

CJ Griffin Quoted in Article Regarding Lawsuit Filed on Behalf of The Trentonian, Alleging the City of Trenton Violated the State's Sunshine Law and Open Public Records Act

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CJ Griffin, Director of the Justice Gary S. Stein Public Interest Center at Pashman Stein Walder Hayden, filed a lawsuit on behalf of *The Trentonian* newspaper on May 11, 2020. The lawsuit alleges that the City of Trenton has violated the Open Public Meetings Act by conducting daily telephone meetings that include the Mayor and a quorum of the City Council and where public business is discussed, including discussions regarding City's response to the COVID-19 health and economic crisis. The meetings came to light earlier this month when audio of a May 2, 2020 call was leaked and published by *The Trentonian*. The audio drew widespread attention because it confirmed that multiple members of the City Council lodged homophobic and misogynistic insults against each other. *The Trentonian's* lawsuit also alleges violations of the Open Public Records Act because the City refuses to produce any other audio recordings from the meetings.

Griffin was quoted in The Trentonian's article about the suit, "The Trentonian Sues Capital City for Holding Infamous COVID-19 Briefings Without Notice." Griffin discusses filing the complaint on behalf of The Trentonian.

"What we heard on that May 2nd call was an absolute failure of government officials to put aside their petty differences and rise to the occasion to guide the City of Trenton through this very serious public health and economic crisis," Griffin said Tuesday via email. "The residents of Trenton deserve a functioning government and not the misogynistic and homophobic insults that these public officials were lodging at each other during a secret meeting that violated the Open Public Meetings Act."

“There is no exception that says that our transparency laws do not apply when there is a public health crisis,” Griffin said, “yet Trenton is flagrantly violating both the Open Public Meetings Act and the Open Public Records Act. During a crisis, the public needs more transparency, not less.”

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