

REPEAL CIVIL RIGHTS LAW 50-A TO ALLOW FOR THE PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF POLICE RECORDS RELATING TO POLICE MISCONDUCT

A.10611 (AM O'Donnell) / S.8496 (Sen. Bailey)

The New York City Bar Association, since its founding in 1870 and through its 24,000 members, equips and mobilizes the legal profession to practice with excellence, promote reform of the law, and uphold the rule of law and access to justice in support of a fair society and the public interest.

To restore public trust, police departments across the nation need to step up to discipline and remove bad actors. In New York, our elected leaders have the opportunity to take a concrete step towards that goal by repealing Civil Rights Law (CRL) 50-a in order to permit the public disclosure of police records relating to police misconduct. The original purpose of CRL 50-a was to prevent disclosure of “unverified and unsubstantiated” civilian complaints—not to prevent disclosure of substantiated civilian complaints.

The City Bar supports A.10611 / S.8496 for the following reasons:

- New York would join a number of other states in promoting transparency of police disciplinary systems. There is no evidence that this transparency endangers officers in those states or inhibits the administration of justice.
- Concerns of the law’s original sponsors over the privacy of police officers are adequately addressed through the privacy protections of FOIL.
- Judges are already charged with restraining lawyers from asking irrelevant, immaterial and abusive cross examination questions.
- Without the repeal of CRL 50-a, police reform efforts will be rendered wholly ineffective.

**WE URGE THE LEGISLATURE AND GOVERNOR TO REPEAL CRL 50-A.
WITHOUT TRANSPARENCY, OFFICERS ARE NOT ACCOUNTABLE TO THE
COMMUNITIES THEY SERVE.**

Read more here: <http://bit.ly/2rbbXGz>.