

CJ Griffin Quoted in Article On The Bergen Record's Year Of No Records

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Attorney CJ Griffin quoted in Columbia Journalism Review article, “The Bergen Record’s year of no records.” The article explains that a year after one of New Jersey’s deadliest viral outbreaks claimed the lives of 11 medically fragile children at a Wanaque long-term care facility, the public is about three months away from knowing how health officials responded to the 76-day crisis.

“I think that they just kept hoping that we wouldn’t push for more,” CJ Griffin, the Record’s lawyer, said. She negotiated—“you never want to look like you’re not being cooperative,” she explained—hoping that the department might eventually send documents with fewer redactions. But in its correspondence, the state consistently argued that many of the requested records were exempt from OPRA because they were “deliberative,” meaning that they showed government employees discussing policy proposals or otherwise trying to reach a decision. (A law bars the release of material revealing how officials make policy.) Griffin, however, believes that these records involved policy-implementing—not policymaking—and that journalists should be entitled to them.

Recently, almost a year after the suit was filed, Griffin lost patience. She has handled a lot of freedom-of-information cases, and said, “I don’t know that I’ve had many where it’s been a year, basically, between the time we filed the case and the time the hearing is.” A hearing is now set for late December, when the judge will consider making any records public. Griffin predicts a decision won’t come until January or February.

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