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Memorandum of Support for Passage of the Safer NY Act June 8, 2020

Center for Family Representation (“CFR”) submits this memorandum in support of passage of bills in the Safer NY Act, a package of critical police transparency and accountability legislation. Three of the Safer NY Act bills are currently under consideration for passage by the legislature including the bill to repeal 50-a (**A10611/S8496**), the Police STAT Act (**A10609/S1830C**), and legislation to strengthen and codify the office of the Special Prosecutor (**A1601C/S2574C**).

These bills, if passed and signed into law, would represent significant forward progress for New York State in regards to meaningful police reform. Here’s how:

- The repeal of 50-a (**A10611/S8496**) would strike arguably the most regressive police secrecy law in the country from the books. A full repeal of 50-a would provide the public much needed transparency on police misconduct and discipline.
- The Police STAT Act (**A10609 /S1830C**) would require police departments throughout the state to record & report on low-level enforcement (violations & misdemeanors) and would require comprehensive reporting on the total number of people who die during an interaction with law enforcement.
- The Special Prosecutor bill (**A1601C /S2574C**) would strengthen and codify Executive Order 147 – ensuring that the Attorney General’s office is able to investigate and, if warranted, prosecute all cases where a person dies during an encounter with police.

CFR is the county-wide assigned public defense provider for parents who are respondents in Family Court Act (FCA) Article 10 proceedings in Queens and New York counties, representing 1,300 new clients each year; one third of our clients also face a prosecution in criminal court for the same incidents that lead to the family court filing. CFR has served over 10,000 families since our founding in 2002. CFR employs an interdisciplinary model of representation, marrying in court litigation to out of court advocacy: every parent is assigned an attorney and a social work staff member beginning at intake, which is generally the first day a parent is summoned to court, and these teams are supported by parent advocates, who have had personal experience losing their children to foster care and then safely reunifying their families. With generous support from the Senate and Assembly, our Home for Good initiative permits us to provide many of our clients with criminal defense representation, as well as representation in housing, public benefits and immigration matters and we also represent young people charged with crimes who are prosecuted in the criminal Youth parts as well as in delinquency matters in family court.

CFR supports the swift passage of the full **Safer NY Act** because we have seen the danger of unchecked police action and the detrimental impact that police intimidation and violence have on communities of color in New York. It is time for the New York legislature to hold the police accountable and pass this important package of legislation, which will increase transparency and ensure greater justice for all New Yorkers.

If you have any further questions, please contact Jennifer Feinberg at jfeinberg@cfnry.org.