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LDF Media
212-965-2200 / media@naacpldf.org

LDF Statement on the New York State Legislature’s Vote to Repeal 50-a

Today, Katurah Topps, Policy Counsel at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF), issued the following statement regarding the New York State Legislature’s vote to fully repeal Section 50-a of New York’s civil rights law, which allowed police departments across the state to conceal officer disciplinary and misconduct records from the public:

“We commend the New York State Legislature’s decision to repeal 50-a, which protected officers who engaged in misconduct from public exposure, further emboldening them to act with impunity, especially against Black communities and other communities of color. LDF, families of victims of police violence, and numerous advocates for police transparency and accountability fought to rescind this damaging law for many years — its passage today in the New York State Assembly and Senate is historic. We now look forward to Governor Andrew Cuomo signing the bill, as he previously stated he would.

“We are hopeful that today’s vote means that New York is serious about profoundly reforming police departments to eliminate pervasive racial discrimination and misconduct. The repeal of 50-a is a first step in addressing the myriad policing issues that plague our communities. Police departments in New York and around the country must undergo rigorous, comprehensive reforms and paradigm-shifting reconceptualizations to end racially discriminatory policing. Just as it acted to repeal 50-a, the state legislature, along with local elected officials, must continue to advance legislation and other reforms that establish a more just, equitable, and accountable public safety mechanism in New York.”

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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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