

NTEU

The National Treasury Employees Union

January 11, 2017

The Honorable James B. Comey
Director
Federal Bureau of Investigation
935 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20535-0001

Dear Director Comey:


As the National President of the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU), I am privileged to represent the 25,000 Customs and Border Protection employees who safeguard our country at the nation's more than 400 ports of entry. These men and women are dedicated law enforcement officers, agriculture specialists, import specialists and many others who guard our country against terrorist threats while ensuring the legitimate trade and travel that drives much of our country's economy.

In late December of 2016, the FBI launched a PSA campaign titled 'Report Border Corruption', targeting ten cities along this nation's northern and southern borders. The campaign announcement states that stopping "public corruption" is the FBI's top criminal priority. The PSA video states that "every day" "drugs, weapons, and even people are smuggled into this country" and then provides the examples of two border officers who were convicted for taking bribes to facilitate smuggling. Overall, the campaign announcement implies that corruption along the border is widespread and the primary cause of contraband entering this country. I strongly object to that implication. I am very concerned that the message, by casting suspicion on the entire workforce at the border, will undermine respect for the legitimate authority they exercise in protecting our nation's borders.

I completely agree that any instance of border corruption is intolerable and must be weeded out. But that should not be done in a way that makes the jobs of tens of thousands of Customs and Border Protection Officers and Agricultural Specialists more difficult. The campaign messaging was developed without input from or advance notice to the very people it casts a wary eye upon. It could have at least included some acknowledgement that corrupt officials represent the rare exception to the otherwise dedicated employees NTEU represent.

I ask that the FBI reconsider this campaign and its messaging before lasting damage is done to the authority of frontline employees, making their already difficult and dangerous jobs even harder.

Sincerely,



Anthony M. Reardon
National President