



Jefferson Beauregard Sessions III
Attorney General of the United States
950 Pennsylvania Ave NW #409
Washington, DC 20530

January 18, 2018

Dear Attorney General Sessions,

NAPD members represent thousands of indigent clients across the country and have seen poor people struggle with crippling criminal justice debt in the form of court fees and taxes. So, it came as a great relief to many who work in the judicial system (and those opposed to oppressive hidden taxes) when, in March of 2016, the Justice Department issued guidance explaining existing law with regard to imposing monetary penalties and threatening incarceration for indigent citizens unable to pay.

Since Ferguson, NAPD members and allies have been able to gain momentum in the fight against crippling legal financial obligations. The work is not done, the problem is not solved, and continued pressure is needed to encourage reluctant jurisdictions to change. The DOJ's letter to the bench provided an independent source of pressure and encouragement and confirmed the problem as a national one.

The recent revocation of this guidance memo by Attorney General Sessions doesn't change the law but it sends a troubling message that the current Justice Department no longer intends to enforce existing law designed to protect one of this country's most vulnerable populations. For this reason alone, the Justice Department and Trump administration must reconsider its commitment to "law and order" and the value of clear Justice Department guidance and reissue its legal advice in the area of criminal costs and fees.

Sincerely,

Paul DeWolfe
Chair, NAPD Steering Committee

Janene McCabe
Chair, NAPD Fines & Fees Committee

cc/hard copy: Rod Jay Rosenstein, Deputy Attorney General of the United States

ON BEHALF OF THE NAPD STEERING COMMITTEE

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