

Federal court rules police discipline records can be made public in New York

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In a massive defeat for police unions, many police discipline records across New York state can be made public.

This ruling was made by a judge in the Second U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. It rejected a claim from New York City's police union that the state's new transparency law would negatively impact the reputations of police officers, endanger them and affect any future jobs.

Attorney Fred Brewington, one of the founders of Long Islanders for Police Accountability, says the ruling means the public will have transparency and accountability when it comes to officers' conduct.

"In this situation, transparency leads to a level of accountability," he told News 12. "...Now we have the ability for there to be appropriate public inspection of those records, for the purposes of not dealing with causing harm, but making sure there's clear information about situations that won't lead to a George Floyd. We found that that officer had multiple civilian complaints, nothing had been done about them."

Lou Civello, the second vice president of the Suffolk Police Benevolent Association, says the ruling was made over the almost universal objection of law enforcement.

"There is tremendous harm, not only to the officers, but really to society as a whole by this ill-conceived law," he says.

He added that making information more accessible puts officers and their families in danger.

The next step for this decision would be an appeal to the Supreme Court of the United States.

A spokesperson for the New York Law Enforcement Labor Coalition said the unions who sued will be reviewing all options.