

SENT VIA EMAIL

Attorney General Tim Fox  
Montana Department of Justice  
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September 4, 2020

Attorney General Tim Fox,

My name is [INSERT HERE]. I am a resident of [INSERT HERE] and I am writing today to demand justice for Kaysera Stops Pretty Places.

On August 24, 2019, Kaysera Stops Pretty Places went missing in a suburban neighborhood of Hardin, Montana, less than a half mile off of the Crow Reservation. Big Horn County did not file a missing person's report for Kaysera when she was reported missing. On the morning of August 29, her body was found in the same neighborhood where she was last seen alive. Law enforcement did not inform the family that Kaysera's body had been found until almost two weeks later, on September 11. Kaysera's family, including her legal guardian, to this day has not been interviewed by investigators in the Big Horn County Sheriff's department.

Days before Kaysera went missing, she filmed and posted to social media the beating of her 15-year-old brother by law enforcement at Crow Fair. The officers beating the minor in a wheelchair included Big Horn County Sheriff's deputies. The U.S. Attorney's Office investigated the incident and officers were reprimanded. There is reason to believe that one of the deputies who was under investigation for the scene filmed by Kaysera was a responding officer when her body was discovered. Despite all of these conflicts and violations of civil rights laws, the Montana Department of Justice never intervened to undertake an investigation of her murder. You left this up to the Big Horn County Sheriff's Office—an office staffed by deputies who are documented as having beaten Kaysera's brother. This is a miscarriage of justice.

The family of Kaysera Stops Pretty Places has sent letters to you several times since September 2019 when they were notified of her death. A year after Kaysera's body was found in Hardin, you have yet to engage in any way with Kaysera's family. As you are from Hardin in Big Horn County, you should be familiar with the high number of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in the county. The county has the greatest rate of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls (MMIWG) in the state and nation. It is appalling that you ignore a family that has reached out to you more times than they should have to.

As Kaysera was found in Hardin, off the reservation, her death is within the jurisdiction of Big Horn County. The State of Montana, your office is charged with upholding the law for crimes committed off the reservation. There is no reason you cannot address the family directly as Kaysera's murder is within the jurisdiction of your office.

The justice system in Big Horn County and Montana has failed Kaysera in all aspects of investigating her death, will your office continue to be complicit in allowing this happen? Kaysera's family has asked for the Montana Department of Criminal Investigation (MT DCI) to step in to investigate Kaysera's murder. The response from your office has been that the county must request for the MT DCI to assist with the investigation. This is complete dismissal of a grieving family that is pleading with the justice system to ensure that the murder of their teenage daughter is adequately investigated.

When the Big Horn County attorney did request assistance from the MT DCI, your office's response was that you are not able to uphold your responsibilities due to the current caseload. Is this standard practice to pick and choose which cases receive adequate investigation based on how much criticism your office receives? How is this fulfilling your offices duties to uphold justice in the state for ALL cases that are referred to your office?

Your office oversees the forensic science division crime lab where Kaysera's remains were taken on August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019 by Big Horn County coroner Terry Bullis before she was identified. The Big Horn County Sheriff's department was aware of this transgression and allowed for it to happen. Furthermore, Kaysera's name was misspelled on the autopsy report when the family did receive it nearly four months after it was performed. There is no reason a family should have to wait 15 weeks to receive an autopsy, as it is their only confirmation of the identity of their deceased daughter. The family was given an incorrect date of the autopsy when they reached out the forensic science division headquarters after repeated attempts to obtain the report. The carelessness of the forensic science department in recording these basic details further adds to the indignities Kaysera continues to receive in death.

In showing some initiative to address the long neglected MMIWG crisis in your state, you have created the Montana Missing Indigenous Persons Task Force last year. What are your plans to address the murder of Indigenous people particularly women and girls that occur at the highest rates in the country? Here is a suggestion; you can start by making all MMIWG cases a priority for receiving assistance when directed through the channels as laid out by your office, and agreeing to at least meet or talk with families of MMIWG for one hour, instead of ignoring their requests for communication.

I demand that you, in your capacity as Attorney General respond to and assist Kaysera's family. If you can find the bandwidth to run for governor while serving as Attorney General, you can help Kaysera's family while you are still in office.

Sincerely,  
[INSERT YOUR NAME HERE]