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## EDITORIAL: Panther injustice continues

### THE WASHINGTON TIMES

The U.S. Civil Rights Commission is not backing off its showdown with the Justice Department about mishandling the voter-intimidation case involving agents of the New Black Panther Party. Nor should it.

Yesterday, the commission sent a letter to Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr. demanding that Justice "fully cooperate," according to specific legal authority vested in the commission, with the commission's inquiry about why Justice dropped the case after it had already been won. The commission wrote that Justice's replies to earlier commission requests either are "overdue," have been "largely non-responsive" or have provided "none of the documents we requested."

A Sept. 9 letter from Justice to the commission said the commission should wait until Justice's own internal investigation of the matter is complete. But as Commission Chairman Gerald A. Reynolds wrote yesterday, "many aspects of the Commission's inquiry have no connection with the matter subject to [Justice's internal investigation]," and thus should not be delayed in any way. Among these broader inquiries are questions about Justice's "prior voting intimidation investigations," about whether dropping the Black Panther case "is consistent with departmental policy or practice in the past," whether dropping the current case "may encourage voter intimidation," and whether the Justice Department is properly enforcing the Voting Rights Act.

The subtext of this investigation is whether Mr. Holder is using civil rights laws to protect only citizens of color, while leaving everyone else unprotected. If so, then Mr. Holder, in effect, would be declaring open season on white voters while treating white citizens as somehow less equal than others. That would be racial discrimination, pure and simple.

Consider again the nature of the charges. The Black Panthers in question were videotaped standing in front of a polling place, nightstick in hand, in paramilitary garb, and were quoted multiple times using racial epithets and threatening language. The Panthers are deadly serious. At [electionjournal.org](http://electionjournal.org), there is a National Geographic video clip of these same Black Panthers saying, "You want freedom, you're gonna have to kill some crackers. You're gonna have to kill some of they [sic] babies."

One of these menaces is a local Democratic official and was a registered Democratic poll watcher on the day in question. Three days after the case was dropped against him, he again served as an official

poll watcher for Democratic municipal elections in Philadelphia.

Rep. Frank R. Wolf, Virginia Republican, said in a floor speech yesterday that the Justice Department's dismissal of the case has "serious and dangerous consequences for future voter intimidation enforcement." The more Mr. Holder stonewalls, the more it looks as if he is trying to hide something noxious.

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