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COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

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INFRASTRUCTURE

SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE
CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

June 27, 2024

The Honorable Merrick Garland
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20530

Attorney General Garland:

On Monday, June 24th, Governor Kristi Noem hosted the Tribal Public Safety Crisis Summit in Pierre, S.D., to discuss the law-and-order crisis on South Dakota's Indian reservations. Rather than focus on how the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) can work together with tribal and state law enforcement officers, your Deputy Attorney General chose to prioritize the exclusion of a federal official from this important and collaborative conversation. Your FBI, due to their arbitrary rules, refused to enter the room at the Governor's summit while I – a member of Congress – was still in the room.

Governor Kristi Noem is to be commended for her work to bring federal, state, local, and tribal community leaders under one roof to see how we can best work together to provide progress for Indian country, which is in desperate need of assistance. Native Americans are subjected to horrific violent crimes on South Dakota Indian reservations at a rate over five times higher than the national average.

According to the latest numbers my office received from Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Assistant Secretary Bryan Newland, violent crime on the Cheyenne River Reservation jumped 55% between 2022 and 2023. Similarly, the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate saw a 32% increase and the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe faced a 33% increase. People are dying. We must do better, and collaboration is a necessary component to confront this challenge.

The FBI staff, at your Deputy's direction, chose to first drive around the block to wait me out and then hide in a hallway when they realized I was still in the room. To put it plainly, there was no reason for this ridiculous display. I left the room so as not to deprive those who showed up at the table of the opportunity to hear from your staff, but I wholly reject the notion my presence would be counterproductive.

I am requesting a response explaining the rationale for their actions to refuse to provide a briefing with me in the room. Please respond in writing by July 8, 2024.

Sincerely,

DUSTY JOHNSON
Member of Congress