



Testimony for the New York City Council Public Safety Committee In Support of the Right to Know Act (Intros 182A & 541) | June 29, 2015

Submitted by: Dwane Porter, VOCAL-NY.

Hello, my name is Dwane Porter, and I am a member of VOCAL-NY. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today and support the Right to Know Act (Intros 182A and 541).

I came to discuss a personal encounter with the police. After I was apprehended by the NYPD, in handcuffs and complying with the arrest— I was a victim of police brutality. I was already handcuffed, but the cops became even more aggressive and used pepper spray on me while I was pinned to the ground. This was all because I was exercising my freedom of speech. I have the right to remain silent, but I also have a right to exercise my rights.

I was sentenced to 3 days of community service and a fine for my offense and was never able to report the abuse I experienced to anyone. I did not have the officer's information and there was no one who would willingly provide me this information. The police brutally attacked me and at a minimum I have a right to know who those officers were.

Many police officers in New York City bring their biases and their personal anguish to the streets and abuse their authority— I want these officers to be identified and properly dealt with. The Right to Know Act will ensure that police officers properly identify themselves so when we are abused we have the opportunity to hold them accountable. Whether I am maced while in handcuffs or if I am being used as a test dummy for illegal stops and searches – I have the right to know who these officers are and the right to know I don't have to consent to an illegal search.

We are living a police state where we are punished for exercising our rights and often the situation gets worse when authority recognizes that we are educated and we do know our rights. My mind is strong— there are a lot of young men and women who cannot control their emotions at my age and I often get frustrated too, but when our voices are not heard, the energy that builds up can be dangerous.

Passing the Right to Know Act is a step towards real public safety.