



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

JOINT STATEMENT FROM NYC DEFENDERS ON FIRST DAY OF HISTORIC CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORMS

(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 the following statement on the first day of implementation for the new criminal justice reforms – bail, discovery, and speedy trial – which were enacted into law this past April:

“Today marks a historic moment in New York State as new bail, discovery, and speedy trial laws officially take effect. Collectively, these new laws make the criminal legal system more just, fair, and equitable for all New Yorkers.

With effective implementation, these laws will ensure that low-income people facing criminal charges will no longer be forced to plead guilty to get out of jail and will be able to fight their case while living with their families, going to school, returning to their jobs, and living their full lives; New Yorkers will no longer have to endure lengthy delays to get their day in court; prosecutors will no longer have the power of information and will instead have to share with the people they charge what the evidence is in their cases so that they can meaningfully defend themselves and make informed decisions.

As we celebrate a new era in our criminal legal system, we cannot forget the thousands of people who have been harmed by our old bail, discovery, and speedy trial laws and we should recognize the impacted people who mobilized, advocated, and helped make these changes possible. Thanks to their efforts and those of public defenders, advocates, and lawmakers, New York is leading the way on criminal legal reform and helping to build trust in our criminal legal system.

We want to also thank Governor Cuomo and the New York State Assembly and Senate for having the courage and vision to pass these important reforms that bring this measure of fairness, transparency and justice to our legal system.”

###