

THE UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
June 23, 2010

Contact: Lenore Ostrowsky
Acting Chief, Public Affairs Unit
(202) 376-8591
TDD: (202) 376-8116

FORMER DOJ TRIAL ATTORNEY IN NEW BLACK PANTHER PARTY VOTER INTIMIDATION CASE TO TESTIFY AT JULY 6, 2010 U.S. CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION HEARING

Washington, DC – The United States Commission on Civil Rights announces that former Department of Justice Civil Rights Division Voting Section trial attorney J. Christian Adams will testify at a hearing on the New Black Panther Party voter intimidation case.

DATE AND TIME: Tuesday, July 6, 2010; 9:30 a.m. EDT

PLACE: 624 9th St., N.W.
Room 540
Washington, DC 20425

Mr. J. Christian Adams, the primary trial attorney assigned to the case, resigned from the Department as of June 4. He was subpoenaed by the Commission in December 2009, but was prevented from testifying by the Department of Justice. Also subpoenaed was Christopher Coates, who was subsequently removed as chief of the voting section and transferred to the U.S. Attorney's office in South Carolina. As of this date, the Department has not permitted Mr. Coates to testify before the Commission.

The case arose out of an incident at a Philadelphia, Pennsylvania polling place on Election Day 2008 involving members of the New Black Panther Party. On that date, two party members wearing paramilitary uniforms positioned themselves at the entrance to a polling place. The party members hurled racial epithets and threats at voters and poll watchers, and one of the party members brandished a night stick. After conducting an investigation, the Department brought charges against the two party members, the head of the New Black Panther Party, and the party itself. Despite the entry of a default in its favor, the Department subsequently dismissed charges against all but one of the defendants and greatly reduced the injunctive relief the Department had originally sought. The hearing will attempt to examine the circumstances of the case, as well as the enforcement of voter intimidation matters generally.

Persons with a disability requiring special services should contact Pamela Dunston at least seven days prior to the meeting at 202-376-8105.

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The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is an independent, bipartisan agency charged with monitoring federal civil rights enforcement. Members include Chairman Gerald A. Reynolds, Vice Chair Abigail Thernstrom, Commissioners Todd Gaziano, Gail Heriot, Peter N. Kirsanow, Arlan D. Melendez, Ashley L. Taylor, Jr., and

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Michael Yaki. Martin Dannenfelser is the Staff Director. Commission meetings are open to the general public. The Commission's website is <http://www.usccr.gov>.