

"Members of Pittsburgh City Council;

By way of introduction, and although I believe you know who I am, I am Commander Catherine McNeilly with the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police. I am presently in Command of Zone 1 Police Station on the North Side of Pittsburgh.

I write to you today, because as a Police Supervisor, I have *very serious* concerns regarding your vote on the upcoming appointment of Mr. Dennis Regan as "Public Safety Director" as it involves his interaction as I attempt to perform my duty as a public official.

As you know, Mr. Regan was appointed the interim Chief of Staff when the late Mayor was diagnosed with cancer. My concern involves:

- Mr. Regan's relationship to a Pittsburgh Police Officer named Francis Rende,
- the role I play in that relationship as his (prior) supervisor and
- the impact I believe that relationship has had on the entire Pittsburgh Bureau of Police.

I'm certain that you know that Mr. Regan shares a residence with Ms. Marlene Cassidy. Ms. Cassidy is the sister of Officer Frank Rende.

He has been employed by the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police since July 3, 1993.

During the fourteen years of his employment, Officer Rende has been charged with disciplinary action numerous times for a host of charges. Countless complaints have been filed against him.

His personnel file is voluminous – but he is *most infamously* known throughout this Bureau for three things:

- The alleged rape of a complainant in 1997 for which he was terminated – only to be reinstated by an arbitrator.
- **The extraordinary hours of “secondary employment” details he has been known to work.**
- His relationship to Mr. Dennis Regan by way of his sister and the advantages it has afforded him in this department.

In June of this year, I served a Discipline Action Report (DAR) on Officer Rende because on at least 37 occasions during the past 4 years, Officer Rende used sick days and then worked secondary employment details either a few hours before calling off sick or a few hours after calling back on. When I was able to document an established pattern of behavior that violated the Sick Leave Policy of the Bureau of Police, I subsequently filed a DAR Officer Rende charging him with violations of the Sick Leave Policy as well as Incompetency, Conduct Unbecoming an Officer, Neglect of Duty and Obedience to Orders and Laws

By August 2006, I was not told of the status regarding the serving of this report. When I inquired as to the status of the DAR, I was told it had been “forwarded through the chain of command.” The morning following my inquiry, Mr. Dennis Regan appeared at Zone 1 Station (unannounced) asking for me ~ but I was at a Command Staff Meeting, so Mr. Regan left.

I was then told that my DAR was subsequently “withdrawn” (without my consultation or input ~ this is not usual protocol).

Officer Rende is presently assigned to the Investigative Branch and enjoys “detective” status and pay. This prestigious position sends a demoralizing message Bureau-wide. Personally, I am insulted that he is assigned to such a position when I know that there are many hard-working officers who would be much more deserving of such an opportunity.

This is just one reason why I am objecting to this appointment. I do not believe that Mr. Regan has the capacity to act fairly when it comes to disciplinary matters against our officers if should hold the position of “Public Safety Director.”

The position of “Public Safety Director” can carry a alarming amount power ~ I don’t know how much thought has been given to the “unintended impacts” that may result from someone taking the helm of such a powerful department.

I am attaching a copy of the DAR I served on Officer Rende in June so you will see the pattern of his behavior over the past four years. I trust that ~ as administrators and public officials who answer to your constituents ~ you will be appalled by what you read.

If you *are* offended, then the next question each of you should ask is, “Do I really want Dennis Regan ultimately deciding the disciplinary fate of our Public Safety employees?”

Members of council, if you grant approval to Mr. Regan to serve in position of “Public Safety Director,” you will be granting final authority to a man to “act in disciplinary matters in police operations as they pertain to discipline against an officer” ~ among a host of many other many things. I can promise that you’ll be questioned about granting such an appointment . . . if you’ve read Saturday’s editorial in the Post-Gazette, you’ll see you already are.

You are giving more than a *title* to a man. “Public Safety Director” can be a very influential and dangerous position – one that is better left *unfilled* rather than filled by someone who is *unqualified* and *unknowledgeable* about the Bureaus within the Department of Public Safety.

There is an *enormous* potential for more damage to be done than one can fathom (how many of you can remember the days of John Norton?).

I realize the result of your decision will not impact me *directly* – but as someone who ultimately has more of a stake in the good of the Bureau of Police, I am obligated to tell you how I feel about the decision before you.

I beg of you to please give this your most serious consideration. I thank you for your time."

Commander Catherine R. McNeilly ~ Zone 1 Police Station 1501 Brighton Road ~ Pittsburgh PA 15212 ~ 412.323.7200