



One Hundred Fifteenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20515

November 17, 2017

The Honorable Elaine Duke
Acting Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
245 Murray Lane SW
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Acting Secretary Duke:

Though Rev. Jamie Johnson resigned last night, I am appalled that he was appointed to lead the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships despite making racist, prejudiced statements about African Americans and Muslims on radio broadcasts as recently as last year. His appointment calls into question DHS's vetting process for key positions and undermines the Department's ability to work with people of color and religious groups on homeland security matters.

I am further concerned that the Department defended Rev. Johnson and praised his work with the Center even after his despicable statements became widely known to the public. While he was appointed during the tenure of former Secretary John Kelly, it is important that you, as Acting Secretary, unequivocally denounce Rev. Johnson's statements and ensure that a suitable candidate is selected to fill the position.

With that in mind, and pursuant to Rule X and Rule XI of the House of Representatives, please provide responses in writing to the following by no later than December 1, 2017.

1. Please describe in detail the suitability vetting process for Rev. Jamie Johnson for the position of Director of the Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Initiatives. Did the Department investigate whether he had made statements or taken actions that would render him unsuitable for the position? If not, why not?
2. Were Rev. Johnson's racist, prejudiced statements about African Americans and Muslims known to the Department prior to his appointment? If so, why was he appointed to the position? If not, why not, given that his statements were made on public broadcasts?

3. Were Rev. Johnson's statements known to the Department at any point prior to the media reports on November 16, 2017? If so, why was he not removed from the position sooner?
4. Is the Department investigating whether Rev. Johnson's racist, prejudiced statements detrimentally affected his work with other DHS employees, relevant communities, and stakeholders? If so, what is the result of that investigation to date? If not, why not?
5. How will the Department ensure the individual selected to lead the Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships is vetted appropriately and found to be suitable for the position?

I look forward to your timely response to these questions and to the Department's appointment of a suitable individual to carry out the goals of the Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



BENNIE G. THOMPSON
Ranking Member