



NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE®

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NATIONAL PRESIDENT

JAMES O. PASCO, JR.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Honorable William L. Clay, Jr.
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

10 January 2017

Dear Representative Clay,

I am writing on behalf of the members of the Fraternal Order of Police to raise our concerns and our objections with your decision to hang a painting in the U.S. Capitol which depicts law enforcement officers as violent, rampaging animals.


The FOP is at the forefront of defending the First Amendment and artistic expression and the right to display such works is indisputably a First Amendment issue. However, I wanted to let you know that the decision to hang this painting in the Capitol is deeply offensive to our members. We believe that the exercise of this right in this case in this space is an abuse of the rights of the men and women in law enforcement.

The law enforcement officers in this painting not only have their physical features distorted to appear as animals, but it is also distorts how they conduct themselves in carrying out their duties. The images in the painting are deliberately inflammatory and defamatory of law enforcement officers and we believe it violates the rights of our officers, who have the right to carry out their sworn duties—to do their jobs—with their reputation unsullied and unstained.

The decision to hang this painting exacerbates the rift between law enforcement community and the communities they serve. The FOP wants to repair these damaged bonds and actions like this make that very, very difficult. There is no question that when there is a lack of trust between police and the community, the safety of the public is compromised. In a real way, inflaming anti-police sentiment puts our officers and the public in greater jeopardy. We have seen time and time again that hateful words and images can lead to physical violence. It is for these reasons, I urge you to find another work by this young artist to display.

I thank you in advance for your consideration of the views of the more than 330,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police. If I can provide you any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me or Executive Director Jim Pasco in my Washington office..

Sincerely,


Chuck Canterbury
National President

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