



**For Immediate Release**  
**Tuesday, July 9, 2024**

**LDF Media**  
[media@naacpldf.org](mailto:media@naacpldf.org)

## **LDF Files Amicus Brief in Support of Disclosure of Police Disciplinary Records in New York State to Improve Accountability and Transparency**

Yesterday, the [Legal Defense Fund](#) (LDF) filed an amicus brief in *NYCLU v. Rochester*, a case currently before the New York Court of Appeals pertaining to the disclosure of police disciplinary records. Following the New York State Legislature’s repeal of Civil Rights Law Section 50-a, a law that shielded police misconduct records from the public, the city of Rochester has asked the court to roll back reform efforts and prevent the disclosure of unsubstantiated complaints of police misconduct.

LDF’s brief argues that New York’s Freedom of Information Law imposes a broad duty of disclosure that requires the disclosure of unsubstantiated complaints. The brief also argues that, in its repeal of Section 50-a following the historic protests arising out of George Floyd’s murder, the New York State Legislature intended to improve greater transparency and accountability for police misconduct by allowing the public, including victims of police misconduct and their families, access to disciplinary records that include unsubstantiated complaints. The brief notes that unsubstantiated complaints may reveal important information about the conduct of officers and the effectiveness of internal disciplinary processes, thus allowing the public to determine whether further reforms are needed and equipping them with information that is critical to demands for accountability.

Issues of police accountability and transparency are especially salient for Black and Brown New Yorkers. In Rochester, Black New Yorkers are victims of a disproportionate amount of police use of force and targeting. In 2021, a study found that over 90% of those ticketed for minor infractions in Rochester were Black. These kinds of disparities mirror similar disparities in New York City, where the New York City Police Department (NYPD) engaged in the racial profiling of Black and Brown New Yorkers for decades.

“Since 1976, Section 50-a has shielded officers who engaged in misconduct, denying the public – including victims of police violence and abuse – crucial information that would aid their advocacy for greater transparency and accountability. Limiting the police

disciplinary records disclosed to the public directly contradicts the New York State Legislature’s intent to respond to the demands of the millions of protesters who took to the streets following George Floyd’s murder, denouncing police violence and misconduct and calling for immediate and meaningful change,” said LDF Director of Strategic Initiatives Jin Hee Lee. “Police officers work in service of the public, and the public deserves to know how they are being policed. We urge the court to ensure that our communities are provided the transparency they deserve.”

###

*Founded in 1940, the [Legal Defense Fund \(LDF\)](#) is the nation’s first civil rights law organization. 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 Legal Defense Fund or LDF. Please note that 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.*