June 1, 2020

Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Legislative Office Building
188 State Street
Room 907
Albany, NY 12247

Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie
Legislative Office Building
188 State Street
Room 932
Albany, NY 12248

Dear Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins and Speaker Heastie:

The following 85 organizations signed onto this letter urging you to reconvene the legislature, and pass Senator Bailey & Assemblyman O'Donnell's bill (S3695-Bailey/A2513-O'Donnell) to fully repeal 50-a. We urge you to stand firmly in opposition to any attempts to water-down or offer partial measures that will continue to provide special rights for police officers and allow departments to shield abusive officers and brutality from public view.

We write to you at an unprecedented time. As you know, against the backdrop of a pandemic disproportionately killing and economically devastating Black, Latinx and other communities of color, our communities are also facing escalating police violence in different parts of the state. This weekend, we witnessed and some of us (including members of your respective conferences) were subjected to police violence while gathering to mourn and protest the police killings of George Floyd, Tony McDade, Breonna Taylor and other Black people across the country.

The blatant police violence experienced by New Yorkers is unacceptable. The continued police secrecy in New York enables that police violence and allows abusive officers to continue to act with impunity. We should be able to look up the misconduct and disciplinary records of every officer who mass-pepper sprayed, assaulted, blatantly covered their badge numbers and engaged in other abuse of authority and violence against New Yorkers. Instead, we are left in the dark and abusive police officers are given special rights and shielded because of 50-a.

The time to pass a full repeal of 50-a is now. We cannot afford to entertain proposals to amend 50a that will give a false sense of progress while loopholes continue to entrench police secrecy. New York is ranked among the worst states in the nation with respect to police transparency. New Yorkers have taken to the streets - risking their health during a pandemic - to express to their leaders in government that we can wait no longer for police accountability. Anything short of full repeal of 50-a is simply not what we need in this moment.
We urge you to immediately pass S3695-Bailey/A2513-O'Donnell to fully repeal 50-a, without amendments or modifications.

Thank you.

Sincerely

Communities United for Police Reform (CPR)

1199 SEIU-UHWE
32BJ SEIU
Arab American Association of New York
Bronx Defenders
Brooklyn Defender Services
Brooklyn NAACP
The Bronx Freedom Fund
The Brotherhood/Sister Sol
Center for Anti-Violence Education
Center for Popular Democracy
Center for Community Alternatives, Inc.
Center for Constitutional Rights
Children’s Defense Fund
Citizen Action of New York
Citizen’s Committee for Children
CLEAR Project
Common Cause/NY
Common Justice
Community Service Society of New York
Community Voices Heard
Congregation Beth Elohim Dismantling Racism Team
Court Appointed Special Advocates of NYC
Crime Victims Treatment Center
Day One
Drug Policy Alliance
DRUM- Desis Rising Up & Moving
Faith in New York
Families Together in NYS
The Gathering for Justice/ Justice League NYC
Girls for Gender Equity
Harm Reduction Coalition
Immigrant Defense Project
Innocence Project
Interfaith Assembly on Homelessness
Interfaith Center of New York
JCCA
The Jewish Vote
Jewish Voice for Peace - New York City
Jews for Racial & Economic Justice
Jim Owles Liberal Democratic Club
Justice Committee
JustLeadershipUSA
Kairos Center for Religions, Rights, and Social Justice at Union Theological Seminary
Katal Center for Health, Equity, and Justice
LatinoJustice PRLDEF
Law Enforcement Action Partnership
Legal Action Center
The Legal Aid Society
Manhattan Young Democrats
Make the Road New York
Malcolm X Grassroots Movement
MomsRising
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.
National Domestic Workers Alliance | La Alianza Nacional de Trabajadoras del Hogar
National Panhellenic Council of Greater New York
New Hour for Women and Children – LI
New Kings Democrats
New York Civil Liberties Union
New York County Defender Services
New York State Nurses Association
The New York Immigration Coalition
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest
New York State Defenders Association
Nodutdol for Korean Community Development
North Star Fund
Public Science Project
Raise the Age New Campaign
Rise Up Kingston
Rockaway Youth Task Force
Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights
Safe Horizon
Sanctuary for Families
Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ)-NYC
T’ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights
Take Root Justice
Transgender Law Center
WITNESS
Women & Justice Project
The Woodhull Freedom Foundation
Violence Intervention Program
VOCAL- NY
Wingspan Psychiatric, LLC
Youth Represent
YWCA of Brooklyn

cc: Assemblywoman Wright, Chair, Black Puerto Rican Hispanic Asian (BPHA) Caucus
Assemblyman Zebrowski, Chair, Assembly Governmental Operations Committee
Senator Bailey
Assemblyman O’Donnell
Senator Hoylman
Assemblyman Lentol