

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Arbitrator Determines DOJ Wrongfully Terminated MHP Trooper, Union President

(Helena, MT) - The Department of Justice has been ordered to reinstate Highway Patrol Trooper Alicia Bragg with back pay, stating that Trooper Bragg “acted within her scope as union president.” In April 2024, Bragg’s union, MFPE, accused the DOJ of wrongfully terminating Bragg for performing her duties as local union president.

Today’s decision upholds a Board of Personnel Appeals initial finding of probable merit in a separate, concurrent Unfair Labor Practice despite the DOJ’s refusal to acknowledge their error.

Following hearings in December 2024, Arbitrator Jeffrey Jacobs affirmed MFPE’s contention that Bragg acted within her role as local union president by communicating about a public MHP climate survey with union staff. Jacobs found Bragg was wrongfully terminated, ordering the DOJ to reinstate her with full back pay and benefits.

“The inescapable conclusion is that [Bragg] was acting in her capacity as the Union President when she sent the document to the Union,” **wrote Arbitrator Jacobs**. “It was also clear she did not send the document to the press nor did she direct anyone at the Union to do so. While the survey may have been somewhat embarrassing to the MHP, that alone did not render her action terminable.”

“I was terminated nearly a year ago for doing my job, as a trooper who loves serving my state and as a union president who’s fiercely loyal to my fellow law enforcement officers,” **said Alica Bragg**. “Senior leaders at MHP and DOJ tried to sanitize and slow roll a public workplace climate survey that reflected poorly on their leadership, and I stood up for troopers.”

The arbitrator’s decision reflects the Montana Constitution’s protections for the public’s right to know. DOJ cannot withhold or obfuscate information about the public safety services Montanans fund and rely on every day. This decision also upholds the legal protections surrounding concerted activities that Montana union members have fought for and continue to defend.

“I am pleased but not surprised to find the law is in fact on our side,” **said MFPE President Amanda Curtis**. “No employer can target or punish a union member for doing union work, and union work includes uplifting and improving our professions. Trooper Bragg’s fellow union members are proud of her leadership and service.”

Read more about this year-long legal fight to hold DOJ accountable at [MFPE.org/Bragg](https://mfpe.org/Bragg).

*MFPE, the Montana Federation of Public Employees, is a labor union of teachers, school employees, higher education faculty and staff, law enforcement officers, and city, county, and state employees. Together, MFPE members fight for fair wages, benefits, and working conditions.*