

June 02, 2025

The Honorable John Thune
Senate Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Senate Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader Thune and Leader Schumer:

Human Rights First and the undersigned 37 organizations, representing civil and human rights advocates, veterans, and concerned citizens, strongly urge you to unequivocally reject the confirmation of Anthony Tata to be Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness.

Mr. Tata has a dangerous history of using his words and actions to harm communities he is meant to serve. His prior nomination to be Under Secretary of Defense for Policy was ultimately withdrawn after his history of bigoted statements and actions came to light. We believe that the discriminatory and anti-democratic rhetoric he has continued to espouse disqualifies him from any federal appointment and especially one that would directly impact the hiring of personnel and management of the United States Military.

With a diverse workforce of almost three million employees and service members and a budget of over \$840 billion, the Defense Department is the largest employer in America. Tata's record of discrimination, conspiracy peddling, and threats to military leadership show that he's patently unfit to assume such a vital role.

Tata's past is riddled with bigotry and antagonism toward minority populations. He has a history of [anti-Black rhetoric](#) targeting Congresswoman Maxine Waters and a Black news anchor, and his Islamophobic comments are well known and cost him his prior nomination. Likewise, his employment history is riddled with opposition toward civil rights. Under his leadership, the Wake County, North Carolina school system dismantled its desegregation program, leading to [multiple civil rights complaints](#) and actions, and faced multiple allegations of [discrimination against disabled and Latino students](#), including violations of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Tata has a history of spreading misinformation and conspiracy theories. He has [repeatedly invoked](#) the "birtherism" conspiracy theory about President Obama, and spread bigoted and false claims that President Obama was a "terrorist leader" with "Islamic roots." He likewise [spread](#)

[misinformation](#) about CIA Director John Brennan, falsely claiming that he ordered an assassination of President Trump, and made inflammatory statements including that Brennan "Deserved to be executed."

Tata has indicated he would use his position to install loyalty tests in the DOD:

- In response to a CNN article that discussed informal planning for potential [unlawful orders](#), he called for a political [purge of military leadership](#), specifically targeting all four-star generals appointed by President Biden.
- At his confirmation hearing he doubled down on his goal of [removing leadership](#) seen as not loyal to this administration, and gave no indication he would [oppose unlawful orders](#), a dangerously anti-democratic stance that could lead to weaponizing the military for political ends.

Tata has indicated he would continue the anti-civil rights purge of the DOD:

- The attacks on “DEI” across this administration have been used as a [cover to strip back civil and human rights](#) and gut agencies and policies that support equity and representation, crucial for a strong democracy or work force.
- His history of removing civil rights protections indicates his willingness to support the continued gutting of DOD leadership, staff, and curricula, including the recently ordered elimination of 10% to 20% of the general officer positions across the military, which has already been [used to disproportionately target](#) senior female officers and positions ostensibly seen as “diversity” hires, significantly [weakening the military’s leadership](#).
- On the question of [DEI purges](#), including [book bans at DOD schools](#), he declined to state that he would end those discriminatory efforts.

The United States military requires leadership that understands and values the diverse population it serves. Tata’s blatant disregard and antagonism toward minority populations and critical workplace protections combined with his false and inflammatory statements make him wholly unsuited for this position. We urge you to unequivocally reject Anthony Tata’s nomination for Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness.

Respectfully,

Advancing Justice | AAJC

Advocates for Trans Equality

Al Otro Lado

Association for Special Children and Families

Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN)
California Association of Human Relations Organizations
The Chamberlain Network
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)
Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF)
Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC)
Equal Justice Society
Equal Rights Advocates
Family Action Network Movement
Frontera Federation
Global Project Against Hate and Extremism
Human Rights Campaign
Human Rights First
Issue One
Japanese American Citizens League
Just Solutions
Latino Farmers & Ranchers International, Inc.
Lawyers for Good Government
Miami Valley Immigration Coalition
The Minority Business Enterprise Legal Defense and Education Fund
Minority Veterans of America
Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC)
National Association of Social Workers
National Bar Association
National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC)

National Education Association

National Partnership for New Americans

National Urban League

National Women's Law Center Action Fund

Oasis Legal Services

PFLAG National

Southern Poverty Law Center

Western States Center

Veterans for American Ideals