

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

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