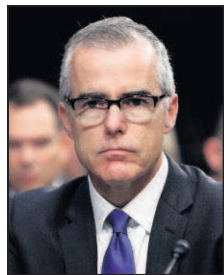


Sessions fires former FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe

By ERIC TUCKER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced Friday night that he was firing former FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe, a longtime and frequent target of President Donald Trump's anger, just two days before his scheduled retirement date.



Andrew McCabe

The move was made on the recommendation of FBI disciplinary officials and comes ahead of an inspector general report expected to conclude that McCabe had authorized the release of information to the news media and had not been forthcoming with the watchdog office as it examined the bureau's handling of the Hillary Clinton email investigation.

"The FBI expects every employee to adhere to the highest standards of honesty, integrity, and accountability," Sessions said in a statement.

In an extraordinary rebuttal released immediately after Sessions' announcement, McCabe said his credibility had been attacked as "part of a larger effort not just to slander me personally, but to taint the FBI, law enforcement, and intelligence professionals more generally."

"It is part of this administration's ongoing war on the FBI and the efforts of the special counsel investigation, which continue to this day," he added, referring to Robert Mueller's ongoing probe into potential coordination between Russia and the Trump campaign. "Their persistence in this campaign only highlights the importance of the special counsel's work."

Though McCabe had spent more than 20 years as a career FBI official, and had played key roles in some of the bureau's most recent significant investigations, Trump repeatedly condemned him over the last year as emblematic of an FBI leadership he contends is biased against his administration. The White House had said the firing decision was up to the Justice Department but seemed to signal this week that it would welcome the move.

The termination is symbolic to an extent, since McCabe had been on leave from the FBI since last January, when he abruptly left the deputy director position. But it comes just ahead of his planned retirement, on Sunday, and jeopardizes his ability to collect his full pension benefits upon his departure.

The firing arises from a wide-ranging inspector general review, initiated last year, into how the FBI handled the Clinton email investigation. That review focused not only on specific decisions made by FBI lead-

ership during the probe, but also on media leaks.

McCabe came under particular scrutiny over an October 2016 news report that revealed differing approaches within the FBI and Justice Department over how aggressively the Clinton Foundation should be investigated. The watchdog office had concluded that McCabe had authorized FBI officials to speak to a Wall Street Journal reporter for that story and that he had not been forthcoming with investigators about it, which McCabe strenuously denied.

In his statement, McCabe said he had the authority to share information with journalists through his public affairs office, a practice he said was common and done with the blessing of senior leadership. He said he had honestly answered questions about whom he had spoken to and when, and that when he thought his answers were misunderstood, contacted investigators again to correct them.

Even so, officials at the FBI's Office of Professional Responsibility had recommended the firing, leaving Justice Department leaders in a difficult situation. Sessions, whose job status has for months appeared shaky under blistering criticism from Trump, risked inflaming the White House if McCabe were to not be fired. But a decision to dismiss McCabe two days before his firing carried the risk of angering his rank-and-file supporters at the FBI.

Though Sessions said McCabe had shown a lack of candor, the law enforcement official suggested a separate reason for his dismissal, saying, "I am being singled out and treated this way because of the role I played, the actions I took, and the events I witnessed in the aftermath of the firing of James Comey."

He said the inspector general's investigation was accelerated after he told congressional investigators that he could corroborate the account of Comey, who was fired as FBI director last May.

McCabe, a lawyer by training, enjoyed a rapid career ascent in the bureau after joining in 1996. He was the FBI's top counterterrorism official during the Boston Marathon bombing, and later led the FBI's national security branch and its Washington field office, one of the bureau's largest, before being named to the deputy director position.

But he became entangled in presidential politics in 2016 when it was revealed that his wife, during an unsuccessful bid for the Virginia state Senate, had received campaign contributions from the political action committee of then-Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe, a close Clinton ally.



Stephen Scarbro, who came from San Antonio, Texas, sits on a park bench along the Pendleton River Parkway on Thursday in Pendleton. Scarbro, who is currently homeless, says he is spending his time maintaining a low profile while waiting to start a new job.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

HOMELESS: Home 4 Hope plans drop-in center

Continued from 1A

"It's more just making sure we're doing it appropriately, going to the right places and talking to the right people," Ruud said.

The higher number shows the area has greater needs than previously thought, Stuvland said, and that opens the door to more grant funding for CAPECO and other institutions to combat homelessness, including schools.

Ruud, Stuvland and McDaniel also are part of Home 4 Hope, a local coalition that helps the homeless. The group held its annual forum March 8 in Pendleton, where about 30 members identified key obstacles for the homeless and brainstormed solutions.

Previous forums helped hatch the idea of warming stations in Hermiston and Pendleton, and this time McDaniel said she hoped the forum would address two big hurdles for the homeless: a place to get mail and phone service. McDaniel said both are essential for people to connect to everything from employers to the Social Security Administration, which requires an address to receive benefits.

After almost two hours of discussion, the group agreed a drop-in day center could provide those benefits and more, including necessities and shower facilities.

On the street

Christopher Viking is a Home 4 Hope member and has lived on the streets after service in the Vietnam War.

"I went on the wrong track for a while then," he said. "I call it a mental lapse."

That lapse included riding railroad cars on the West Coast and a stint in federal prison, he said, before landing in Umatilla County since the late 1990s. A man of Christian faith, Viking said he feels a calling to volunteer to help homeless people obtain services from operations such as CAPECO.

The days of dining with hobos, he said, were far different from today's homelessness. Now, he said, families huddle together in tents or back rooms, and Pendleton High School students sleep on the Umatilla River levee, bathe in park restrooms and trudge to classes. Viking

said he supports the idea of a drop-in day center and what it could accomplish, but the most essential part starts with people. The center would need caring individuals who know how to relate to the homeless and can connect them to services.

The center also would not replace the overnight warming stations in Pendleton and Hermiston. Stuvland described the stations as vital to the communities and said a drop-in center would function during the day.

The Salvation Army just outside downtown Pendleton serves to some degree as a drop-in center, offering mail collection and free hot lunches to 50-100 people Monday through Saturday. Ricky Scruggs, the lieutenant in charge of the local operation, estimated 25 percent of those are people with no home at all.

Scruggs said dealing with homelessness takes more than shelters and centers. Those are bandages, he said, while the deeper challenge is to engage people who are homeless and teach them to have a new relationship with finance.

Scott Scarbro, 37, ate lunch Thursday at The Salvation Army. He said he is homeless for the second time in his life. The first time he was 18 and his grandparents kicked him out of their West Virginia home.

"That was in the middle of a snowstorm," he said.

Going it alone was hard, he said, and he found organizations such as The Salvation Army were essential. He also said he did a stint in jail for a felony, but that led to getting his life together and even gaining some education and welding skills.

Scarbro said he ended up in Eastern Oregon when he fled Texas after a bad breakup. The road trip ended about 60 days ago with a traffic stop near Hermiston that resulted in police impounding his rig and everything inside, including his clothes.

"I'm starting all over again," he said.

He has no money and said he sleeps under a bridge. He said he tries to stay away from people because the public stereotypes homeless as mentally ill, addicts or both.

Viking said for many

homeless, everything is about survival — about meeting the needs of the next hour or day. But Scarbro said he is looking further ahead. Tuesday he starts a new job at Keystone RV in Pendleton, he said, and The Salvation Army is helping him get clothes and arranging a shower at the Arrowhead Travel Plaza about six miles east of Pendleton. To get there, Scarbro can take free public transportation.

Home 4 Hope also is pushing for a better tomorrow. The group meets every other Thursday 2-4 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church, 201 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. Stuvland said the conversations on the day center continues, and eventually will lead to committees to move the proposal forward. She also encouraged participation from community members and representatives of local governments.

"This is open to anyone who wants to be at the table," she said.

For more information about Home 4 Hope, visit <https://home-4-hope.weebly.com/>.

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