

CJ Griffin Featured in Politico New Jersey Playbook on Two Recent NJ Supreme Court Rulings That Deliver for Transparency

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CJ Griffin, Director of the Justice Gary S. Stein Public Interest Center at Pashman Stein Walder Hayden, was featured in Politico's "New Jersey Playbook" regarding two significant New Jersey Supreme Court rulings in which CJ was the lead attorney. The newsletter discusses how the New Jersey Supreme Court recently issued two decisions that deliver on transparency. In the first ruling issued last week, Cumberland County was required to publicly release a settlement agreement with a corrections officer who had been accused of misconduct. In the second ruling issued this week, the NJ Supreme Court ordered a police internal affairs report released under the common law right of access.

Griffin also was quoted in the *Politico* article, "State Supreme Court rules in favor of releasing of police disciplinary records." In the case decided this week, Griffin represented the plaintiff seeking the internal affairs records of the director of the Elizabeth Police Department who had been found to violate Elizabeth's anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies. While acknowledging that police internal affairs reports are not subject to the Open Public Records Act, the NJ Supreme Court held that such reports should be released under the common law right of access. The Court also set forth factors that public agencies and trial courts should consider when deciding whether to release internal affairs reports. The Court reversed the Appellate Court decision and ordered the trial court to release the records, with appropriate redactions.

Attorney CJ Griffin argued the case on behalf of plaintiff Richard Rivera, who filed the public records request. Rivera, an advocate for police reform, sued the Union County Prosecutor's Office and its public records custodian.

What they are saying: Griffin said in a statement that the decision by the state's highest court is a "landmark police transparency ruling."

"Going forward, we can expect broader access to internal affairs reports that relate misconduct that involves the use of excessive or deadly force, discrimination or bias, domestic or sexual violence, concealment or fabrication of evidence or reports, criminal behavior, or abuse of the public trust," Griffin said in the statement to POLITICO. "In the past, we couldn't get anything."

To view the full article, [click here](#).