



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POLICE ORGANIZATIONS
317 South Patrick Street, Alexandria, VA 22314
info@napo.org • www.napo.org
(800) 322 - NAPO

December 19, 2016

NAPO Statement on Obama Appointment of Debo Adebile to Civil Rights Commission

The Obama Administration, in a final, childish gesture of anger and frustration at the close of a failed presidency, announced that it has appointed Debo Adebile to a six-year term to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. Unlike his previous nomination in 2014 to lead the Department of Justice (DOJ) Civil Rights Division – which NAPO worked successfully to stop – this nomination does not need Senate approval. NAPO is disappointed but not surprised that President Obama decided to ignore the will of Congress and the voices of the law enforcement community and make this appointment at the end of his Presidency.

Under Mr. Adebile's leadership, the Legal Defense Fund of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) volunteered their services to defend Mumia Abu-Jamal, a convicted cop-killer. Abu-Jamal was convicted of murdering Philadelphia Police Officer Daniel Faulkner in 1982. Mr. Adebile worked tirelessly to free this unrepentant cop-killer and his efforts led to the overturning of the just sentence Abu-Jamal received for murdering an irreplaceable member of our law enforcement community.

In 2014, Mr. Adebile was the first Obama nominee to be rejected by the Senate under new rules that allowed nominees to be confirmed with only a simple majority. Several Democrats joined their Republican colleagues in voting no on Mr. Adebile, recognizing that his work on Abu-Jamal's case disqualified him to direct the DOJ Civil Rights Division. Additionally, through his work defending Abu-Jamal, he revealed an intense animosity toward our nation's law enforcement officers, not to mention a callous and crude despising of the widows and orphans left behind.

The one bright spot in this fiasco is that Mr. Adebile's appointment to the U.S. Civil Rights Commission will not allow him to interfere with American law enforcement in any meaningful way. The U.S. Civil Rights Commission has marginalized itself over the past several years under the leadership of Chairman Martin Castro, especially after its report on the state of religious liberty in the U.S. The Commission continues to dwindle in influence and if Mr. Adebile is going to be appointed to a position, we would rather have him sitting on a Commission where his hatred for law enforcement officers will have little impact.

There is no legitimate reason why President Obama would make such an appointment at a time when our nation's officers need the complete support of our government. It speaks volumes as to Barack Obama's intrinsic dislike and mistrust of police. We urge Congress to condemn this nomination in the strongest possible terms and we will continue our work in the 115th Congress to ensure that our nation's law enforcement community is adequately supported.

NAPO is looking forward to a much different future under President Trump and a new Department of Justice under the leadership of Attorney General Designate Jeff Sessions. We already have a strong, pro-law enforcement relationship with the new Attorney General and we can ensure that the Civil Rights Division views law enforcement as its partner and not an enemy it must combat.

###

NAPO is a coalition of police unions and associations from across the United States that serves to advance the interests of America's law enforcement through legislative and legal advocacy, political action, and education. Founded in 1978, NAPO now represents more than 1,000 police units and associations, 241,000 sworn law enforcement officers, and more than 100,000 citizens who share a common dedication to fair and effective crime control and law enforcement.