



Redmond Haskins, *The Legal Aid Society* (RHaskins@legal-aid.org)
Lupe Todd-Medina, *New York County Defender Services* (Lupe@effectivemediastrategies.com)
Jared Chausow, *Brooklyn Defender Services* (jchausow@bds.org)
Ryan Karerat, *The Bronx Defenders* (rkarerat@bronxdefenders.org)
Sam McCann, *The Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem* (smccann@ndsny.org)

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

NYC DEFENDERS JOINT STATEMENT ON RIKERS ISLAND

(NEW YORK, NY) – The Legal Aid Society, New York County Defender Services, Brooklyn Defender Services, The Bronx Defenders, and Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem released a joint statement today regarding Rikers Island:

“This week, the City announced it now predicts a local jail population of 3,300 by 2026, which is a drastic reduction in the estimates we heard even a few months ago. This underscores what community-led advocacy and systemic reforms – bail, discovery, and speedy trial – can achieve. It also should encourage all of us to continue to build on these recently enacted successes by granting more New Yorkers – especially the aging and infirm – parole; reducing reliance on incarceration when restorative justice and other resolutions would be more fair and effective; ending jailing people for technical parole violations; disclosing critical information about police misconduct; investing in communities, not law enforcement; and abolishing solitary confinement.

The reduction in the jail population is the product of years of unrelenting advocacy by countless organizations and New Yorkers impacted by our unjust legal system, with whom we proudly stand.

We must all be vigilant. We must ensure that decarceration continues. We must acknowledge that even as we reduce the numbers of people in local jail, we have not made a significant impact on racial disparities that persist. In addition, New York State must reduce the state prison population. That is the only way to truly begin to end the era of mass incarceration.”