

Community Taskforce to Review Youth Corrections System Standards

February 28, 2022

Merrick B. Garland
United States Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington DC 20530-0001

RE: Request for the Department of Justice to conduct a Pattern and Practice Investigation into Kansas Department of Children and Families, Wichita Police Department and Juvenile Intake Assessment Center, relative to existing system standards and performance, law enforcement and foster care policies, mental and behavioral health training resources, standards and use of force for civil rights violations, including but not limited to the death of Cedric Lofton.

Dear Attorney General Garland:

We write to you today to request a FBI Investigation into a potential Civil Rights Violation of Cedric Lofton's rights in the arrest and detainment of Cedric Lofton on September 24, 2021 by the Wichita Police Department, Juvenile Intake Assessment Center and Kansas Department of Children and Families which resulted in Cedric Lofton's death on September 26, 2021.

While the Sedgwick County District Attorney Office, Sedgwick County Sheriff Department and Kansas Bureau of Investigations, has investigated the circumstances surrounding the arrest and death of Cedric Lofton, it was a criminal investigation that focused on use of force by the officers and/or employees involved to see if criminal charges should be filed in the case¹. This is a request for an investigation to see if Cedric Lofton's Civil Rights were violated by the officers and/or employees involved in his arrest and detainment. With the recent findings where the Sheriff of Clayton County, Georgia was indicted April 27, 2021 on use of unreasonable force found in an FBI Civil Rights Violation investigation² and the George Floyd federal grand jury indicting the four arresting officers and subsequent civil rights violation charges being filed in federal court on September 14, 2021³, we urge you to complete an investigation into the matter of Cedric Lofton as soon as possible. We are anxious to see the results provided by a FBI investigation.

¹[DA's office investigating death of Cedric Lofton, may not be criminal \(ksn.com\)](https://www.ksn.com/story/news/crime/2021/09/24/district-attorney-investigating-death-of-cedric-lofton/7041440002/)

²[Georgia sheriff allegedly ordered his employees to use excessive force against detainees, federal indictment says \(cnn.com\)](https://www.cnn.com/2021/04/27/georgia-sheriff-allegedly-ordered-his-employees-to-use-excessive-force-against-detainees/index.html)

³[4 former officers charged with violating George Floyd's civil rights plead not guilty \(nbcnews.com\)](https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/former-officers-charged-violating-george-floyd-civil-rights-plead-not-guilty-ncna11172)

There needs to be a clearer, safer, and ADA-compliant way to interact with people with mental health issues and improve strategies for crisis intervention and to de-escalate the situation. Until these issues are addressed and new policies implemented, there will continue to be more harm to our youth instead of a positive effect on them.

If you have any questions, please contact our Community Taskforce via email at:

Community Taskforce@sedgwick.gov.

Sincerely,

Community Task Force Members:

Larry Burks, Sr., NAACP – Wichita Branch
Lilliana Rivera, NAACP – Wichita Youth Branch
Mike Fonkert, Kansas Appleseed
Holly Osborne, St. Francis Ministries
Marquetta Atkins, Destination Innovation
Jazmine Rogers, Progeny
Dr. April Terry, Kansas Advisory Group on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
Steve House, Juvenile Defense Counsel
Lamont Anderson, Community Partner
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Monique Garcia, Community Partner
Annmarie Arensberg, KVC Hospital Wichita
Debbie Kennedy, Wichita Children's Home
Taben Azad, Wichita Asian Association
Valerie Leon, St. Francis Ministries
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