



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pete Harckham

## Harckham: Law Enforcement Transparency and Accountability Legislation “Makes Our Communities Safer for All of Us”

PETE HARCKHAM June 9, 2020

| ISSUE: **CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORMS, POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY, RACIAL JUSTICE**



*Albany, NY* – New York State Senator Pete Harckham joined his Senate colleagues today in voting for the “Law Enforcement Transparency and Accountability” package of legislation, which includes ten different police reform bills that were introduced in the wake of recent and widespread demonstrations focused on police brutality against black Americans.

Included in the package of legislation are laws, a number of which were passed with broad bipartisan support, that ban chokeholds, make it a crime to place false 911 calls based on race and give the state attorney general the role of special prosecutor in police brutality and racial violence cases. Also, a bill was passed to repeal Section 50-a of the state's Civil Rights Law, which will now allow the disciplinary records of law enforcement officers to be subject to FOIL requests similar to those made to other public agencies.

"This is truly a historical moment, and, wisely, we are taking the opportunity to strengthen the relationships our law enforcement professionals have with the communities they protect and serve by enacting these reform bills," said Harckham. "This legislation will increase the public trust amongst community members, police officers included, and help ensure overall public safety. Indeed, today's vote will make our communities safer for all of us.

"By providing necessary accountability and transparency," Harckham continued, "we are allowing sunlight to shine where shadows have prevailed for too long a time. And for those suggesting that these reforms actually disparage law enforcement or make things less safe for them, I disagree. What has made things less safe for police officers is the violence and terror caused by those individuals who have disparaged their badge with their unlawful behavior.

"Our shared humanity triumphs today—and every day—when we reinforce the democratic values that make our country great. The promises we have made to treat all as equals, to stand for liberty, to grant justice for all—that's what we are advancing with these reforms, which offer full and lawful protections for our friends and neighbors."