



Public Officers Law Amended to Create Employee Notification to FOIL Requests

Governor Signs Bill Effective Immediately

For Immediate Release

September 5, 2024

Albany, NY – A bill sponsored by Senator James Skoufis and Assemblywoman Marianne Buttenschon and fully supported by the members of NYSCOPBA to amend the Public Officers Law, was signed into law by Governor Hochul yesterday that directs state agencies, including DOCCS, to develop a policy to notify public employees in the event that their disciplinary records were requested as a result of a FOIL request.

The legislation was specifically drafted and introduced on behalf of the members of NYSCOPBA in direct response to the repeal of the provision of subsection 50-a of the Civil Rights Law in 2020.

The new law now requires agencies to develop policies for providing notification to public employees whose disciplinary records have been sought through a FOIL request under New York State law. When 50-A was repealed, long-standing privacy protections were eliminated making the personnel records of law enforcement officers in New York accessible to the public through a simple FOIL request. NYSCOPBA has maintained the position that if the public is entitled to access certain records of public employees, then those public employees should be similarly entitled to notification when their records have been accessed.

“This legislation very simply provides notice to our corrections officers and other public servants when their disciplinary records have been requested under the freedom of information law. I thank NYSCOPBA for being an important partner on this effort that adds new, fair standards to the process.” – stated Senator Skoufis.

“I’m very proud of the work that the members of NYSCOPBA and law enforcement do for our communities. This piece of legislation is to assist them and provide the necessary support they deserve while they are working to keep all of us safe. I want to thank them for all they do. Passing and the governor signing this legislation is one step closer to making sure they are protected.” - said Assemblywoman Buttenschon.

“I would like to thank Senator Skoufis and Assemblywoman Buttenschon for sponsoring and championing this important legislation. Our members and other law enforcement throughout this State perform one of the most important roles in safeguarding our communities and they deserve the protection from unnecessary and unwarranted invasions of their privacy. This legislation is a step in the right direction to safeguard their ability to perform their duties efficiently.” – stated Chris Summers, NYSCOPBA President.