

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

November 17, 2023

The Honorable Deb Haaland  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

Dear Secretary Haaland:

Six years ago today, on November 17, 2017, two U.S. Park Police officers shot and killed 25-year-old Bijan Ghaisar.

As you know, the Department of Interior's (DOI) Federal Law Enforcement Task Force recently released a report as part of its responsibilities to review DOI's federal law enforcement and assist in strengthening trust, accountability, and collaboration through community-focused law enforcement. The report lists actions that the Law Enforcement Task Force has already taken across DOI and its Bureaus to improve the daily operations of all DOI law enforcement programs. It mentions that the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) was updated to provide effective law enforcement services on Tribal lands, and to establish jurisdictional guidelines and protocols for officer involved shootings and in-custody deaths.

We are writing to ask that you revisit a MOU between the Park Police and FBI for officer-involved shootings and in-custody deaths. The process that followed the 2017 shooting death by Park Police of Bijan Ghaisar revealed a failure by the two departments to demonstrate a level of transparency and management of the incident that reinforced public trust.<sup>1</sup> The Park Police's response to the case was the antithesis of a commitment to transparency and clarity. Revisiting how communications and incidents are shared and handled between these two agencies is imperative.

Secondly, now that the Department of Justice review of the Bijan Ghaisar shooting and the civil case related to the shooting has concluded, we wanted to follow up on a request made by Congressman Beyer and agreed to by then-Park Police Chief MacLean on February 26, 2018, as well as formally requested in a congressional letter on the second anniversary of Bijan's death, for an internal, wholistic review of the case by DOI. This should be separate from the Law Enforcement Task Force's efforts.

Thank you for your attention to these efforts, and we request a response in writing.

Sincerely,



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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.grassley.senate.gov/news/news-releases/grassley-warner-decry-opaque-drawn-out-review-ghaisar-case>; <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/07/16/bijan-ghaisar-unanswered-questions/>