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FAMILY DIVISION
FRAUD DIVISION
DIVISION CIVIL RIGHTS & PUBLIC TRUST

Hon. Kristen Clarke
Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530-0001

May 11, 2022

Dear AAG Clarke,

I write regarding a troubling incident that is deserving of your attention. I'm grateful that this is already on your office's radar and for your commitment to review the facts and determine what next steps are appropriate.

Based on the facts available to me—including several discussions with those impacted at Delaware State University—I'm deeply troubled by what occurred on April 20, 2022. A traffic stop (for what can charitably be called a minor infraction) led to a slew of sheriff's deputies searching virtually every bag belonging to student athletes who were returning home from their season finale. I'm told that all the deputies were white, and almost everyone whose bags were searched is black.

These students and coaches were not in the proverbial wrong place at the wrong time. They hail from one of the oldest and finest HBCUs in the country. By all accounts these young women represented their school and our state with class – and they were rewarded with a questionable-at-best search through their belongings in an effort to find contraband that did not exist. Not only did the deputies find nothing illegal in the bags; they did not issue a single ticket for the alleged traffic infraction.

Your record and the Southern District of Georgia's recent history are sterling. When you say that your office will look into the events of April 20th, I know we can count on a thorough vetting and appropriate action.

Thank you for our discussion. I stand ready to assist in any way possible.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Jennings
Attorney General

cc: David Estes, Acting United States Attorney, Southern District of Georgia
Hon. Christopher M. Carr, Attorney General, Georgia
Dr. Tony Allen, President, Delaware State University
Pamella Jenkins, Head Coach, DSU Hornets Women's Lacrosse
Alexander S. Mackler, Chief Deputy Attorney General, Delaware