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EDITORIAL: Holder runs from Wolf

Congressman wants answers on New Black Panther voting case

By [THE WASHINGTON TIMES](#)

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The indefatigable Rep. Frank R. Wolf provided plenty of fodder for today's meeting of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. The eight-member panel is scheduled to discuss a number of matters, including the ongoing investigation into the New Black Panther voter-intimidation incident. On Tuesday, the Northern Virginia Republican fired off 24 questions about the case to Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr. The congressman, and the commission, deserve answers.

The controversy centers on the Justice Department's response to the 2008 Election Day harassment at a Philadelphia polling place. Although the department already had won a default judgment against the Black Panthers, administration appointees suddenly dropped three of the four charges and imposed a ludicrously weak injunction for the fourth. Since then, the department's policy has been to stonewall attempts to get at the truth.

Mr. Wolf is not about to back down. "If showing a weapon, making threatening statements and wearing paramilitary uniforms in front of a polling station do not constitute voter intimidation, at what threshold of activity would these laws be enforceable?" he asked, getting to the heart of the matter. Important questions also remain unanswered about original Black Panther defendant Jerry Jackson, who was a member of the local executive committee of the Philadelphia Democratic Party. Dismissal of the case against him came four days before another election in which, again, he served as an official poll watcher.

Congressional investigators and the civil rights commissioners have been barred from meeting with the trial team on this case. One key member, Christopher Coates, was transferred to South Carolina, which is out of the commission's subpoena range. The other, J. Christian Adams, resigned from the Justice Department effective June 1 in protest of the decision to dismiss the cases. The Justice Department had ordered Mr. Adams not to comply with the commission's subpoena, but now that his job no longer is at risk from Mr. Holder's minions, the commission ought to try to secure his testimony. One imagines such testimony will make Mr. Holder's team look anything but good.

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