

August 26, 2020

Mayor Bill de Blasio  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

**Re: Publication of DOC Corrections Officer Misconduct Records  
Following Section 50-a Repeal**

Dear Mayor de Blasio,

As civil and human rights organizations, community-based groups, public defenders and others across the state, we celebrated the repeal of New York Civil Rights Law Section 50-a. This repeal was a critical step in lifting the veil of secrecy surrounding the institutionalized violence against Black, brown, and other marginalized people by the criminal legal system. It brings New York in line with the [48 other states](#) that do not keep such records secret. It will also provide incarcerated people and their advocates and allies basic access to a fundamental tool to seek redress for injustices perpetrated against them and provide the community with a tool for change. This is why we welcomed the recent [announcement](#) that your administration would make disciplinary records and allegations of misconduct for corrections officers employed by New York City's Department of Correction ("DOC") publicly available online.

**We urge you to make good on this commitment to transparency by immediately directing DOC to create and maintain a database of correctional officer misconduct and disciplinary records online, freely available to the public, by September 15, 2020.** This database must include all "law enforcement disciplinary records" as defined by the [amended](#) Public Officer's Law as well as information about lawsuits relating to DOC staff misconduct within city jails and must be updated every month with all qualifying documents.

The overwhelming vote to repeal 50-a, which occurred in the wake of the protests of George Floyd's murder, is a public mandate to bring to light not only the misconduct and disciplinary histories of the police, but also of DOC officers who carry out similar patterns of institutionalized violence. The impunity for this culture of unjust violence in New York City jails rests on secrecy. Accountability starts with public access to the information about the injustices perpetrated in DOC facilities.

Brutality against incarcerated people at the hands of DOC officers has been rampant for many years. As you are aware, DOC is subject to a consent judgment in the case *Nunez v. City of New York*, requiring DOC to overhaul its practices in order to reduce the unconstitutional levels of violence in city jails. The Ninth Report of the Independent Monitor in that case found that, as of

May 2020, DOC has continuously failed to comply with core requirements of the Consent Judgment. After five years, DOC has still not implemented effective systems for investigating violent misconduct by staff, supervising staff to prevent such misconduct, or imposing appropriate discipline.

These failures noted by the report mean that DOC is plagued by an “entrench[ed]” culture of “hyper-confrontational” and “aggressive” conduct, in which “multiple levels of uniform leadership” allow violent misconduct to “flourish, unchecked.” In spite of the judgment, the “frequency of unnecessary and excessive force has not shown a marked decrease” in half a decade. Simply put, DOC has failed to hold itself accountable. Change at DOC requires public scrutiny.

The repeal of 50-a was necessary but not sufficient to hold law enforcement accountable. To ensure misconduct records do not continue to be shielded by the denials and delays that plague Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) requests, it is critical that you affirmatively publish disciplinary records and allegations of misconduct of DOC officers.

Signed,

1. Amnesty International USA
2. Anti Torture Initiative Project
3. Appellate Advocates
4. Asociación de Mujeres Progresistas Inc.
5. Black and Pink NYC
6. Black Lives Matter (BLM) Hudson Valley
7. Bronx Climate Justice North
8. The Bronx Defenders
9. Brooklyn Defender Services
10. Buffalo Mutual Aid Network
11. Call BlackLine
12. Center for Community Alternatives
13. Center for Law and Justice
14. Center on Race, Inequality, and the Law at New York University School of Law
15. Citizen Action of New York
16. Citizen Action WNY
17. Close Rosie's
18. Color Of Change
19. Congregation Beit Simchat Torah
20. Congregation Beth Elohim Dismantling Racism Team
21. Correctional Association
22. Emergency Release Fund

23. Erie County Restorative Justice Coalition, Inc.
24. Exodus Transitional Community
25. Housing Works
26. Human Rights Watch
27. Humanists of Long Island
28. The Gathering for Justice
29. Immigrant Defense Project
30. Incarcerated Nation Network,inc
31. Jim Owles Liberal Democratic Club
32. John Brown Lives!
33. John Jay College Institute for Justice and Opportunity
34. Judson Memorial Church
35. Justice for Families
36. Justice League NYC
37. LatinoJustice PRLDEF
38. The Legal Aid Society
39. The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center
40. #LetMyPeopleGoNow! Campaign
41. LIFE Progressive Services Group Inc
42. Long Island Council of Churches, Public Issues Committee
43. Long Island Progressive Coalition
44. Make the Road NY
45. Manhasset Quaker Monthly Meeting
46. The MAN Program
47. Monroe County Public Defender's Office
48. Muslim Peace Fellowship
49. National Action Network - Nassau County Chapter
50. National Action Network - NYC Chapter Second Chance Committee
51. National Association for Mental Illness (NAMI) - Huntington
52. National Association for Mental Illness (NAMI) - NYS Criminal Justice
53. Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem
54. New Hour for Women and Children - LI
55. New York City Jericho Movement
56. New York Civil Liberties Union
57. New York Immigration Coalition
58. New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault
59. North Bronx Racial Justice
60. NYCAIC #HALTsolitary Campaign
61. Parole Preparation Project
62. Partnership for the Public Good

63. Presbytery of New York City
64. Prison Action Network
65. Prison Families Anonymous
66. Prison Writes
67. Public Interest Resource Center, Fordham Law School
68. Release Aging People in Prison (RAPP) Campaign
69. The Riverside Church
70. Riverside Edgecombe Neighborhood Association (RENA)
71. ROC/ACTS
72. Rockland Prison Justice Project
73. Rural and Migrant Ministry
74. Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ NYC)
75. Sisters of St. Joseph, Brentwood Office of Peace and Justice
76. Solitary Watch
77. Students for a Sensible Drug Policy - Buffalo
78. Transforming Lives
79. Turning Points Resource Center
80. United Voices of Cortland
81. Uptown Progressive Action
82. Urban Justice Center
83. Vera House, Inc.
84. VOCAL-NY
85. Wayne Action for Racial Equality
86. WESPAC Foundation
87. Westchester for Change
88. Western New York Campaign Against Isolated Confinement
89. Western New York Law Center
90. Women & Justice Project
91. Worth Rises
92. Youth Represent