

Peace and good afternoon,

My name is Darian X and I am the Youth Organizer for Justice and Community Safety at MRNY. Today myself and many other community groups gather before the Senate to continue to call for a full repeal of Civil Rights Law 50-A. Young, Black, Latinx, Queer and Trans people in our communities regularly experience police violence and abuse, yet we lack the basic ability to identify officers who commit these egregious acts of harm. Police secrecy laws like 50-A make it nearly impossible for the families who have lost loved ones to the police and individuals who have been brutalized, sexually assaulted, and abused by law enforcement to hold police departments and officers accountable.

The need to act and fully repeal 50-A has never been more clear in the state of NY ! Eric Garner, 43 years old, lynched by the hands of NYPD officers and left to die on the sidewalk in Staten Island. However, in the wake of our communities mourning of Eric Garner, 50-a was used as an excuse not to disclose disciplinary records and information about substantiated CCRB complaints against Daniel Pantaleo, the NYPD officer who put Eric in a NYPD-banned chokehold, while multiple other officers tackled him and forced him to the ground. Many of the other officers who participated in killing him remain anonymous and shielded by CRL 50-A. Saheed Vassel, 34 Years old executed in front of his friends and community, his assailants also remain anonymous, yet present in our communities. How long will our policy makers continue to allow

members of our communities to be killed and their killers walk away with anonymity and impunity?

However, we have not always applied blue walls of silence to this kind of information. For 40 years, the NYPD used to publish outcomes of disciplinary proceedings including officer names, until they decided to reinterpret 50-a and claim that it lets them withhold even this basic summary information. So while the police unions may joust rhetoric suggesting that officers will be injured or harmed, we know that this is simply a gross act of political theatre and is in no way accurate. **CRL 50-A serves no function to protect an officer's safety or personal privacy.** However, it has served to permit police departments to withhold virtually any information related to outcomes of police department disciplinary trials, and even misconduct documents which have now been redacted to remove any identifying officer information.

Our communities have a right to know officers who abuse their powers and commit harm and violence to our friends and families ! It is time for the NY Senate to join our communities and commit to repealing one of the most secretive laws in the country when it comes to hiding police misconduct from public view by repealing 50-a in the 2020 session. As brother Desmond Tutu said " If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor." We ask you today to choose transparency, to choose accountability, to choose justice for our communities. Repeal 50-A ! Thank You.