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

STATEMENT ON RAISE THE AGE PHASE II IMPLEMENTATION

(NEW YORK, NY) – Dawne Mitchell, Attorney-In-Charge of the Juvenile Rights Practice at The Legal Aid Society, released the below statement regarding the second phase implementation of Raise the Age, which will place the majority of 17-year-olds charged with a crime in age-appropriate courts:

“For years, New York stood alone as one of only two states in the country that prosecuted all 16- and 17-year-olds as adults in the criminal legal system, regardless of the crime committed. Today, that injustice is no more. Adolescents are children, and prosecuting and placing children in the adult system is a disservice to them and to our communities.

Since the first phase of Raise the Age was implemented last October, it has already made a huge difference and proved its success by transferring 16-year-olds to age-appropriate courts that are equipped with the programming essential for serving them.

We are confident that this last phase will prove equally successful for the vast majority of 17-year-olds entering the system, who will now have access to court processes, services and resources that are proven to be most appropriate for them, thereby improving public safety and giving these young people the chance they deserve.”

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The Legal Aid Society exists for one simple yet powerful reason: to ensure that New Yorkers are not denied their right to equal justice because of poverty. For over 140 years, we have protected, defended, and advocated for those who have struggled in silence for far too long. Every day, in every borough, The Legal Aid Society changes the lives of our clients and helps improve our communities.
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