

CJ Griffin Quoted in RLS Media Regarding N.J. Attorney General's Disclosure Policy Undermining Recent NJ Supreme Court Decision

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11.30.22

CJ Griffin, Director of the Justice Gary S. Stein Public Interest Center at Pashman Stein Walder Hayden, was quoted in RLS Media article, "Leading NJ Public Information Attorney Blasts NJ AG's Disclosure of Law Enforcement Disciplinary Records Expansion." The article discusses the recent directive issued by the New Jersey Attorney General requiring police departments to create a summary report for public release upon request, which report details certain police misconduct. The article also discusses the landmark case litigated by Griffin, *Richard Rivera v. the Union County Prosecutor's Office*, in which the New Jersey Supreme Court held in March that internal affairs reports may be released pursuant to the common law right of access.

Attorney CJ Griffin applauded the landmark N.J. Supreme Court decision as a step in the right direction. Still, [Griffin] went on to say N. J. Attorney General's 2022-14 directive undermines the progress Pashman Stein Walder Hayden law firm fought years to obtain.

"This directive is a real disappointment"; Attorney CJ Griffin expressed in a statement.

*Earlier this year, we obtained a landmark ruling from the New Jersey Supreme Court in *Rivera v. Union County Prosecutor's Office*. That decision provided a path to access internal affairs for the first time ever, and as a result of that decision, we've been gaining access to them.*

*Instead of getting the full internal affairs report like we got in *Rivera*, the A.G. now orders agencies to make two "separate and distinct reports." The first report will have all the meats and potatoes of what*

we would get under the Rivera decision—the interview summaries, a recounting of the evidence, etc.

They want to keep that one a secret.

The second report will be a "summary and conclusions report," designed to be given to the public in response to a records request. It won't contain all the investigation evidence—it's going to be a sanitized summary of the internal affairs matter drafted by the I.A. unit, knowing it's what they have to send out to the public.

That's not real transparency, and we have too many examples of the police telling the public one thing, only to learn later that it was not full, fair, accurate, or sometimes downright false. Real transparency is giving us the actual internal affairs investigation report, which we won access to in the Rivera decision.

Under no other circumstances would we accept that the government can create two versions of a document, keep one for itself, and give the other to the public. The reason we have public records laws is so that we can gain access to original documents, not summaries of documents".

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