



For Immediate Release
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LDF Demands Independent Investigation Into the Death of Quawan “Bobby” Charles

On November 3, 2020, 15 year-old Quawan “Bobby” Charles was found dead in a sugarcane field in Iberia Parish, Louisiana, four days after his family reported him missing. According to Quawan’s family and other local accounts, police never issued a Level II Endangered/Missing Child Advisory, which would have notified media statewide of Quawan's disappearance, and did not actively look for him until the day his body was found. While his death is now being investigated as a homicide, no suspects have been announced nor have next steps been made clear to Quawan’s family or area residents.

In response, LDF Associate Director-Counsel Janai Nelson released the following statement:

“We are horrified by the highly suspicious death of Quawan ‘Bobby’ Charles and local law enforcement officials’ alarming lack of immediate action. After Quawan’s family reported him missing, the Baldwin Police Department failed to take the family’s concerns seriously and wholly neglected their duty as officers and public servants to swiftly and thoroughly investigate Quawan’s disappearance, possibly costing his life. This egregious disregard of Quawan’s life follows centuries of indifference toward the humanity of Black children.

“The racial disparities in missing child cases are staggering. Nearly 40% of missing children are Black, even though Black children only make up 14% of all children in the United States. Quawan’s case should have been acted upon and investigated immediately, including sending an advisory, organizing a search party, pinging his cell phone, and deploying all tools at the disposal of the Baldwin Police Department, the Iberia Parish Sheriff’s Office, and the St. Mary Parish’s Sheriff’s Office, which have been involved in this matter. Quawan and his family deserved urgency, assistance, and leadership from local officials, none of which was offered.

“We join Quawan’s family in demanding an independent investigation into his death, an investigation of all law enforcement agencies and officers involved in the mishandling of this case, as well as the arrest and prosecution of those responsible for his death. In addition, in response to the apparent misconduct of the law enforcement agencies involved, LDF has filed Louisiana Public Records Act requests with all three agencies involved to obtain details about the handling of this case thus far. We will continue to monitor this case to ensure justice is served for Quawan, his family and community.”

Read LDF’s requests sent to the Baldwin Police Department, St. Mary Parish Sheriff’s Office, and Iberia Parish Sheriff’s Office.

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Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation's first civil and human rights law organization. LDF has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights. LDF's Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF. Follow LDF on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).