All the documents surrounding this case need to be made public and all the questions asked in my July 22 letter to Attorney General Holder should be answered. The American people deserve nothing less than full transparency.

Oversight is needed now more than ever given the disclosures in today’s Washington Times that the department’s voter intimidation case against the New Black Panther Party was dismissed over the objections of career attorneys on the trial team—as well as the chief of the department’s Appellate Division.

The politicization of the Justice Department by Eric Holder against career employees is absolutely wrong and the Congress ought to get to the bottom of this.

Sources within the department stated that Associate Attorney General Thomas Perrelli, a political appointee, overruled career attorneys in dismissing the case.

According to the Appellate Division memo first disclosed in the Times article, Appellate Chief Diana K. Flynn said that “the appropriate action was to pursue the default judgment” and that Justice had made a “reasonable argument in favor of default relief against all defendants.” Flynn’s opinion was shared by a second Appellate Division official, Marie K. McElderry, who stated: “The government’s predominant interest is preventing intimidation and coercion against voters or persons urging or aiding persons to vote or attempt to vote.”

Given these troubling disclosures, I call on the attorney general to re-file this civil suit and allow a ruling from the judge based on the merits of the case—without political expediency.

It is imperative that we protect all Americans’ right to vote, which I consider a sacred and inalienable right of any democracy. The career attorneys and Appellate Division within the department sought to demonstrate the federal government’s commitment to protecting this right by vigorously prosecuting any individual or group that seeks to undermine this right. I hope that the political leadership will follow their example and allow this case to go forward again.

The politicization of the Justice Department by Eric Holder against career employees is absolutely wrong, and the Congress ought to get to the bottom of this.

Mr. Speaker, as a strong supporter of the Voting Rights Act, I have been deeply troubled by this Department of Justice’s questionable dismissal of an important voter intimidation case in Philadelphia, where I grew up, and my dad was a policeman. My commitment to voting rights is unquestioned. In 1981 I was the only member, Republican or Democrat, of the Virginia delegation in the House to vote for the Voting Rights Act, and was harshly criticized by the editorial page of the Richmond Times Dispatch.

And when I supported its reauthorization in 2006, I was again criticized by editorial pages. I have grave concerns about the Department’s dismissal of this case. Congress must use its oversight to maintain the integrity of the voting system. Oversight is needed now more than ever given the disclosures in today’s Washington Times that the department’s case against the New Black Panther Party was dismissed over the objections of career attorneys on the trial team as well as the chief of the Department’s Appellate Division.

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I have concerns about the department’s dismissal of this serious case. Above all, Congress must use its oversight to maintain the integrity of our voting system.
against two of the men and the party and seeking a restraining order against the one man who wielded a nightstick at the Philadelpha polling place. Mr. Perrelli approved that proposal after the request was approved.

Questions about how high inside the department the decision to drop the case went have persisted in Congress and in the media for weeks.

Justice Department spokeswoman Tracy Schmaler told The Washington Times that the department has an "ongoing obligation to be sure the claims it makes are supported by the facts and the law. She said that after a "thorough review" of the complaint, top career attorneys in the Civil Rights Division determined the case to be general enough to support pursuing the claims against three of the defendants."

"As a result, the department dismissed those claims," she said. "We are committed, to vigorous enforcement of the laws protecting anyone exercising his or her right to vote."

While the Obama administration has vowed a new era of openness, department officials have refused to answer questions from Republicans on Congress about why the case was dismissed, claiming the information was "privileged," according to congressional correspondence with the department. Ms. King and a senior member of the House Appropriations Committee, who has raised questions about the case, said he also was prevented from reviewing the front-line lawyers who brought the charges.

"Why am I being prevented from meeting with the trial team on this case?" Mr. Wolf asked. "There are many questions that need to be answered. This whole thing just stinks to high heaven."

Mr. Schmaler said the department has tried to cooperate with Congress. "The Department responded to an earlier letter from Congressman Wolf in an effort to address his questions. Following that letter, the Department agreed to a meeting with Congressman Wolf and career attorneys, in which they made a good-faith effort to respond to his inquiries about this case. We will continue to try to clear up any confusion Congressman Wolf has about this case."

Ms. King and a deputy are expected to travel Thursday to meet behind closed doors with House Judiciary Committee Chairman John Conyers Jr., Michigan Democrat, and Rep. Lamar Smith of Texas, both of whom requested a meeting to discuss continuing concerns about the case. The department also has yet to provide any records sought by The Times under a Freedom of Information Act request filed in May seeking documents detailing the decision process. Department officials also declined to answer whether any outside groups had raised questions about the decision or pressured the department to drop it.

Kristen Clarke, director of political participation at the NAACP Legal Defense Fund in Washington, responded to The Times that she talked about the case with lawyers at the Justice Department and shared copies of the complaint with several persons. She said, however, her organization was "not involved in the decision to dismiss the civil complaint." She said its National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has consistently argued that the department should bring more voter intimidation cases, adding that it was "disconcerting" that it did not do so.

Mr. Perrelli, a prominent private practice attorney, served previously as a counsel to Attorney General Eric Holder before the Bush administration and was an Obama supporter who raised more than $500,000 for the Demo-
Bob’s contributions are too numerous to mention, but principal among them are his efforts to improve import coverage uniformity in applying FDA policies and procedures and his work to increase cooperative activities with Customs and Border Protection. As the Nation has faced serious threats to the safety of its food supply, Bob significantly increased the number of import samples and product exams performed each year and contributed to updating the FDA import training program. Last year, Bob focused on FDA/SWID outreach and education efforts to work with the Federal and State agencies on border health to improve the health of the population living along the United States and Mexican border.

For all of his accomplishments in life, Bob Deininger’s greatest achievement will always be his family. His mother Evelyn and brother Gary are very proud of him, as is his wonderful wife Rosemary. Together, she and Bob have raised two impressive sons, Kristopher and Brian. They are blessed with a lovely daughter-in-law, Katherine, who has given them their pride and joy, grandson Jack.

Mr. Speaker, let us pause and give thanks to Bob Deininger for four decades of tireless, selfless service to the Food and Drug Administration and the American public.

Today, I join the good people of the Seventh Congressional District of Pennsylvania and the thousands of FDA employees Bob has led, mentored and cared for over the course of his brilliant career, and Bob’s many friends and colleagues, to wish Rosemary and Bob “fair winds and following seas” as they embark on the next, and no doubt even more remarkable, chapter of their lives.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. POE of Texas addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Ms. Wanda Evans, one of his secretaries.

NUMBER OF MARINE SUICIDES INCREASING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week I was saddened to read an article in the Marine Corps Times with the heading “7 July suicides push Corps to record pace.” I will submit that article for the record.

The article states, “At least seven Marines are believed to have killed themselves so far in July, putting the Corps on a record pace despite broad-based efforts introduced to reduce suicides.”

The Corps is on a pace for about 56 suicides in 2009, which would shatter a record set last year. The Corps lost 42 Marines to confirmed or suspected suicide. The article further states, “Marine suicides have increased annually since 2006.”

At least seven Marines are believed to have killed themselves so far in July, officials said, putting the Corps on a record pace despite broad-based efforts introduced to reduce suicides.

The deaths come as the service rolls out a new suicide-prevention program this week focused on getting sergeants and corporals to take a more active role in watching for signs that a Marine may be in danger of killing himself. Nine Marines killed themselves in June, and 33 have done so this July.

Carl Redding, a spokesman at Marine Corps headquarters, said the statistics were discussed Monday at the Sergeants Major Symposium, an annual meeting of the Corps’ top enlisted leaders in Washington. The 33 dead Marines put the Corps on pace for about 56 suicides in 2009, shattering a record set last year, when the Corps lost 42 Marines to confirmed or suspected suicides.

“We’re looking at all options to get a handle on this,” said Sgt. Maj. Carlton Kent, the Corps’ top enlisted adviser. “We’re trying to pinpoint what we can do, and we’re going to stay engaged until we find a fix for it.”

Marine suicides have increased annually since 2006, when 25 Marines killed themselves. Thirty-three Marines were believed to have committed suicide in 2007, Marine officials said.

The recent numbers have alarmed Marine leadership, prompting additional “all-hands” prevention training in March that included videos made by commanders, a slideshow outlining recent statistics and an overview of warning signs shown by Marines at risk of killing themselves.

On Monday, senior enlisted leaders discussed a next wave of suicide-prevention training that has been in the works for months. Noncommissioned officers throughout the Corps will be trained to watch for suicide signs more carefully, with “master trainer” sergeants who went through 3½ days of training in July at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., now fanning out across the service to teach NCOS how they can be a better help to at-risk Marines.

The new training package will include a 30-minute video featuring professional actors portraying Marines, and 11 documentary film clips featuring Marines who considered killing themselves and survivors of Marines who did. The Corps’ senior enlisted leaders were told Monday. It will focus in part on eliminating the stigma of reporting a Marine who is considering suicide, officials said.

“Marines have to recognize the signs at ankle level, not chest level,” said Sgt. Maj. Michael Timmerton, the senior enlisted advisor with the Personal and Family Readiness Division at Marine Corps headquarters.

Kent said he wants NCOS to feel empowered to report that a Marine in turmoil may be considering suicide, but he believes senior enlisted leadership and officers also need to be actively involved.

“We still have to provide the guidance, oversight and support needed for our enlisted leadership. ‘We have to give (NCOS) the tools they need’ to prevent suicides.