



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John E. Brooks

Why I Am Voting To Repeal 50-A:

JOHN E. BROOKS June 8, 2020

| ISSUE: **50-A, PEACEFUL PROTEST, GEORGE FLOYD, POLICE**



State Senator John Brooks on the Repeal of 50-A

Today, I am announcing that I will join with other members of the New York State Senate to vote for the repeal of the civil rights law 50-A. This decision was not an easy one to come by but I believe in my heart it is the right one to make.

I have the greatest respect for the men and women who serve in law enforcement and I have always provided support for them in all that they do. However, the action of those officers in Minneapolis was so egregious, the world community is now crying out for change. I

believe it is only a small minority of officers who engage in this kind of wrongful behavior, but it is this minority that has betrayed police all over the world and who are responsible for the changes that must be made.

This vote is the result of a betrayal of the oath taken by all police officers to protect and serve. This betrayal is not from the members of the New York State Legislature, nor is it from the tens-of-thousands of protesters marching all over this great nation in protest. It was in fact, a betrayal by four members of the Minneapolis Police Department.

Conversations I have had with members of law enforcement, community leaders, religious leaders, various civic organizations, and the volume of calls and emails I have received in my office have, in the end, lead to my inability to understand how this tragic death, as well as so many others, can happen. I no longer believe the solution is to merely take corrective actions. For days, I and others worked on possible reforms to the current law to ensure this could never happen again. We tried to engage many groups and individuals to find a workable solution but in the end such a solution could not be reached.

In the time I have served in the state senate I have always tried to do what I believe to be right. I have voted independently when I felt it necessary. I have voted with the majority on issues and sometimes I have voted with the minority on issues. In the end it was the betrayal by these four members of the police service, and how they conducted themselves in this tragic incident that has made it clear that there is no suitable compromise in this and the time for complete change is long overdue.

As a nation trying to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and the tremendous losses it has wrought, we must now deal with the tragic events in Minneapolis as well. As one of the residents of my district said to me last night, "Things must change," and they do. I will support the repeal of 50-A not because most police officers are bad but because most police officers are good. Because most police officers have good records, because most police

departments take action to remove those bad cops long before something like Minneapolis takes place, and perhaps most importantly, because we need more transparency in every level of government. I will vote to repeal 50-A because it is the right thing to do.