

**CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH**

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DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

April 22, 2019

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

Dear Dr. Ruda,

On Friday, April 19<sup>th</sup>, my Chief of Staff, Mary McDermott Noonan, and my District Director, Jo Schloeder, spoke with GCCC counsel, Randy Grisell, regarding the meeting that had been tentatively set for this Friday, April 26, 2019. That phone call indicates that the meeting must be postponed.

On the call, my staff approached the meeting as you and I had defined it—a meeting with the goal of providing a grieving mother an opportunity to meet with you face-to-face; to ask specific questions and learn more about the untimely death of her 19-year old son, Braeden Bradforth, only two days after he arrived at your college. In a telephone conversation on April 11<sup>th</sup>, you told me, as well as my chief of staff in a subsequent conversation, that you would discuss the internal review that had been conducted, including witness observations and that you would consider sharing the internal review with Braeden's mom, Joanne Atkins-Ingram. The expectations for the requested meeting were memorialized in the attached letter I sent to you dated April 17<sup>th</sup>.

Separately, Mr. Grisell sent an email to Ms. Schloeder that was in direct contradiction to our conversations with you. In fact, Mr. Grisell wrote, "I would not want Congressman Smith to travel to Garden City, only to discover GCCC representatives will not discuss the internal review conducted in preparation for possible litigation and to assist the college to determine if any changes needed to be made to procedures, policies, or practices."

Co-Chairman of the following Congressional Member Organizations: Task Force on Alzheimer's Disease • Bi-Partisan Coalition for Combating Anti-Semitism  
Lyme Disease Caucus • Coalition for Autism Research and Education • Bi-Partisan Congressional Pro-Life Caucus • Bosnia Caucus • Poland Caucus  
Ad Hoc Congressional Committee for Irish Affairs • Congressional Caucus on Human Trafficking • Vietnam Caucus • Congressional Heart and Stroke Coalition



THIS MAILING WAS PREPARED, PUBLISHED, AND MAILED AT TAXPAYER EXPENSE.

On the April 19<sup>th</sup> phone conversation, Mr. Grisell said that you and any other college officials would only discuss general information which is now included in a short “Summary” of the internal review that he sent to the family only the night before Mr. Grisell’s conversation with my staff.

After speaking with Mr. Grisell, it seems that he is attempting to change the parameters of the meeting to which you first agreed to host. Additionally, it is no longer clear that a report of the internal review—that you and I discussed on the phone—even exists. Mr. Grisell concedes that witnesses were interviewed; that he himself did fact-finding, and that Mr. Colin Lamb gathered and compiled information. There is now a “Summary,” yet he argues that there is no internal review document that has been summarized.

It was our hope that the full internal review—with supplementary documents—would address and answer specific questions and give insights to detailed witness information. Specifically, Ms. Atkins-Ingram would like a timeline of Braeden’s movements and conversations with coaches and players the day he died. She would like to hear what others who were at the practice did and said, i.e., players, coaches and trainers. She would like the information GCCC received from campus police, city police, and first aid responders. Who found Braeden? What state was he in at the time? Was he alone?

It is now more important than ever that an independent, external review is conducted to address the many unanswered questions surrounding Braeden’s death.

In the interim, Ms. Atkins-Ingram would still like to meet with you face-to-face. She would like to meet with the President of the college that recruited her son to play football but has not fully shared what they know about his death from exertional heat stroke.

The mixed signals sent in the last few days demonstrate that this meeting can no longer take place this Friday. Ms. Atkins-Ingram needs to know that there will be an honest, forthright conversation that enables her to ask basic questions and receive insights and answers. When you are ready, when you have a clear consensus that GCCC can be transparent, we will eagerly reschedule.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chris Smith".

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH  
Member of Congress