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*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*****

***STATEMENT ON GOVERNOR CUOMO ENACTING MARIJUANA
DECRIMINALIZATION INTO LAW***

(NEW YORK, NY) – Emma Goodman, Staff Attorney with the Criminal Defense Practice’s Special Litigation Unit at The Legal Aid Society, issued the following statement concerning New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo enacting marijuana decriminalization (S.6579A/A.8420) into law:

“While in some regards this legislation is a step forward – including its automatic expungement of low-level marijuana charges – it still fails to address the radically disparate enforcement of marijuana possession laws or any of the collateral consequences created by marijuana prohibition that almost exclusively affect black and Latinx communities.

Under this statute, for basic marijuana possession, our clients will continue to face parole and probation violations, continue to live in fear of immigration detention and deportation, and continue to be at risk of being separated from their family by an adult or child protective agency.

All of the collateral consequences of marijuana criminalization that harm communities of color will continue to exist. We hope that next year Albany finally enacts the Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act, legislation that will address these historic problems that continue to plague our clients and other New Yorkers of color on a daily basis.”

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