

Congress of the United States
Washington, D.C. 20510

July 29, 2020

The Honorable Eric S. Dreiband
Assistant Attorney General
United States Department of Justice
Civil Rights Division
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530

The Honorable Christopher A. Wray
Director
United States Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Investigation
935 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20535

Dear Assistant Attorney General Dreiband and Director Wray:

We write to draw the attention of the leadership of the Civil Rights Division and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to the shooting by a United States Park Ranger that led to the death of Charles "Gage" Lorentz at Carlsbad Caverns National Park.

On March 21, Lorentz was driving home to Colorado from Texas when he entered Carlsbad Caverns National Park. U.S. Park Ranger Robert Mitchell pulled Lorentz over for speeding. The publicly released body camera footage shows an interaction that escalated when Ranger Mitchell deployed his Taser, at which point the video ended. When the video resumed 26 seconds later, Mitchell was on top on Lorentz. The video then shows Ranger Mitchell shoot Lorentz twice with his gun. The Eddy County District Attorney's Office and the U.S. Attorney's Office for New Mexico are currently investigating the incident.

While we acknowledge that the New Mexico U.S. Attorney's office is reviewing the matter, we believe that the circumstances warrant the attention of the Civil Rights Division and the FBI leadership as well. The shooting involves a federal employee and the Department of Justice should take particular care to ensure that all federal officers adhere to rules and regulations regarding use of force by law enforcement officers in such situations.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Tom Udall
United States Senator



Deb Haaland
United States Representative

/s/ MARTIN HEINRICH
Martin Heinrich
United States Senator