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Investigation Into Lapses That Led to C.A.H.S. Coach Child Rape Scandal to Be Led by D.H.S. in Coordination With D.O.J., Education

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Ernice Gilbert **November 09, 2021**

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Alfredo Bruce Smith By. FACEBOOK

The local Dept. of Justice and the Dept. of Education will be working with the Dept. of Human Services to investigate potential lapses that led to the [Alfredo Bruce Smith scandal](#), a Charlotte Amalie High School coach accused of abusing dozens of minor boys for an estimated 13 of his 15-year tenure at the learning institution.

[Early October](#), Governor Albert Bryan told the Consortium he had ordered the Dept. of Education to hire an outside investigator to probe the scope of the alleged crimes. On Monday, Mr. Bryan said the three aforementioned departments would work together to find out whether there were

gaps that needed to be identified to ascertain that such incidents never occur moving forward.

"We're getting the investigators squared away and being able to do that and coordinate between [the Dept. of] Justice, Education and Human Services, so we have yet another meeting on that today, and being able to get some understanding on how this is going to launch," the governor said Monday during his weekly press briefing. "Right now the main concern is auditing the system to make sure that this never happens again, as well as finding out where the gaps were that we didn't identify, or if there were any gaps that we didn't identify in this particular case."

He added, "We did it under Human Services because we felt that Human Services would have the autonomy that we needed to be transparent, so that we don't have Education investigating themselves and anybody trying to trump up some conspiracy theory."

The governor stated that the investigation would not be criminal in nature. "It's a gap investigation in terms of what happened," he said. "So we put it in Human Services and we're getting the pieces in line for that."

"Every time a child dies there is a committee that is assigned in Human Services to investigate it, and we want to take that approach with it so we could get it done," Mr. Bryan said.

Federal prosecutors on Oct. 4 submitted new filing in District Court alleging that the timeline of Smith's abuse of minor boys spanned as many as 13 of the 15 years he has been employed at D.O.E., with the number of boys suspected to be abused growing to "dozens."

The filing indicates an investigation that has grown vast, with large amounts of data being compiled from Facebook (more than 1,000 images and more than 300 videos) along with five cellphones with more videos, images and communication, some of which are suspected to include child pornography and "dozens of potential minor victims," according to Assistant U.S. Attorney Natasha Baker, who filed a motion on Oct. 4 asking for more time.

Governor Bryan on Oct. 4 also said he asked D.O.E. Commissioner Racquel Berry Benjamin "to create an audit of sorts to find out is the protocol we have working, [and] how can we make it stronger. Not only for [the Charlotte Amalie High School] but all our schools so this is going to be a little in depth."

In the filing, Ms. Baker announced 13 charges against Smith, including counts of coercion, rape, one count of transportation of a child to engage in criminal sexual activity, and two counts sexual exploitation of a child.

The Consortium was told by two well-placed sources that some current Dept. of Education officials were part of a meeting between C.A.H.S. leadership and D.O.E. STT-STJ District officials held during the prior government administration where concerns regarding Smith were discussed. However, it was ultimately decided that Smith would continue his employment at C.A.H.S. He is currently on leave without pay pending the outcome of the investigation and federal case.

Asked by the Consortium about the matter in October, the governor said, "As far as any specific encounter with Mr. Smith, I'm sure that's under the review of the U.S. Justice Department, the U.S. Attorney's Office as well, but right now what we're trying to do is get down to what happened, who was involved and most importantly how we could make sure that this never, ever happens again."

He added, "At this point we have no evidence of criminal activity, but I do want a complete audit of the system to make sure that all our schools have the resources that they need and have the reporting mechanism that works... We hear a lot of things in the community anecdotally and anything people send to me I take seriously, because the first thing they're going to say is, 'I told the governor.' I want to know we have a real reporting system. Just like sexual harassment in the workplace, once you notify a supervisor of something... there must be an action."

The V.I. District Court [on September 1](#) announced the arrest of Smith for the molestation of multiple minor boys over the years of his employment at the V.I. Dept. of Education. Baker filed documents in the District Court in early September that stated C.A.H.S. administrators were made aware of the rape incidents since 2019 — gruesome sexual violations that allege, among other crimes, that Smith raped and used a penis pump on some of the minor victims. Smith continued working at C.A.H.S. for more than a year and to this day remains on leave.

On Oct. 4, Attorney Baker called for more time to build the case, pointing to the high volume of new evidence that she said federal prosecutors were working "diligently to comb through," according to the filing. In most cases, defendants under the Sixth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and their individual state constitutions have a right to a speedy trial, and Smith's federally-provided public defender said Smith was unwilling to waive this right, according to a response filed to the motion of Ms. Baker. A ruling has not been made.