

# Keeping Them Honest:

## Using the Power of OPRA to Hold Public Officials Accountable

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Progressive Democrats of New Jersey State Convention

11/14/2020

AN AGE-OLD QUESTION:

What did they know?  
And **when** did they know it?

**OPRA** can help us find out!

# What is OPRA?

Originally signed into law in 2002

Gives citizens the **right** to request **public records**

**Does NOT** apply to legislature and judiciary!

# What is OPRA?

"OPRA's clear purpose . . . is 'to maximize public knowledge about public affairs in order to ensure an informed citizenry and to minimize the evils inherent in a secluded process.'"

*Educ. Law Ctr. v. N.J. Dep't of Educ.*, 198 N.J. 274, 284 (2009) (quoting *Mason v. City of Hoboken*, 196 N.J. 51, 64 (2008)).

# How to make a request

Must specifically identify requested records

Word requests as precisely as possible

Requests can be submitted in-person or electronically via  
[OPRAmachine.com](http://OPRAmachine.com) or email

# Examples of OPRA as an accountability tool

# The cost of MAGA rallies

OPRA request:

[https://opramachine.com/request/trump\\_visit\\_total](https://opramachine.com/request/trump_visit_total)

Police overtime / compensation records can be used to show the cost to NJ residents for political appearances. One requester got the bills for Trump's South Jersey Rally in January.

CITY OF WILDWOOD						
PERSONNEL COST						
POLICE DEPARTMENT						
JANUARY 28, 2020 TRUMP RALLY						
	Date	Hours	Compensatory Hours Earned	TOTAL Compensatory Hours Earned	Straight Time Paid	Overtime Paid
REGULAR OFFICERS						
Allen, Clarence	28-Jan	11.0				311.52
						311.52
Boice, Donald	25-Jan	3.0				240.56
	28-Jan	16.0				1,282.99
					-	1,523.55
						1,523.55
Bottoms, Lucas	27-Jan	3.0	4.5			
	28-Jan	3.0	4.5	9.0		-
Carter, Jason	27-Jan	3.0				207.36
	28-Jan	11.0				760.33
					-	967.69
						967.69
Chobert, Christopher	27-Jan	3.0				210.45
	28-Jan	2.5				175.38
					-	385.83
						385.83
Cormican, Conor	27-Jan	3.0	4.5	4.5		-



COUNTY OF OCEAN  
VENDOR HISTORY REPORT  
Fiscal Year 2016

Acct No	Trans ID	Check Date	Check #	P O #	Payment Voucher	Amount
VC0000006183 - HOLMAN FRENIA ALLISON, P.C.						
308-155-2202-6600	AD-111-20160001099	02/03/2016	000000000512418	PRC	PRC-156-272118	5,000.00
016-025-4008-6600	AD-111-20160001276	02/03/2016	000000000512477	PRC	PRC-015-271409	70,000.00
016-025-4009-6600	AD-111-20160001276	02/03/2016	000000000512477	PRC	PRC-015-271409	10,000.00
016-015-0588-6600	AD-111-20160003252	03/16/2016	000000000514342	GAX	GAX-052-274670	1,855.00
016-080-4040-6600	AD-111-20160003856	04/06/2016	000000000515002	PRC	PRC-080-275471	4,612.50
016-015-0588-6600	AD-111-20160004582	04/20/2016	000000000515602	GAX	GAX-052-276383	255.00
016-215-5058-6600	AD-111-20160004582	04/20/2016	000000000515602	PRC	PRC-215-276339	3,360.00
016-025-4008-6600	AD-111-20160006083	06/01/2016	000000000517210	PRC	PRC-015-279191	40,000.00
016-025-4009-6600	AD-111-20160006083	06/01/2016	000000000517210	GAX	GAX-025-279569	460.00
016-025-4009-6600	AD-111-20160006083	06/01/2016	000000000517210	PRC	PRC-015-279192	15,000.00
016-025-4008-6600	AD-111-20160006452	06/15/2016	000000000517591	PRC	PRC-015-280354	40,000.00
016-025-4009-6600	AD-111-20160006452	06/15/2016	000000000517591	PRC	PRC-015-280354	20,000.00
016-215-5058-6600	AD-111-20160006452	06/15/2016	000000000517591	PRC	PRC-215-279870	3,640.00
016-215-5058-6600	AD-111-20160006452	06/15/2016	000000000517591	PRC	PRC-215-279871	15,400.00
209-290-0029-7900	AD-111-20160006730	06/21/2016	000000000517893	GAX	GAX-290-L121814	21,000.00
016-080-4040-6600	AD-111-20160009043	07/06/2016	000000000520133	PRC	PRC-080-283043	4,060.00
016-025-4008-6600	AD-111-20160009799	07/20/2016	000000000520907	PRC	PRC-015-284521	25,000.00
016-025-4009-6600	AD-111-20160009799	07/20/2016	000000000520907	PRC	PRC-015-284521	5,000.00
016-015-0589-6600	AD-111-20160010948	08/17/2016	000000000522076	GAX	GAX-015-286297	2,015.00
016-025-4009-6600	AD-111-20160010948	08/17/2016	000000000522076	GAX	GAX-025-286071	277.50
016-025-4009-6600	AD-111-20160010948	08/17/2016	000000000522076	GAX	GAX-025-286298	1,285.00
016-025-4009-6600	AD-111-20160011467	09/07/2016	000000000522590	PRC	PRC-015-287442	2,015.00
016-080-4040-6600	AD-111-20160011467	09/07/2016	000000000522590	PRC	PRC-080-286658	690.00
016-080-4040-6600	AD-111-20160011467	09/07/2016	000000000522590	PRC	PRC-080-286659	3,675.00
016-215-5058-6600	AD-111-20160011467	09/07/2016	000000000522590	PRC	PRC-215-286660	4,100.00
016-015-0589-6600	AD-111-20160012593	10/05/2016	000000000523751	GAX	GAX-015-288366	4,960.00
016-025-4009-6600	AD-111-20160012593	10/05/2016	000000000523751	PRC	PRC-015-289018	4,960.00
308-155-2202-6600	AD-111-20160013000	10/19/2016	000000000524335	GAX	GAX-155-289227	5,000.00
411----	AD-111-20160013200	10/19/2016	000000000524336	GAX	GAX-015-289731	5,000.00
016-025-4008-6600	AD-111-20160017777	12/21/2016	000000000528917	PRC	PRC-015-296524	20,000.00

# Follow the money: Vendor activity reports

Fields of data within government  
computer systems can be  
requested like this one.

OPRA request:  
[https://opramachine.com/request/hfa\\_holman\\_frenia\\_allison\\_cpa\\_fi](https://opramachine.com/request/hfa_holman_frenia_allison_cpa_fi)

## USE OF FORCE

### A. Incident Information

Date 08/08/2017	Time 11:27	Day of Week Tue	Location 7-ELEVEN - 217 ROUTE 70, LAKEHURST NJ 08733	Incident Number 2017-07630
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Crime in progress <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic <input type="checkbox"/> Other Dispute <input type="checkbox"/> Suspicious Person <input type="checkbox"/> Traffic Stop <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____				

### B. Officer Information

Name (Last, First) POLICE OFFICER GUIDE, JASON	Badge # 330	Sex M	Race WHITE	Age 28	Injured <input type="checkbox"/>	Killed <input type="checkbox"/>
Rank POLICE OFFICER	Duty Assignment PATROL			Years of Service 4	On Duty <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Uniform <input type="checkbox"/>

### C1. Subject 1 (List only the person who was the subject of the use of force by the officer listed in Section B.)

Name (Last, First) SMITH, STEVEN N	Sex M	Race WHITE	Age 34	Weapon <input type="checkbox"/>	Injured <input type="checkbox"/>	Killed <input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Under the influence <input type="checkbox"/> Other Unusual condition (specify) _____		Arrested <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Charges POSS SCHEDULE I, II, III, IV			
<b>Subjects actions</b> (check all that apply) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Resisted police officer control <input type="checkbox"/> Physical threat/attack on officer or another <input type="checkbox"/> Threatened/attacked officer or another with blunt object <input type="checkbox"/> Threatened/attacked officer or another with knife/cutting object <input type="checkbox"/> Threatened/attacked officer or another with motor vehicle <input type="checkbox"/> Threatened officer or another with firearm <input type="checkbox"/> Fired at officer or another <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____		<b>Officer's use of force toward the subject</b> (check all that apply) <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Compliance hold  <input type="checkbox"/> Hands/fists  <input type="checkbox"/> Kicks/feet  <input type="checkbox"/> Chemical/natural agent  <input type="checkbox"/> Strike/use baton or other object  <input type="checkbox"/> Canine  <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____         </div> <div>           Firearms Discharge  <input type="checkbox"/> Intentional  <input type="checkbox"/> Accidental            Number of shots fired _____            Number of hits _____            (Use 'UNK' if unknown)         </div> </div>				

### C2. Subject 2 (List only the person who was the subject of the use of force by the officer listed in Section B.)

Name (Last, First)	Sex	Race	Age	Weapon <input type="checkbox"/>	Injured <input type="checkbox"/>	Killed <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Under the influence <input type="checkbox"/> Other Unusual condition (specify) _____		Arrested <input type="checkbox"/>	Charges			
<b>Subjects actions</b> (check all that apply)		<b>Officer's use of force toward subject</b> (check all that apply)				

# Investigate your local police

Use of force reports:

[https://opramachine.com/request/police use of force reports janu 20incoming-72](https://opramachine.com/request/police%20use%20of%20force%20reports%20janu%20incoming-72)

Internal affairs summary reports:

[https://opramachine.com/request/different police department annu 148incoming-7496](https://opramachine.com/request/different%20police%20department%20annual%20incoming-7496)

Calls for service:

[https://opramachine.com/request/all policeems calls and response 11incoming-11748](https://opramachine.com/request/all%20police%20calls%20and%20response%20incoming-11748)











Berkeley Township Police Department &gt; Page Settings

## Page Settings

☐ Search Page Settings☐ General☐ Page Info☐ Templates and Tabs☐ Event Ticketing☐ Notifications☐ Advanced Messaging☐ Facebook Badges☐ Page Roles☐ Diversity Info☒ People and Other Pages☐ Preferred Page Audiences

### Banned People and Pages

Name

 Steven Wronko Bruce Sigmon Knits Ogo Joshua Everett Tracey E Glass-Reina John Jay Eisenhower Douglas Schwartz Shea Marie Greg Bleeker Hunter Hauge Tom Chaudoin Todays World

# Did your town block you from commenting?

If the page is run by an agency  
subject to OPRA, you can request  
data from it.

OPRA request:

[https://opramachine.com/request  
/police\\_facebook\\_page\\_4](https://opramachine.com/request/police_facebook_page_4)

To	From	Subject	Received
sgjordano@laceyschools.org	Megan <noreply@ypagescloud.com>	Leads database - 50% discount	12/13/19 9:47 PM
sgjordano@laceyschools.org	Educator Marketplace <edu@mg.educatormarketplace.com>	Educators Get Great Holiday Deals!	12/14/19 5:08 AM
Shawn Giordano	DeGeorge, Patrick <pdegeorge@laceyschools.org>	Fwd: OPRA request - Email logs for BOE President Shawn Giordano from Nov 22, 2019 to 12/13/2019	12/14/19 10:41 AM
sgjordano@laceyschools.org	Jessica, your personal Sales leads collector <noreply@biz-catalog.com>	Important information regarding Business leads	12/14/19 4:35 PM
undisclosed-recipients:	Mrs. Helen Johnson <hj4617618@gmail.com>	From;Mrs.Helen Johnson	12/14/19 6:00 PM
sgjordano@laceyschools.org	OpenTable <OpenTable@emails.opentable.com>	Votes are in: New Jersey - Central's highest rated restaurants	12/15/19 1:02 PM
Shawn Giordano	Chris Beaver <chris_beaver@advisorycloud.com>	You're not maximizing your skill set!	12/16/19 8:59 AM
Shawn Giordano	Learning Counsel Publications <publishing@learningcounselnews.org>	Holiday Wishes from the Learning Counsel	12/16/19 10:12 AM
vcclark@laceyschools.org	Jason Downey <jdowney@socialsentinel.com>	There is never a right time to have a tough conversation.	12/16/19 10:33 AM
Shawn Giordano; Nicholas Mirandi	Discenza, Regina <rdiscenza@laceyschools.org>	Question re 12/16 agenda item	12/16/19 12:38 PM
Frank Palino; Linda Downing; Nick Mirandi; Regina Discenza; Robert C. Riggs; Shawn Giordano; Skip Peters	DeGeorge, Patrick <pdegeorge@laceyschools.org>	Gender Neutral Bathrooms	12/17/19 8:35 AM
ALL	Silvia, Sharon <ssilvia@laceyschools.org>	Office 3000	12/17/19 10:49 AM
Silvia, Sharon	Opacity, Heather <hopacity@laceyschools.org>	Re: Office 3000	12/17/19 11:07 AM
ALL	Silvia, Sharon <ssilvia@laceyschools.org>	Re: Office 3000	12/17/19 12:04 PM
sgjordano@laceyschools.org	The Home Depot <reply@info.inbox-insider.com>	Holiday Savings with \$60 off the Ring Video Doorbell Pro	12/17/19 12:15 PM
sgjordano@laceyschools.org	OpenTable <OpenTable@emails.opentable.com>	Shawn, don't leave your bonus points on the table	12/17/19 1:06 PM
undisclosed-recipients:	Mrs. Helen Johnson <hj4617619@gmail.com>	From;Mrs.Helen Johnson	12/17/19 2:25 PM
Anthony Risoli	Clark, Vanessa <vclark@laceyschools.org>	Re: Transparency hidden by Lacey BOE	12/17/19 5:20 PM
Lytle, Tom	Clark, Vanessa <vclark@laceyschools.org>	Re: Lacey School Board Video Followup- Fwd: [#21599523] Youtube is displaying video improperly [ ref:_00D00VNwG_500f21VcV8z,00DfGEAW.500f8zAAF:ref ]	12/17/19 5:24 PM
sgjordano@laceyschools.org	Oglesby, Amanda <aoglesby@gannettnj.com>	Ethics complaint - Gavin Rozzi	12/17/19 6:23 PM
sgjordano@laceyschools.org	Adobe Acrobat <mail@mail.adobe.com>	Because we're not elves	12/17/19 11:29 PM
ALL@laceyschools.org	Olender, Michael <molender@laceyschools.org>	WOBM CHRISTMAS CHOIR CONTEST	12/18/19 7:18 AM
sgjordano@laceyschools.org	Literacy Empowerment Foundation <info@lefbooks.org>	Deadline For Free Books For Read Across America Day	12/18/19 9:13 AM
sgjordano@laceyschools.org	Hobsons Summer Institute <questions@hobsons.com>	Apply for the Hobsons Education Advances Awards!	12/18/19 10:15 AM
Shawn Giordano	Christopher Fungia <ccf@stjohns.com>	FW: Ethics complaint - Gavin Rozzi	12/18/19 10:42 AM

# Emails

Bodies of email correspondence as well as email logs – which show metadata about a public employee’s email inbox, can be requested under OPRA.

OPRA request:  
[https://opramachine.com/request/email\\_logs\\_for\\_2019\\_board\\_pres\\_id](https://opramachine.com/request/email_logs_for_2019_board_pres_id)

# A strategy for requesting emails

1. First, request email logs
2. Select individual emails found within the logs
3. File a second OPRA request for those emails
4. Repeat as needed

LAW OFFICES  
**STEIN & SUPSIE**

AN ASSOCIATION CONSISTING OF A LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY

CHRISTOPHER M. SUPSIE†  
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P.O. BOX 1070  
FORKED RIVER, NEW JERSEY 08731-6070  
(609) 693-6200

TELEFAX: (609) 693-6202

E-MAIL: csupsie@steinlawnj.com

OUR FILE: 5846AS

February 06, 2018

Lacey Township Board of Education  
200 Western Boulevard  
Lanoka Harbor, NJ 08734

RE: LACEY TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION - GENERAL

FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES RENDERED:

		<u>Hours</u>
1/4/2018	CMS Telephone conference with Mr. Wigley re: OPRA issue.	0.10
	CMS Receipt and review of emails from Mr. Wigley; memorandum to file.	1.20
1/16/2018	CMS Attendance at executive session Board of Education meeting.	1.00
1/17/2018	CMS Review of file materials; preparation of post meeting memorandum re: collective negotiations.	0.50
1/28/2018	CMS Telephone conference with Board President re: student matter.	0.10

## Legal Bills

Detail billing entries can be a valuable source of info when investigating school boards

OPRA request:

[https://opramachine.com/request/legal\\_bills\\_for\\_supsie\\_and\\_capeh](https://opramachine.com/request/legal_bills_for_supsie_and_capeh)



# Building an ethics case

Ethics complaints are often tossed because of a lack of evidence.

OPRA can be used to gather evidence for your complaint before you even file!

Can supplement discovery process in legal cases

# Conclusion

OPRA is a powerful research tool

Valuable evidence can be gathered  
using it

How you use it is up to you.



Q&A

# Stay in touch:

Email: [hello@gavinrozzi.com](mailto:hello@gavinrozzi.com)

Personal website: [gavinrozzi.com](http://gavinrozzi.com)

Twitter: [@gavroz](https://twitter.com/gavroz)