



**COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
OFFICE OF COUNCILMEMBER TRAYON WHITE, SR., Ward Eight**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**STATEMENT BY COUNCILMEMBER TRAYON WHITE  
ON THE DEMOTION OF COMMANDER REGIS BRYANT**

(Washington, D.C., May 31, 2018) Last evening while attending a community meeting, I was shocked and saddened to learn of the demotion of Commander Regis Bryant in the Seventh Police District. Unfortunately, I was not given a courtesy advance notice of this decision either by Mayor Muriel Bowser or Police Peter Newsham. Accordingly, I am formally requesting that Commander Bryant be reinstated, effective immediately.

My community is in crisis – a State of Emergency. My own family is in crisis. Just this past Tuesday, my cousin was one of three shooting victims in the District. In recent weeks, he has been at the forefront of several anti-violence marches and meetings. Just today, there were two separate shootings in the Ward.

The overall response from the Bowser Administration on this issue remains, too little, too late. The decision to demote Commander Bryant is just another example of the lack of a coherent and coordinated strategy from the Office of the Mayor to effectively address increased violence in Ward 8. Commander Bryant has been made a scapegoat by this demotion. But I am not surprised by this action. His demotion follows a long pattern of behavior by an Administration that lacks answers for the increased crime being witnessed on our streets and chooses to engage in diversionary tactics, such as this.

The Ward 8 community is not happy to see the Mayor use the Commander as a scapegoat. No fewer than eleven residents have approached me in the past 24 hours to express their concern and outrage. My office has also received a number of calls from constituents expressing concern. The political and community leadership of Ward 8, along with its residents, should have been consulted before the decision to scapegoat a good and decent man was made.

Commander Bryant has the confidence and support of the community I have been elected to serve. The majority of Ward 8 ANC Commissioners, businesses and community leaders approved his performances and efforts in re-uniting the community. In addition, and during his short time here, the Commander did more than any other person who has filled this role in 7D.

For example, Commander Bryant attended as many community meetings as humanly possible. If he could not physically be present, he always made certain that a committed and knowledgeable captain or lieutenant was in attendance.

Furthermore, Commander Bryant assisted the community by interacting with DDOT to get the Hawk traffic light installed on the heavily traveled South Capitol Street. He took to the streets and had conversations with people in the Shepherd Park and on Mellon Street. He also joined us in trying to improve the conditions in the troubled Shepherd Park.

Over the last eight years, I have not always had a good relationship with the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD). However, that changed greatly during Commander Bryant's short tenure and it is to him that give all of the credit. He brought a degree of both respect and credibility to my community that had not been seen prior. It is no wonder that Commander Bryant was honored as the Man of the Year, and now a demotion? How does this happen?

Finally, I know first-hand how the morale of those officers serving in 7D improved under Commander Bryant's leadership. For example, regular awards ceremony for 7D officers and community residents uplifted morale. Without a doubt, better morale results in better police performance in a community under siege.

The Ward 8 community has had four Commanders, which I recall, since 2012. The very last thing that my community needs right now is a change in police leadership in 7D. We simply do not have the time to waste for a new Commander, however well intentioned, to gain the confidence and support of residents.

Commander Bryant is an honest, forthright, competent and tireless advocate for not only the MPD, but also the 7D community. I respectfully encourage Mayor Bowser to immediately reinstate him as the Commander of the Seventh Police District.

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