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FREDERICK DAVIE  
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**Testimony of Rev. Frederick Davie, Chair of the Civilian Complaint Review Board  
before the State Senate Committee on Codes  
October 24, 2019**

Chair Bailey and members of the State Senate’s Committee on Codes, thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important issue. I am Rev. Frederick Davie, Chair of the Civilian Complaint Review Board (“CCRB”).

The CCRB is the largest civilian police oversight agency in the nation. The City Charter empowers our Agency to receive, investigate, prosecute, mediate, hear, make findings, and recommend action in civilian complaints against uniformed members of the New York City Police Department (“NYPD”). Our jurisdiction includes allegations of excessive force, abuse of authority, discourtesy, and offensive language, often referred to as “FADO.”

The Agency’s staff is comprised entirely of members of the public—civilians, rather than law enforcement. The CCRB’s independence from the NYPD is a key component in bolstering the public’s confidence. It reinforces that when a complaint is filed with our Agency it will be thoroughly and impartially investigated and that officers will be held accountable for misconduct. That confidence is undermined when information about the disciplinary process is shrouded in secrecy.

At our monthly board meetings and numerous community outreach events, we often hear from members of the public that they believe that filing a complaint with the CCRB is not worthwhile. They fear that nothing will happen to officers against whom allegations of misconduct have been substantiated. Another common concern is that City residents are unaware when an officer who has multiple disciplinary infractions is deployed in their community. Because of the constraints of Civil Rights Law § 50-a, the CCRB is not permitted to inform the public of the outcome of its investigations or about an officer’s CCRB history. The Agency is even limited in the information that it can provide to civilians about the complaints they have filed with the CCRB.

CCRB has made great progress in increasing the public trust in the agency. Where we are limited in feeling public confidence is our inability to share important information about our investigations because of 50-a. We are thwarted in our efforts to provide increased transparency in the disciplinary process. Let’s be clear: that transparency does not have to come at the expense

of privacy, safety, or other public interests. While I personally support a full repeal of Civil Rights Law § 50-a, I cannot speak on behalf of the CCRB's Board as we have not yet had public discussion on that topic. At our next Board meeting, we hope to hear from advocates and other stakeholders. My quarterly meeting with the Police Commissioner is scheduled just prior to the next Board Meeting, and I am certain that this will be one of the topics we will discuss. In having these discussions over the next month, I look forward to hearing different views and am open to understanding other perspectives on issues of security and privacy related to the repeal of 50-a.

Thank you again for giving me the opportunity to weigh in on this important issue.