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PETITION TO MAKE VIDEOTAPED INTERROGATIONS STATE LAW

Dear Honorable Governor Andrew Cuomo:

As a voter and a constituent, I wanted to express how urgently we need to codify a uniform statewide law mandating all custodial interrogations in relation to felony cases be videotaped. As a longstanding advocate for the Central Park Five I will continue to cite this egregious case with respect to this matter, because of the catastrophic system failure that led to their wrongful imprisonment. The Central Park Five—Antron McCray, Kevin Richardson, Yusef Salaam, Raymond Santana and Korey Wise, were victims of a pervasive and cynical form of police brutality and injustice which subsequently led to their false confessions and unjust conviction. Their confessions were taped but the violative and unethical interrogations were performed in the dark.

I fully support legislation carried by Senator Bill Perkins, in the form of Senate Bill 2419—which will make videotaped interrogations the official law of the land in New York State, by requiring the creation of an electronic record of an entire custodial interrogation in felony cases. Electronic records will eliminate disputes in court as to what actually occurred during the interrogation, thereby improving effective prosecution of the guilty while affording essential protection to the innocent. **Videotaped interrogations are positive for our entire criminal justice system—they protect and provide essential safeguards for everyone involved, including law enforcement, prosecutors, victims and the accused.**

You have wisely implemented the Commission on Youth, Public Safety, and Justice to investigate the age of criminal responsibility and its detrimental effects. Furthermore, the Commission has suggested—and you have affirmatively agreed to implement a policy that would expand the use of videotaping custodial interrogations to 16- and 17-year olds in custody for felony offenses. However, the Commission's suggestion needs to be pushed one logical and responsible step further—to include all individuals. **The right to have an interrogation videotaped needs to be a universal right afforded to everyone regardless of age or what jurisdiction conducts an investigation.**

Can we as a society continue to confidently bellow the phrase, “liberty and justice for all,” if the entire state is not equipped with the necessary technology to conduct videotaped interrogations? Governor—as you craft 21 and 30 day amendments to the FY 2015-2016 Budget—I respectfully request that you include precise language, modeled after Senate Bill 2419 and accompanying funding in your Article VII

ELFA bill to finally enact into state law, the policy of videotaped interrogations for all felony investigations. I am entirely confident we can move forward in the name of the Central Park Five and others like them , to ensure that no one ever suffers a multitude of massive injustices—in the form of illegal and unethical system failures that give rise to false coerced confessions—ever again.

Respectfully Submitted:

Name	
Address	
Phone Number/E-mail	