on Homeland Security, *chairman*
The Honorable Bennie Thompson, House Committee on Homeland Security, *ranking minority member*
The Honorable Martha McCally, House Border and Maritime Security Subcommittee, *chairwoman*
The Honorable Filemon Vela, House Border and Maritime Security Subcommittee, *ranking member*