



May 25, 2017

President Donald J. Trump  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, DC 20500

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

Dear President Trump and Secretary Kelly,

We are writing to you today to express our deep concern regarding media reports that Milwaukee County Sheriff David Clarke will be appointed as an Assistant Secretary in the Office of Partnership and Engagement at the Department of Homeland Security. Clarke's record as Milwaukee County Sheriff and his history of incendiary and hateful statements make him unfit to serve in this role, as does his connection with anti-government extremist groups. We urge you not to appoint Clarke to this key position.

As an Assistant Secretary in the Office of Partnership and Engagement, Sheriff Clarke would serve as the Department of Homeland Security liaison with state, local and tribal law enforcement and governments across the country. Yet, he has shown an unwillingness to work with people from political backgrounds different from his own and an opposition to the institution of government. When asked about bipartisanship, Sheriff Clarke once stated that "the only reason I'll be reaching across the aisle is to grab one of them by the throat." In addition, Sheriff Clarke has well-documented ties to anti-government extremist movements, including Constitutional Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association (CSPOA) and the Oath Keepers.

Clarke also has a history of disparaging marginalized communities and encouraging violence against them. He has described transgender people as living a "freakish lifestyle" and called for an armed uprising in response to the Supreme Court's decision legalizing marriage equality nationwide. He has referred to Black Lives Matter as a terrorist group, compared them to the Ku Klux Klan and has called for them to be "eradicated from American society." Clarke also opposes hate crime laws, has supported law enforcement patrolling Muslim neighborhoods, and has denied the existence of police brutality. Clarke has repeatedly made disparaging comments about Muslims and Islam. He has suggested that law enforcement patrol and surveil American Muslim neighborhoods and implied that views held by terror groups represent the views of the greater Muslim population.

In addition, Sheriff Clarke has supported harsh penalties for nonviolent criminals and other tough-on crime measures that have contributed to mass incarceration in the country. This has disproportionately targeted African American men.

The Department of Homeland Security's mission is to keep American people safe, but Sheriff Clarke hasn't even been able to keep his own inmates safe. Four inmates died in Clarke's jails in 2016, and he is currently the subject of several lawsuits alleging abuse in his jails. If Sheriff Clarke cannot ensure the safety of his own inmates how can he be trusted to work with law enforcement across the country to ensure the safety of the American people?

We need an Assistant Secretary in the Office of Partnership and Engagement who can bridge divides and work with diverse law enforcement across the country to keep America safe. Sheriff Clarke would not be that Assistant Secretary. We urge you not to go forward with his appointment to this position.

Sincerely,



Jonathan A. Greenblatt  
National Director and CEO  
Anti-Defamation League



Chad Griffin  
President  
Human Rights Campaign



Wade Henderson  
President and CEO  
The Leadership Conference



Farhana Khera  
Executive Director  
Muslim Advocates



Janet Murguía  
President  
National Council of La Raza



Marc Morial  
President  
National Urban League