

July 29, 2020

OPPOSE THE CONFIRMATION OF ANTHONY TATA TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF  
DEFENSE FOR POLICY

Dear Senator,

On behalf of 54 organizations representing civil and human rights advocates, people of color, people of faith, teachers, students, disabled people, and allies, we strongly urge you to vocally and unequivocally reject the pending nomination of Anthony Tata to be Under Secretary of Defense for Policy.

All of our communities have been directly harmed by Mr. Tata's words and actions. We believe that the bigotry and discrimination he has perpetuated over this career disqualify him from any federal appointment *and especially one of this importance*. He is one of the most openly and brazenly bigoted nominees in recent memory.

The Under Secretary of Defense for Policy is the third highest position at the Pentagon. With a deeply diverse workforce of almost three million employees and service members and a budget of over \$700 billion, the Defense Department is the largest employer in America. Anthony Tata's record of discrimination and bigotry show that he's patently unfit to assume such a vital role.

**Tata's use of racist rhetoric shows a deep disregard for Black people and victims of police violence.**

- He called veteran Congresswoman Maxine Waters a "vicious race baiting racist" for her defense of Rodney King, a victim of police violence.<sup>1</sup>
- He invoked plantation slavery to criticize a Black news anchor.<sup>2</sup>
- He repeatedly invoked the "birtherism" conspiracy theory about President Obama.<sup>3</sup>

**He is deeply hostile to American Muslims and routinely invoked bigoted anti-Muslim rhetoric and conspiracies, including:**

- He repeated false claims based on bigoted narratives about Islam that the nation's first Black President was a "Muslim," and a "terrorist leader" with "Islamic roots"<sup>4</sup> who sought "a weaker America."<sup>5</sup>
- He called Islam "most oppressive violent religion I know of."<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/12/politics/pentagon-nominee-tata-trump-kfile/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/12/politics/pentagon-nominee-tata-trump-kfile/index.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/12/politics/pentagon-nominee-tata-trump-kfile/index.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/12/politics/pentagon-nominee-tata-trump-kfile/index.html>

<sup>5</sup> <https://imgur.com/a/KDLpvsj>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/12/politics/pentagon-nominee-tata-trump-kfile/index.html>

- In one of his novels that was published in 2019, he included a subplot about “Islamic gang rape” of white women.<sup>7</sup>

**Anthony Tata was a leader in the effort to resegregate schools.** In late 2010, Tata was hired to lead the Wake County, North Carolina school system and immediately dismantled a nationally lauded desegregation program. He wrote and implemented a plan to eliminate school diversity in the face of multiple civil rights complaints and actions.<sup>8</sup> “His racial insensitivity quickly became notorious,” according to the North Carolina NAACP. After his Defense Department nomination was announced, the organization called him “a walking scandal” who “seemed to regard African American parents as ideological adversaries, rather than taxpayers invested in the quality of their Public Schools.”<sup>9</sup> He would go on to be fired less than two years after he was hired.

**Under Tata’s leadership, Wake County schools discriminated against disabled students and Latinos.** His time at Wake County schools was marred by allegations of violating various civil rights laws, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, for refusing to provide Spanish-speaking parents with information related to special education services and processes and information about long-term suspensions.<sup>10</sup>

One simply cannot lead a diverse department while having such contempt for diverse people. A vote for Anthony Tata would be a vote to confirm one of the most clearly bigoted executive nominees in recent memory. We urge you to vocally and unequivocally reject the Tata nomination.

Thank you for your consideration of our views. If you have any questions or would like to discuss this matter further, please contact Naheed Qureshi at [naheed@muslimadvocates.org](mailto:naheed@muslimadvocates.org).

Signed,

Muslim Advocates, Co-Organizer  
NAACP, Co-Organizer  
American Federation of Teachers (AFT), Co-Organizer  
Center for Disability Rights, Co-Organizer  
SPLC Action Fund, Co-Organizer  
A. Philip Randolph Institute  
American Atheists

---

7

[https://www.google.com/books/edition/Double\\_Crossfire/BzSGDwAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=islamic+gang+rape+inauthor:%22Anthony+J.+Tata%22&pg=PT173&printsec=frontcover](https://www.google.com/books/edition/Double_Crossfire/BzSGDwAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=islamic+gang+rape+inauthor:%22Anthony+J.+Tata%22&pg=PT173&printsec=frontcover)

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.facingsouth.org/2012/09/political-controversy-roils-nc-school-system-at-ce.html>

<sup>9</sup> <https://muslimadvocates.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/NCNAACPTataResponse.pdf>

<sup>10</sup>

<https://www.splcenter.org/news/2012/05/08/nc-school-system-must-stop-discrimination-against-latino-students>

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)  
Americans United for Separation of Church and State  
Andrew Goodman Foundation  
Anti-Defamation League  
Arab American Institute  
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC  
Athlete Ally  
Bend the Arc Jewish Action  
Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI)  
Center for Disability Rights, Co-Organizer  
Center for Responsible Lending  
CenterLink  
Clearinghouse on Women's Issues  
Coalition of Black Trade Unionists  
Color Of Change  
EDGE Consulting Partners  
Emgage Action  
Equality North Carolina  
Faith in Public Life  
Faithful America  
Family Equality  
Feminist Majority Foundation  
Free Press  
Human Rights Campaign  
Lambda Legal  
Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights  
League of United Latin American Citizens of Iowa (LULAC)  
Matthew Shepard Foundation  
Military Religious Freedom Foundation (MRFF)  
MoveOn  
National Action Network  
National Association of Human Rights Workers  
National Center for Transgender Equality  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Domestic Workers Alliance  
National Equality Action Team (NEAT)  
National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights  
North Carolina NAACP  
Reconstructing Judaism  
Revolutionary Love Project  
Rian Immigrant Center  
Seattle Immigrant Rights Action Group  
The Interfaith Center of New York

Voices for Progress

Wallingford Indivisible

Washington State Religious Campaign Against Torture

Win Without War

Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center