



**For Immediate Release**  
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**Coalition of National Civil Rights Organizations File Amicus Brief Opposing Unions’ Motion for Preliminary Injunction to Prevent Disclosure of Certain NYPD Misconduct Info**

Last week, a coalition of national civil rights organizations, including the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF), Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law (LCCRUL), LatinoJustice PRLDEF (LJP), and Law For Black Lives (L4BL), filed an amicus brief in opposition to police, firefighters, and corrections unions’ motion for a preliminary injunction to prevent disclosure of unsubstantiated and non-final claims of misconduct filed against New York City Police Department (NYPD) officers. This coalition is represented by the law firm of O’Melveny & Myers LLP (O’Melveny).

In response to mass protests demanding greater police accountability in the wake of the police killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, the New York State Legislature passed the repeal of New York Civil Rights Law § 50-a, which was signed by Governor Cuomo on June 9, 2020. Under 50-a, New York had been the worst state in the country in terms of the secrecy of police misconduct information. 50-a protected police officers who engaged in misconduct from public exposure, further emboldening them to act with impunity, especially against Black and Latinx communities.

The amicus brief explains how, from a national perspective, full transparency of police misconduct is an essential component of police accountability, especially for Black and Latinx communities that have long borne the brunt of over-policing and police abuse. Public disclosure of unsubstantiated and non-final claims is a crucial part of this transparency to understand the full scope of police misconduct and to scrutinize the documented problems with misconduct investigations of NYPD officers.

“For far too long, New York City’s Black and Latinx communities have suffered physical injury and rights violations at the hands of police, but these incidents of police misconduct have been shrouded in secrecy due to 50-a,” said LDF Senior Deputy Director of Litigation Jin Hee Lee. “Having lost in their opposition to the repeal of 50-a, police unions are now trying to thwart the full implementation of that repeal by excluding crucial information about officer misconduct that would shed light on the quality of misconduct investigations and the full extent of police misconduct within the department. We urge the court to

recognize the important public interest in police transparency and accountability and deny the unions' last-ditch efforts.”

“LatinoJustice PRLDEF is pleased to join with our partners Law for Black Lives, LDF, Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law and pro bono counsel O’Melveny & Myers in submitting this amicus brief to the Southern District of New York,” said LJP Associate Counsel Nathalia Alejandra Varela. “The police unions’ misguided effort to belatedly thwart the repeal of 50-a demonstrates their clear indifference to the systemic – if not systematic – racism that plagues the NYPD. The legislature has responded to the community’s call in deeming transparency and safety as the highest interest to the public. Law enforcement is not a protected class and does not warrant an elite set of privacy protections that are not afforded to other public employees.”

“In New York City, as in the rest of the country, Black and brown people have endured the worst effects of police abuses,” said Arthur Ago, Lawyers’ Committee Criminal Justice Project Director. “By opposing the law that makes police misconduct records fully available to the public, New York police unions are seeking to entrench a system that imposes nearly no accountability, perpetuates police violence, and has made police killings of civilians a regular part of the national news cycle. It is time for this to stop. The police unions must not be permitted to defeat the will of the people of New York — the very people that they are sworn to serve and protect.”

Police unions were vocal opponents of the repeal of 50-a and, by filing this case and seeking a preliminary injunction, they continue to prevent progress in the fight for police accountability and transparency. This recalcitrance is consistent with the unions’ longstanding opposition to other equity measures in New York City policing. As advocates for Black and Latinx communities, LDF, LCCRUL, LJP, and L4BL stand firm in opposition to the unions’ latest efforts to impede equity and accountability within the criminal justice system.

Read the filed amicus brief [here](#).

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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.*

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