



FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

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December 8, 2003

The Honorable Gale Norton
 Secretary of the Interior
 Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Norton:

On behalf of the 21,000 members of the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association (FLEOA), I would like to address what appears to be a very unfortunate situation. Over the past two and one half years, your leadership has brought about remarkable and positive change to all law enforcement entities within the Department. I recently received the distressing news that Chief Theresa Chambers, United States Park Police (USPP), one of your senior managers and member of FLEOA has been suspended for alleged insubordination.

Chief Chambers' career has been quite remarkable. She began her career as a patrol officer in the Prince Georges County Police Department, rising to the position of Major. This occurred, while battling many of the past prejudices that inhibited the law enforcement profession only until recent memory. She maintains her positive attitude for success which is infectious and since made its way down through the rank and file. She has maintained leadership by setting the example, and this has gained her the trust and loyalty of the officers under her command. Just prior to coming in as Chief to the USPP she was the Chief of the Durham, NC Police Dept. She is described as a forward thinking leader.

My understanding of this situation is that Chief Chambers was recently suspended for responding to inquiries from the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) as to why working conditions were so poor, and why personnel numbers so low. The Chief related some of the pertinent issues and now there is an apparent attempt to stifle her actions and remove her from the position of Chief.

Lack of budgetary resources or current issues with management is not a hidden problem in either the National Park Service (NPS) or many other federal agencies. What is disturbing is the appearance that upper echelon management decided to publicize this in an apparent attempt to make an example and have consequently shown their inability to support law enforcement operations at a critical time with an elite and professional department led by a dedicated

individual. Additionally, these actions have brought more undesirable attention to the current USPP situation.

Following on with publicly embarrassing the Chief rather than handling this issue in a professional manner behind closed doors to assess what really transpired sends overtones of an inquisition attitude. The Chief was making the point that there is simply not enough money to accomplish all the tasks assigned to the Park Police, a statement reflected by many other police departments stretched thin by the additional criteria placed on them by, Homeland Security, current threat levels and added responsibilities.

The FLEOA is committed to every one of its members, from the rookie just out of academy to law enforcement leaders. Chief Chambers is one of these leaders, she is not motivated by political ideals or aspirations. We feel she is motivated by a desire to provide her officers on the street the tools needed to get the job done safely.

I have received many words of support for Chief Chambers from our membership. Barring any ongoing issues concerning Chief Chambers that compile and or complicate this situation that the general public is not aware of, it would be an opportune time to return Chief Chambers to full duty citing administrative procedures and that NPS management revisit their concept of law enforcement.

In the past, our meetings with Mr. Parkinson have been very productive. Madam Secretary, please remember Chief Chambers was selected by you and Director Fran Mainella to be the future of the USPP, it is the consensus the Chief was on that path. I realize your schedule is quite busy but I would welcome the opportunity meet with you; perhaps joined by representatives from the Fraternal Order of Police and the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

We look forward to a swift resolution of this situation and reaffirm our continued support of your efforts to reform law enforcement within the Depart of the Interior. If I can be of assistance or you have questions please feel free to contact me at 202 441-9780.

Sincerely,



Timothy J. Danahey
National President