

CJ Griffin Quoted in Associated Press on NJ Supreme Court Landmark Ruling Setting Framework for Public Access to Police Internal Affairs Reports

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CJ Griffin, Director of the Justice Gary S. Stein Public Interest Center at Pashman Stein Walder Hayden, was quoted in the *AP* article, “Court: Report on top cop’s racist comments must be released.” The article discusses the recent New Jersey Supreme Court victory in which 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.

C.J. Griffin, an attorney who argued on behalf of plaintiff Richard Rivera, noted the ruling came a week after the same court ruled in favor of a group that sought access to a settlement agreement involving a county corrections officer who resigned in the wake of sexual misconduct allegations.

“This is a landmark ruling that recognizes the importance of transparency in police misconduct investigations,” Griffin wrote in an email. “The court not only ordered these records to be released, but also set a framework for public access to other internal affairs reports relating to serious misconduct. This is a sea change, especially when paired with last week’s decision that granted access to separation agreements that resolve discipline.”

To view the full article, click here.

<https://apnews.com/article/business-new-jersey-police-gurbir-grewal-race-and-ethnicity-b1127c7c8ecef722245e33255c823fc1>

