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R. SETH WILLIAMS  
District Attorney

February 4, 2014

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy  
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee  
437 Russell Senate Building  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley  
Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee  
135 Hart Senate Office Building  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Leahy and Grassley:

I write to express my opposition to the confirmation of Debo Adebile to be the next Assistant Attorney General to lead the Civil Rights Division at the U.S. Department of Justice.

Mr. Adebile has impressive credentials. His decision to champion the cause of an extremist cop-killer, however, sends a message of contempt to police officers who risk their lives every day to maintain the peace. I believe he is ill-suited for a pivotal role in the Justice Department.

As acting director of the NAACP's Legal Defense Fund (LDF), Mr. Adebile chose to inject his organization into the notorious case of Mumia Abu-Jamal, a convicted murderer who executed a Philadelphia police officer in cold blood. Although Abu-Jamal was already well-represented and had large cash funds at his disposal, Mr. Adebile volunteered the LDF to act as lead counsel during the defendant's appeals.

Evidence at trial established that this was not some case of random street crime. Abu-Jamal was a supporter of the "MOVE" organization -- an anarchist group that explicitly advocated violence against police.

In December 1981, Abu-Jamal gunned down Daniel Faulkner, a twenty-five-year-old police officer who was in the process of a routine traffic stop on a Philadelphia street. Abu-Jamal shot Officer Faulkner once in the back and then stood over him and shot at him three more times before firing a

final shot into the officer's face, killing him. Immediately following the incident, Abu-Jamal stated that he hoped the officer died.

Abu-Jamal made every effort to turn the trial into political theater. He repeatedly interrupted the proceedings, insulted the judge, and chanted the name of MOVE leader John "Africa." During the appeals, his supporters attempted to intimidate the judge by massing in front of his home in a residential neighborhood. Worst of all, they have maintained a three-decade-long campaign of verbal abuse against Officer Faulkner's widow, Maureen, who simply wanted justice for her dead husband.

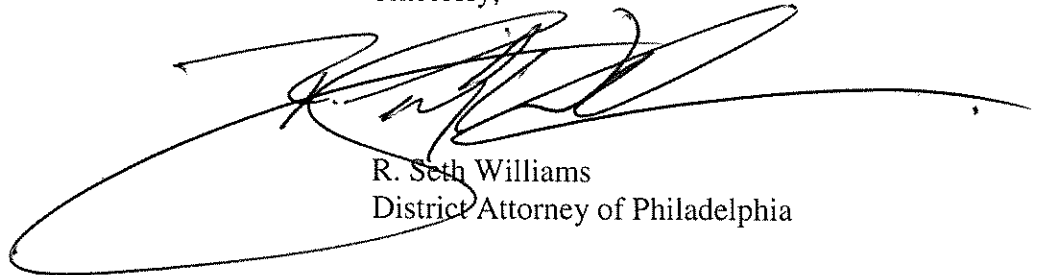
His lawyers, who have included Leonard Weinglass, echoed these tactics in their legal maneuvers. Despite the overwhelming evidence of guilt, they have consistently attempted to turn reality on its head, arguing that Abu-Jamal was framed and that it was he, rather than Officer Faulkner, who was the victim of racism. The LDF perpetuated these allegations when it took over Abu-Jamal's case. Although Abu-Jamal's death sentence was eventually overturned on the basis of new procedural rules invented after his trial, his murder conviction has been upheld -- and his lawyers' bogus racial claims have been consistently rejected in both state and federal court.

Aside from being patently false, moreover, these claims are personally insulting to me. As an African-American, I know all too well the grievous consequences of racial discrimination and prejudice. I also know that Abu-Jamal was convicted and sentenced because of the evidence, not because of his race. And I have continued to fight for the jury's verdict because it was the just result.

Given all of the laudable objectives of the NAACP, it is telling that Mr. Adegbile chose to devote his resources to this particular cause rather than the many legitimate battles that called for his formidable abilities. Of course, in our system even a radical cop-killer like Mumia Abu-Jamal is entitled to legal representation. That does not mean, however, that those lawyers who elect to arm him in his efforts are suitable to lead this nation's highest law enforcement offices. To select such a lawyer, among all those qualified for the position, speaks volumes to police officers and their families.

In light of this troubling history, I am most concerned by Mr. Adegbile's nomination and would ask that you oppose his confirmation. Thank you very much for your consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Seth Williams', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and somewhat abstract, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

R. Seth Williams  
District Attorney of Philadelphia