



Florida Police Benevolent Association, Inc.

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Press Release

For Immediate Release

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Statement Regarding Orange-Osceola State Attorney Aramis Ayala's decision not to seek the death penalty in the murder of Orlando Police Lt. Debra Clayton

March 16, 2017 ~ Earlier today Orange-Osceola State Attorney Aramis Ayala announced that she will not seek the death penalty for Markeith Loyd who is accused of murdering his pregnant ex-girlfriend, Sade Dixon, and Orlando Lt. Debra Clayton. Her decision has outraged law enforcement and many high-ranking elected officials across the State of Florida, including Florida and Dade County PBA President John Rivera:

“In life there are cowards, and then there are cowards with titles. Orange-Osceola State Attorney Ayala is a coward with a title. In fact, it is our opinion that she is a bigger coward than the killer of pregnant Sade Dixon, and an honorable guardian angel of society, Orlando Lt. Debra Clayton. At today's press conference, we witnessed someone who trapped the community into believing that she could and would follow the law. Ayala words were, at best, absurd as she made statements such as life sentences will bring closure to families. How does she have that divine ability to know what closure is for families who have lost loved ones? Do these families not deserve input and to have their wishes heard and considered?

Governor Scott called for Ayala to recuse herself from this case. We join Governor Scott in voicing concern regarding Ayala's inability to be fair and impartial. We stand beside Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi's and her statement that Ayala's decision is a blatant neglect of duty and a shameful failure to follow the law. Therefore, we call for Ayala's resignation. She is a disgrace to the justice system. Her resignation would be in the best interest of justice and it is what our community and victims deserve. When Ayala took the oath, she swore to follow the law and to leave her personal feelings out of any and all decisions. Today, she broke her oath to the people who elected her, spat in the face of the Florida legislature and law enforcement everywhere. Her message is crystal clear: if you take the life of a law enforcement officer, our guardian angels of society, you will not be punished to the fullest extent of the law.

Anything short of Ayala's resignation amounts to an act of terrorism against victims within our justice system ---the very people our justice system seeks to protect. We are a nation of laws and Ayala's inability to follow our laws makes her unfit for office. Our legislators, each one duly elected to represent the people of the State of Florida, has codified the death penalty and the circumstances where it may be applicable. By refusing to even consider individual cases where the death penalty is called for, Ayala is snubbing her nose at the electoral process, at the people of the State of Florida and the elected officials themselves. When you take the life of a law enforcement officer, anything less than the maximum penalty allowed by law is unacceptable. In this particular case, that penalty is death,” said John Rivera, Dade County and Florida PBA President.

Please contact Stephanie M. Womble at (305) 593-0044 for more information or to arrange an interview.

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Incorporated in December 1963, the Dade County PBA works to protect the rights of law enforcement personnel and promote professionalism. Today the Dade County PBA represents more than 6,500 law enforcement officers and provides union-type services such as collective bargaining, labor relations assistance and legal representation. The PBA strives to keep the community and elected officials informed of the challenges facing law enforcement. In 1984, the Dade County PBA established the Love Fund, a [501 (c) (3)] charitable organization, to aid law enforcement officers and their families. For additional information, contact the PBA office at (305) 593-0044 or visit www.dcpba.org.