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January 17, 2020

The Honorable William P. Barr
The Attorney General
United States Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C., 20530

Dear Attorney General Barr:

Over a year ago, President Trump signed the bipartisan Ashanti Alert Act (P.L. 115-401) into law. I write today to draw your attention to language I included in the FY20 Consolidated Appropriations Act directing the Department of Justice to take swift measures to fully implement the Ashanti Alert system.^[1]

Specifically, Congress directs the Department “to provide a report to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees no later than 30 days after enactment” of the FY20 Consolidated Appropriations Act (P.L. 116-93) detailing progress on the implementation of the Ashanti Alert Act. Further, the language directs the report to set out a final deadline for implementation no later than 90 days after enactment. As the FY20 Consolidated Appropriations Act was enacted on December 20, 2019, I will look for the Department’s initial report next week, which should include a plan for full implementation of the Ashanti Alert Act by March 19, 2020.

As I have noted in three previous letters, the Ashanti Alert system will save lives by closing the existing gap in our nation’s missing person alert systems. This crucial public safety system is named in honor of Ashanti Billie, a 19-year-old who was abducted in Norfolk, Virginia on September 18, 2017. Ashanti was found murdered – 11 days after she was initially reported missing. Because of Ashanti’s age, she did not qualify for AMBER or Silver Alerts and thus critical resources were not used to locate her whereabouts.

I am profoundly disappointed that the Department has failed to implement the Ashanti Alert system in a well-organized and competent way. I look forward to the Department’s report and expeditious implementation.

Sincerely,



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator

^[1] Rep. Nita Lowey, “Explanatory Statement Submitted by Mrs. Lowey, Chairwoman of the House Committee on Appropriations Regarding H.R. 1158, Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020,” *Congressional Record*, vol. 165, no. 204—Book II, (December 17, 2019), p. H10966.