For Immediate Release
March 3, 2017

The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. issued the following statement calling for a special prosecutor to investigate Attorney General Sessions and Russian involvement in the 2016 Presidential Campaign:

The Legal Defense Fund urges Acting Attorney General Boente to appoint an independent special counsel to investigate and prosecute the potential perjury committed by Attorney General Sessions. That same counsel should also investigate any potential criminal conduct arising out of contacts between Russia and affiliates of the Trump Campaign, Transition, and Administration, and the extent of Russian influence in the 2016 presidential election. Preservation of the integrity of our democratic systems demands nothing less.

It is no secret that the LDF vigorously opposed the confirmation of Mr. Sessions. Among a range of concerns we raised about Mr. Sessions, was the fact that Mr. Sessions made material misrepresentations in his Senate Judiciary questionnaire about cases which he claimed he litigated. Nevertheless, Mr. Sessions was confirmed by the Senate over the overwhelming objections of a unified civil rights community. Now that evidence suggests that Mr. Sessions misled the SJC about his contacts with Russian representatives, it raises even more profound questions of his integrity and fitness to serve. The cloud of this controversy and impending investigations tear at the credibility of the Attorney General and the DOJ and undermines the authority of the AG’s enforcement powers.

While AG Sessions took the appropriate step of recusing himself from the investigation into Russian involvement in the “campaigns,” he did so only after it was revealed by the Washington Post that he had participated in two conversations with the Russian ambassador during the course of Mr. Trump’s presidential campaign. Unfortunately, his recusal doesn’t go far enough – Sessions should recuse himself from any matters associated with “the campaigns” as he has said, but also any investigation of Cabinet officials or nominees, Presidential aides and the President himself, as relates to their contacts with Russia. This is urgent and should happen immediately. Every day we learn more about the connections and interrelations of these communications. We need a full and complete investigation free from the taint of impropriety that now stains any inquiry led by the Department of Justice into conduct that includes the sitting Attorney General.

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*Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation’s first civil and human rights law organization and has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the*
NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights. LDF’s Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF.