

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 13, 2020

VIA MAIL AND ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

The Honorable William P. Barr
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

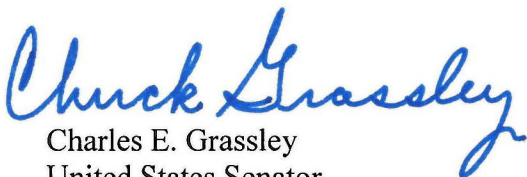
Dear Attorney General Barr:

We appreciate your recent attention to the concerns we have raised over the last two years around the Department of Justice's (DOJ) and Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) handling of the Bijan Ghaisar investigation. During a recent briefing from DOJ, senior DOJ officials made references to several changes you are implementing to ensure future investigations will be handled in a more efficient and considerate manner. We write today to request more information on the specifics of these planned changes.

On November 17, 2017, Bijan Ghaisar was shot and killed by two U.S. Park Police officers while in his car and unarmed. The FBI subsequently investigated the deadly shooting for close to two years, and DOJ ultimately declined to prosecute the two Park Police officers. Throughout the entire investigation, we raised concerns over the lack of transparency, the length of the investigation, and DOJ's overall treatment of the Ghaisar family, including how the Department communicated and shared information with the family.

We must work together to ensure future investigations are handled in a more transparent expedient, and thoughtful manner, which is a critical component if we are to maintain the public's trust in law enforcement and our institutions. Furthermore, in order to prevent leaks to the media, the Department must carefully review and strengthen the process by which it notifies family members of declination decisions. In Bijan's case, his family first heard about the Department's decision not to file charges from a reporter seeking comment. This is completely unacceptable, and frankly embarrassing. The Department must take steps to prevent such callousness in the future. We look forward to learning more about the planned changes at DOJ and FBI to prevent future investigations from being handled in a similar manner.

Sincerely,


Charles E. Grassley
United States Senator


Mark R. Warner
United States Senator