

CRL-50a Hearing Testimony

October 17, 2019

Monifa Bandele

Senior Vice President, MomsRising

MomsRising is an organization of more than a million people who are working to achieve safe communities, health equity, and economic security for all moms, women, and families in every state in the country. MomsRising is working to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline, end mass incarceration, for paid family leave, earned sick days, affordable childcare, and for an end to the wage and hiring discrimination which penalizes so many mothers. MomsRising also advocates for better childhood nutrition, health care for all, toxic-free environments, breastfeeding rights so that all children can have a healthy start, and national and state budgets that reflects the contributions of women and moms.

In New York, our thousands of members are working to bring greater independent oversight, transparency, accountability, and justice for victims of police brutality and misconduct. Everyday, we are working on the ground towards a day where mothers no longer fear that our children could come to harm at the hands of those charged with protecting them.

MomsRising supports the repeal of NYS Civil Rights Law 50-a (CRL 50-a). Essentially, CRL 50-a (A.3333 sponsored by Assembly Member Daniel O'Donnell) constitutes for the public disclosure, upheld by the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL), of police records and/or documents. Access to these records and documents will be used to assess any NYPD police officer, in relations to police misconduct, in the same way that we use access to public disciplinary and misconduct records of doctors, lawyers, and other professions that provide services in our communities. The repeal of CRL 50-a is a step forward in disassembling the divide and increasing trust between police officers and the people in the neighborhoods that they are assigned to patrol.

In communities across NYC, women and men of color, trans, gender non-conforming, and non-binary civilians are specifically targeted, face humiliation and abuse during their interactions with the police everyday. Every year, some 1,000 people are shot and killed by police. Yet, in a

twelve-year period, 2005 to 2017, only 80 officers were arrested on murder or manslaughter charges for on-duty shootings, out of which only 35% were convicted. Additionally, studies show that Black Americans are more than twice as likely as their white counterparts to be killed by police. We've seen this narrative play out through the killings of Eric Garner, Sean Bell, James Powell, Ramarley Graham, Kimani Gray, Nicholas Heyward Jr., Mohammed Bah, Amadou Diallo, Shantelle Davis, Saheed Vassell, and the teeming number of innocent black people who were killed at the hands of the NYPD, the very systems that are supposed to protect all of us.

Repealing CRL 50-a is a step forward to guarantee that mothers like, Gwen Carr, mother of Eric Garner, Valerie Bell, mother of Sean Bell, Carol Gray, mother of Kimani Gray, families and loved ones can properly seek the justice that they deserve and, to dismantle a policy that was put in place to protect officers from public accountability and legitimate penalization for unlawful, harmful, and often deadly actions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Monifa Bandele". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Monifa Bandele
Vice President, Healthy Kids Campaign
Chief Partnership and Diversity Officer
MomsRising.org