



Statement by Hon. Ashley Tabaddor, President of Judges' Union (NAIJ), on Revelation of “Gross Irregularities” in DOJ Immigration Data

On Oct. 31, the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC) at Syracuse University released a report documenting “gross irregularities in recent data releases” by the Executive Office of Immigration Review (EOIR) at the U.S. Department of Justice. The following statement is from Hon. Ashley Tabaddor, president of the National Association of Immigration Judges (NAIJ), who also serves as a U.S. immigration court judge based in Los Angeles.

We are deeply disturbed that independent researchers at Syracuse University have uncovered serious and systemic flaws in the public release of data by the U.S. Department of Justice about what is – and what is not – happening in U.S. immigration courts. The concerns raised by TRAC researchers confirm the experience of our judges, who find time and again that DOJ’s recent data does not match the reality we see in our courtrooms.

According to TRAC, millions of records are apparently missing or garbled and may have been intentionally deleted. Researchers who have been closely following reports from the Executive Office of Immigration Review (EOIR) for years say the agency is now demonstrating a ‘lack of commitment...to ensuring the public is provided with accurate and reliable data.’

The United States needs a fact-based immigration court system. This cannot be achieved if we do not have the data and the facts straight. The Supreme Court has made important rulings based on EOIR data that has turned out to be inaccurate and miscalculated. Similar data issues are also plaguing our judges who are

subjected to arbitrary quotas and deadlines, which compromise due process rights of the parties before the Court.

This is not a dispute about numbers on a spreadsheet. It's about getting the facts we need to make decisions affecting real people in our courtrooms. Missing or garbled data is unacceptable and the Department of Justice needs to fix this problem right away.

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Judge Tabaddor's comments are made in her capacity as president of the National Association of Immigration Judges (NAIJ). NAIJ, founded in 1971, is a voluntary organization formed with the objectives of promoting independence and enhancing the professionalism, dignity, and efficiency of the Immigration Court.