



Feb. 21, 2017

Ross Jones
7 Investigator
WXYZ Detroit

VIA Email

Dear Mr. Jones,

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. In the Detroit area, that includes more than 700 CBP employees who work day and night at the Ambassador Bridge, Detroit-Windsor Tunnel and Detroit Metro Airport.

When the FBI launched the corruption campaign that was the focus of a story you broadcast today, I raised specific concerns with FBI Director James Comey about the tone and tenor of the campaign and the long-term damage this campaign will cause to CBP employees.

This is part of what I wrote to Director Comey:

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.

Make no mistake, I agree that any instance of border corruption is unacceptable. But rooting it out should not make the jobs of these dedicated CBP employees more difficult and potentially turn the public against them.

I point out that your report said 197 CBP employees have faced corruption charges since 2004. Given that there are more than 64,000 CBP employees that is an occurrence of less than 1.0 percent of the workforce over a 13-year period.

CBP employees 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. These workers face the potential of danger each day but do their jobs professionally and with great commitment to this country and the public they serve.

I am proud to represent CBP employees and I would be happy to answer any further questions you may have about their work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tony Reardon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Anthony M. Reardon
National President