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

***AHEAD OF BOARD OF CORRECTION MEETING ON ISOLATED
CONFINEMENT, LEGAL AID URGES COMPREHENSIVE
CHANGE TO TREATMENT OF PEOPLE IN SOLITARY AND
LOCK DOWN***

(NEW YORK, NY) – Ahead of a New York City Board of Correction (BOC) hearing about regulating isolated and highly restrictive housing units in the New York City jails, The Legal Aid Society urged BOC to publish a comprehensive rule that has been drafted over nearly four years to regulate the treatment of people in lockdown or solitary jail units. BOC announced in January 2016 that it would issue broad and detailed rules to curb DOC’s highly irregular isolation practices, but has yet to do so.

In a letter to BOC, The Legal Aid Society noted that the nature and scope of the rules published at the hearing on October 22 would be an immediate indicator to the public of how seriously the City is taking its commitment to reform the toxic culture at the Department of Correction as the City plans to close Rikers Island.

The letter states:

In January 2016 – three years and nine months ago – the Board of Correction voted to establish humane standards for the Department of Correction’s isolated and highly restrictive housing units. BOC will finally publish the proposed rule for public consideration by its October 22, 2019 meeting. It is appalling that it has taken nearly an entire presidential term for the BOC to

propose rules, especially given that the subject matter – the treatment of people in lockdown or solitary jail units – has such a tremendous, daily impact on human health and safety.

Isolation and restrictions have borne many names in New York City: punitive segregation, Close Custody, Enhanced Supervision Housing, Secure Unit, Second Chance Housing Unit, Restrictive Housing Unit, Solo Housing. Regardless of label, all forms of isolation have the potential for serious harm and all must be subject to oversight by the Board.

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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. <https://www.legalaidnyc.org>