



**Office of the New York State  
Attorney General**

**Letitia James  
Attorney General**

December 30, 2025

Chief of Police Joseph L. Cecile  
Syracuse Police Department  
511 S. State Street  
Syracuse, NY 13202

***Via Email***

Re: Executive Law § 75(5)(b) Referral of Police Officer Rachel Phillips  
OAG Matter No. 1-818319678

Dear Chief Cecile,

The Office of the New York State Attorney General has reviewed your agency's Executive Law § 75(5)(b) referral of complaints involving Officer Rachel Phillips from September 2022 to July 2024. Based on our review, we have not made a finding of a pattern or practice of misconduct, use of excessive force, or acts of dishonesty by Officer Phillips with respect to the referred complaints.

However, in DR 24-376301, Officer Phillips and her partner detained the Complainant and ordered her to empty her bag without sufficient justification. The stop was based on information the officers received from the owner of a phone who alleged that he lost his phone inside the restaurant where the Complainant worked as a cashier. The phone's owner stated that a phone-tracking app showed that the phone was at the restaurant and then was moving in the direction taken by the Complainant as she left work, but the officers' body-worn camera footage shows that the officers could see that the phone's owner was displaying a maps app that was providing directions to a fixed address, not a phone-tracking app.

Apart from the unreliable information from the maps app, the officers lacked additional information linking the cashier to the missing phone, which apparently had been left on the counter of the busy restaurant earlier that day. Accordingly, the officers did not have sufficient basis to detain the Complainant and order her to show them the contents of her bag. *People v. Johnson*, 40 N.Y.3d 172, 174 (2023) (reasonable suspicion requires "specific and articulable facts which, along with any logical deductions, reasonably prompted the intrusion").

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Accordingly, we recommend that Officer Phillips receive re-training on the appropriate basis for Level 3 stops.

We appreciate the cooperation of you and your agency.

Sincerely,

Mihea Kim  
Assistant Attorney General

Tyler Nims  
Chief, Law Enforcement Misconduct Investigative Office