

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 23, 2022

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

The Honorable Mark Greenblatt
Inspector General
U.S. Department of the Interior

Dear Inspector General Greenblatt:

According to a recent press release from the Department of Justice (DOJ), federal prosecutors have declined to reopen an investigation into the deadly shooting that occurred on November 17, 2020, involving two U.S. Park Police officers and an unarmed motorist, Bijan Ghaisar.¹ As the Inspector General of the Interior Department, you have jurisdiction over the U.S. Park Police, and over alleged incidents of excessive force and employee misconduct by officers of the U.S. Park Police.² We write to request that you investigate this incident to determine whether the two Park Police officers involved acted in accordance with agency policy, guidelines, and training. More broadly speaking, we also request that you look into the U.S. Park Police's use of force policies, de-escalation training, and policing methods and report to Congress on whether they are following best practices.

On November 17, 2017, two U.S. Park Police officers shot and killed Bijan C. Ghaisar.³ According to news reports, Mr. Ghaisar fled the scene of an accident on the George Washington Memorial Parkway, which falls under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service.⁴ He then led Park Police on a lengthy vehicle pursuit, where Ghaisar repeatedly stopped his car in an apparent bid to end the chase, only to speed away when officers exited their patrol cars to approach Ghaisar's vehicle.⁵ The vehicle pursuit ultimately ended when two Park Service police officers fired nine rounds into Mr. Ghaisar's vehicle when he again attempted to flee by maneuvering his vehicle around a police car that was blocking its path.⁶

¹ U.S. Dep't of Justice, Off. of Pub. Aff., *Federal Officials Decline to Reopen Investigation Into the Death of Bijan Ghaisar* (June 10, 2022), <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/federal-officials-decline-reopen-investigation-death-bijan-ghaisar>.

² See U.S. U.S. Dep't of the Interior, Office of the Inspector Gen., 209 Department Manual 10 (Sept. 28, 2007), <https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/elips/documents/209-dm-10.pdf>.

³ Tom Jackman, *Video shows Park Police fired nine shots into Bijan Ghaisar's Jeep at close range, killing him*, The Washington Post (Jan. 24, 2018), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/true-crime/wp/2018/01/24/video-shows-park-police-fired-nine-shots-into-bijan-ghaisars-jeep-at-close-range-killing-him/>.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ *Id.*

After the shooting occurred, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) took over the investigation and spent nearly two years investigating what should have been a relatively straightforward case.⁷ Throughout this time, we sent multiple letters to the FBI and DOJ expressing concerns about delays and a lack of transparency surrounding the investigation, including with respect to those entities' communications with Mr. Ghaisar's family.⁸

As we have previously stated in other inquiries, investigations involving the use of deadly force should be handled in a manner that reinforces public confidence in law enforcement. The FBI and DOJ's handling of this case has not met that bar. We ask that you look into this matter to help restore the public's trust and provide much needed transparency for Mr. Ghaisar's family, the Park Police officers, and the general public.

If you have any questions, please contact Dario Camacho of Ranking Member Grassley's staff at (202) 224-5225 or Jay Swanson of Senator Warner's office at 202-223-2418.

Sincerely,


Charles E. Grassley
U.S. Senator


Mark R. Warner
U.S. Senator

⁷ U.S. Dep't of Justice, Off. of Pub. Aff., *Federal Officials Decline to Reopen Investigation Into the Death of Bijan Ghaisar* (June 10, 2022), <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/federal-officials-decline-reopen-investigation-death-bijan-ghaisar>.

⁸ See Letter from Charles E. Grassley, Ranking Member, S. Comm. on the Judiciary, to the Hon. Jeffrey A. Rosen, Deputy Att'y Gen, U.S. Dep't of Justice, *The Washington Post* (Dec. 23, 2019), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/context/warner-grassley-letter-to-doj-on-ghaisar-case/dc5fa34b-4484-43b4-96e9-4169fb616eb5/>; See also Letter from Charles E. Grassley, Ranking Member, S. Comm. on the Judiciary, to the Hon. William P. Barr, Att'y Gen, U.S. Dep't of Justice (Mar. 13, 2020), [https://www.grassley.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2020-03-12%20CEG%20MW%20to%20DOJ%20\(Ghaisar%20briefing%20follow-up\).pdf](https://www.grassley.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2020-03-12%20CEG%20MW%20to%20DOJ%20(Ghaisar%20briefing%20follow-up).pdf); See also Letter from Charles E. Grassley, Ranking Member, S. Comm. on the Judiciary, to the Hon. Christopher Wray, Director, Fed. Bureau of Investigations, *The Washington Post* (Dec. 17, 2018), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/crime-law/2018/12/21/grassley-seeks-answers-fbi-park-police-slaying-bijan-ghaisar/>; See also Letter from Charles E. Grassley, Ranking Member, S. Comm. on the Judiciary, to the Hon. Christopher Wray, Director, Fed. Bureau of Investigations (Mar. 22, 2019), [https://www.grassley.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2019-03-22%20CEG%20to%20FBI%20\(Ghaisar\).pdf](https://www.grassley.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2019-03-22%20CEG%20to%20FBI%20(Ghaisar).pdf); See also Letter from Charles E. Grassley, Ranking Member, S. Comm., & Mark R. Warner, U.S. Senator, to the Hon. Christopher Wray, Director, Fed. Bureau of Investigations (June 18, 2019), <https://www.warner.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2019/6/grassley-warner-decry-opaque-drawn-out-review-of-ghaisar-case>; See also Letter from Charles E. Grassley, Ranking Member, S. Comm., & Mark R. Warner, U.S. Senator, to the Hon. Christopher Wray, Director, Fed. Bureau of Investigations, *The Washington Post* (Nov. 20, 2019), https://www.washingtonpost.com/context/context-card/ac91ba9b-e368-46e6-8f96-099c4ac7093a/?itid=lk_interstitial_manual_11.