

# Cleveland police stall on releasing police report issued against state Rep. Elliot Forhan

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COLUMBUS, Ohio—A police report has been filed against state Rep. Elliot Forhan, who recently was stripped of most of his legislative privileges amid complaints of repeated confrontations with constituents and other lawmakers, including one who has filed a civil protection order against him.

However, while Cleveland Division of Police spokesman Wilfredo Diaz confirmed that such a report exists, a police administrative clerk denied The Plain Dealer/cleveland.com's request on Wednesday to immediately release the report, on the grounds that Forhan, a South Euclid Democrat, is a public official and works for the government. While such reports have, until now, routinely been released by Cleveland police within minutes of them being requested, the clerk stated that Forhan's report could only be obtained through an open-records request, which often can take weeks to process.

Diaz said the practice allows the city's law department to review requests and make sure they adhere to state law.

David Marburger, a longtime First Amendment attorney who previously represented The Plain Dealer in legal matters, said Wednesday that refusing to immediately release a police report because it involves a public official "is a completely garbage excuse."

However, Marburger added, "it is within their right to ask you to make a request under the public records act."

Reached on Wednesday afternoon, Forhan declined to comment.

Last week, Ohio House Speaker Jason Stephens, a Lawrence County Republican, reassigned Forhan's lone legislative aide and revoked his badge access to the Ohio Statehouse and his legislative office nearby, [citing "serious allegations and concerns implicating the safety and wellness of House members and staff."](#)

A House Democratic memo on Forhan laid out several incidents in which Forhan had “apoplectic, incidental interactions with House staff, representatives, and community members,” during some of which he threatened to either take his own life or challenged others to kill him.

On Tuesday, state Rep. Juanita Brent, a Cleveland Democrat, said a Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court judge approved her request for a civil protection order against Forhan, who last weekend posted three videos to social media – which he later deleted – apologizing to Brent for an earlier altercation.

“The representative’s tone, demeanor, and choice of words in each video left me feeling uncomfortable and concerned for my safety,” Brent said in a statement.

Jennifer Ciaccia, a spokeswoman for the county, said the civil unit of the sheriff’s department sought to serve Forhan with the restraining order, but he was not home.

In June, Forhan showed up unannounced at Brent’s Cleveland home, ostensibly to get Brent’s help in responding to a constituent he confronted at the Statehouse, who had become increasingly vocal in her criticism of him. Last week, Forhan again came under fire from within his own party after a confrontation with another state representative.

He has faced calls to resign from both state and local Democrats.