

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
4TH DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY



CONSTITUENT SERVICE CENTERS:

MONMOUTH
112 Village Center Drive
Freehold, NJ 07728-2510
(732) 780-3035

OCEAN
405 Route 539
Plumsted, NJ 08514-2303
(732) 350-2300; (609) 286-2571

MERCER
4573 South Broad Street
Hamilton, NJ 08620-2215
(609) 585-7878

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

March 22, 2019

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President Ryan Ruda
Garden City Community College
801 Campus Dr.
Garden City, KS 67846

Dear President Ruda,

I am writing to request that Garden City Community College (GCCC) immediately commission a thorough and independent investigation into the tragic death of Braeden Bradforth, a former GCCC athlete and resident of my district who received a scholarship in July, 2018 to play football at the college.

Tragically, as you know, after football practice on the evening of August 1, 2018—his second day on campus—Braeden suffered from what an autopsy later revealed to be “exertional heat stroke”. Braeden was taken by ambulance to the hospital and was pronounced dead just hours later. Braeden’s mother, extended family and our community were shocked and saddened by the untimely death of this gifted 19 year-old.

To this day, Braeden’s family has many unanswered questions. We hope you agree that an independent investigation—which would include, at a minimum, a review of the health and safety practices of the athletic department and football program, eyewitness accounts and the response of GCCC leadership—is necessary and warranted.

Most regrettably, the Bradforth family’s tragedy is not the first of its kind, and an investigation would be critical to providing information the family is entitled to as well as information to help prevent such tragedies in the future. You may recall that in a similar case of the death of another college football player—due to heat stroke—the University of Maryland (UMD) hired a sports medicine consultant to look at the school’s protocols for maintaining student-athlete health and safety and whether they were appropriately implemented. The report can be found online at <https://www.usmd.edu/newsroom/Walters-Report-to-USM-Board-of-Regents.pdf>.

The UMD evaluation assembled a team of doctors, athletic trainers and strength and conditioning specialists, and spanned the course of three months. The team interviewed university athletic department officials, campus police and safety officers, athletic training staff, coaches and student-athletes, including officers, athletic staff and players present on the day of

the medical emergency, and constructed a timeline of the day's events. It reviewed the health and safety standards of the football program and athletic department in the light of best medical practices, assessed the existing Emergency Action Plan (EAP), and examined documents relevant to the athlete's case including workout notes and the medical records of the deceased. Additionally, and specifically to Braeden's case, an investigation could determine if a Wet Bulb Globe Thermometer was in use and if an EAP was already in place.

The independent investigation, conducted in relation to the events at UMD, represents a prototype that might provide some answers to the Bradforth family and a sense of confidence for other student-athletes, and their parents, at GCCC. In fact, the University of Maryland investigation and subsequent report prompted changes in the university's practices, and the school has reportedly implemented almost all of its recommendations to date.

Accordingly, I urge you to authorize an outside investigation into the case of Braeden Bradforth, both as a means to respond to the many questions raised by Braeden's surviving family members and so that GCCC may take any proactive steps to ensure that the tragedy that happened the night of August 1 may never happen again.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter. I can be reached at 202-225-3765, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Smith", written in a cursive style.

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
Member of Congress