State’s AG rejects request to see names of police on ‘Laurie List’

Right-to-Know request:

The New Hampshire Union Leader filed a request to see the list of officers who’ve been flagged for having credibility issues.

By MARK HAYWARD

New Hampshire Union Leader

CONCORD — New Hampshire Attorney General Gordon MacDonald has rejected requests by media and a civil liberties groups to disclose a statewide list of police officers with credibility issues.

Disclosure would amount to an invasion of the officers’ privacy, wrote Senior Assistant Attorney General Francis Fredericks in response to a request by the New Hampshire Union Leader for a copy of the complete list. MacDonald’s office maintains an exculpatory evidence schedule, which includes the names of police officers who have been flagged for credibility issues.

The list, otherwise known as the “Laurie List,” also identifies what department employs the officer, the date of the incident, the date of notification and a brief description of the credibility issue, such as falsifying reports, excessive force or sexual harassment.

MacDonald’s office has released a redacted version of the list with names blackened out. The most recent list has 171 entries, although many no longer work in law enforcement.

The American Civil Liberties Union-New Hampshire had also filed a Right-to-Know request for a copy of the complete list.

In a statement, the organization called the decision bad policy and legally incorrect. The ACLU said the decision created special treatment for police officers.

“The public has a right to know whether officers serving them have engaged in conduct that impacts their credibility or truthfulness. As the New Hampshire Supreme Court has repeatedly explained, the public interest in disclosure is great when it will expose potential government misconduct,” the statement reads.

In his letter, Fredericks relies on a state law regarding police personnel files and when they must be disclosed to a defense attorney whose client was arrested by an officer on the list.

Fredericks acknowledged that a public interest exists when it comes to the identity of the officers on the list.

But he wrote that the list does not go far enough and provide the substance or context of the underlying conduct.