

DEBBIE DINGELL  
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**Congress of the United States**  
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**Washington, DC 20515**

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May 9, 2017

Mr. J. Edward Allen  
Beaufort County Coroner  
P.O. Box 1228  
Beaufort, SC 29901

Dr. Lee Marie Tormos, M.D.  
Medical University of South Carolina  
Department of Pathology and Lab Medicine  
165 Ashley Avenue, Suite 309  
MSC 908  
Charleston, SC 29425

Dear Mr. Allen and Dr. Tormos:

Last year, your offices made a determination of the cause of death of a constituent of mine, U.S. Marine Corps Private Raheel Siddiqui, based on evidence and reports that were available at the time. This letter is to support the request made by his family to revise the final determination of his manner of death based on information that has subsequently become available. This case has disturbed the conscience of many and it is important that the facts be followed.

The original finding of suicide made by your offices was based on facts immediately available after the death. Since then, new information has come to light about the circumstances surrounding his death. The Marine Corps Command Investigation states that "several factors contributed to [Private Siddiqui's] death, including maltreatment by his drill instructor team, leadership failures at multiple levels of command, and administrative and process failures, that if avoided, could have reduced the risk of his death." The report goes into further detail about the physical abuse Private Siddiqui faced, including being slapped in the face moments before his death. While we will never know what happened, I am convinced he did not intend to kill himself that day, which is the definition of suicide.

Since then, numerous investigations have shown other cases of abuse and hazing at Parris Island. In a recent article in the Washington Post, it was disclosed that there are at least 20 hazing investigations involving drill instructors. This clearly demonstrates a pattern of maltreatment and of abuse at Parris Island, which shows that what happened to Private Siddiqui was not an isolated incident and gives more credence to the claims that his death was the result of abuse and not a suicide.

Private Siddiqui was an intelligent, loyal, patriotic young Muslim man—and class valedictorian—who chose to serve this country to defend our highest ideals of freedom and opportunity. He was his family's pride and joy. Since the suicide determination, the family has experienced grave emotional stress and irreparable damages, both personally and within the community at large. I have seen firsthand the impact this has had on the Siddiqui family from the beginning and the pain the suicide determination has caused.

In light of the current facts of this case, I urge you to support the family's request to change Private Siddiqui's manner of death from suicide to "Pending" and/or "Undetermined." This is the right thing to do since we have more information available to us and not all the facts were available when the original determination of suicide was made. No parent should have to bear the burden of their child committing suicide when the evidence points to the contrary.

Thank you for your attention and consideration of this request. My heart breaks for the Siddiqui family every day, and I will continue fight for all the answers and peace they deserve. Reversing the suicide determination in this case will go a long way to ease the family and help them find comfort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Debbie Dingell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Debbie" and last name "Dingell" clearly distinguishable.

Debbie Dingell  
Member of Congress

CC: Brigadier General David J. Furness, Legislative Assistant to the Commandant of the Marine Corps