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August 12, 2026

The Honorable Todd W. Blanche
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20530

Director Kash Patel
Federal Bureau of Investigation
935 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20535

Dear Attorney General Blanche and Director Patel:

More than a month has passed since the tragic disappearance and death of 18-year-old Nolan Xavier Wells, and his family is still without fundamental answers about what happened to their son. The Congressional Black Caucus stands with the Wells family and joins their call for a full, transparent, independent, and timely investigation into the circumstances surrounding Nolan's disappearance and death. It is unacceptable that so many questions remain unanswered as the Wells family continues to suffer what is already an unimaginable loss.

Nolan was a young student-athlete with a promising life ahead of him. Yet more than 30 days after his disappearance and death, significant questions remain unanswered about the events of July 4, 2026, and the circumstances that led to his death. The Wells family has been forced to grieve while also seeking basic information about what happened to their son. At the same time, there has been insufficient public information from the Jackson County Sheriff's Office, which has continued to defer questions regarding the investigation to the district attorney.

Accordingly, the Congressional Black Caucus requests that the United States Department of Justice immediately undertake an independent federal review of the circumstances surrounding Nolan Wells' disappearance and death, provide appropriate federal investigative assistance, and determine whether there is a basis for a federal investigation, including under applicable federal civil rights laws.

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We recognize that local authorities have an ongoing investigation. However, we are concerned by the silence and lack of answers the Wells family and the public have received over the past month. A local investigation does not diminish the need for federal assistance or an independent assessment of whether additional investigative resources or federal jurisdiction are warranted. Nor should federal involvement be viewed as prejudging the facts or conclusions of any investigation. We simply want to ensure that every appropriate resource, investigative tool, and avenue of inquiry is being used to establish the truth.

The lack of answers thus far continues to fuel speculation and grief. Neither the Wells family nor the public should be left to fill an information vacuum with speculation.

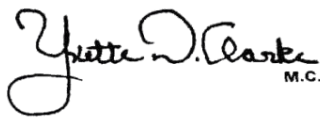
The Department of Justice possesses investigative resources and expertise that can help establish the facts, determine whether any federal laws were implicated, and provide confidence that every appropriate avenue has been pursued. Given the extraordinary circumstances surrounding Nolan's death and the continued absence of answers more than a month later, we believe federal involvement is warranted now. DOJ can help ensure that the investigation is thorough, impartial, and conducted in accordance with the law.

The Wells family deserves to understand what happened to their son. They deserve answers. They deserve transparency. And they deserve confidence that every available resource has been brought to bear in determining the truth.

In the interest of justice, we request that the Department immediately review this matter and advise the Congressional Black Caucus and the Wells family of the steps it has taken or intends to take. Further, we request a written response within seven days of receipt of this letter regarding the Department's involvement in this matter.

We look forward to your immediate attention and response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Yvette D. Clarke". To the right of the signature, the letters "M.C." are printed in a small, sans-serif font.

U.S. Representative Yvette D. Clarke (NY-09)
Chair, Congressional Black Caucus