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

***STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO NEW NYPD WHISTLEBLOWER LETTER EXPRESSING GRAVE CONCERNS WITH MAYOR DE BLASIO AND NYPD'S "SUBWAY DIVERSION PROGRAM"***

(NEW YORK, NY) – **The Legal Aid Society** released the below statement responding to an [anonymous letter](#) by a New York Police Department (NYPD) Transit Bureau whistleblower published today, which expresses grave concerns with Mayor Bill de Blasio and the NYPD's "Subway Diversion Program." Under the initiative, NYPD officers issue homeless individuals in the transit system referrals to services, only *after* a civil summons is issued, and without offering any relief to the most needy. Additionally, the New York City Council will hold an oversight hearing on the program today at 1 p.m. Our testimony can be found [here](#).

"The Mayor's 'Subway Diversion Program' is misguided and an absurdly backwards way of addressing the homelessness crisis in New York City. Our City's homeless should have unfettered access to housing, shelters and resources, but not through a law enforcement pipeline that has historically criminalized people experiencing homelessness. We must acknowledge the plights facing this population and implement thoughtful policies and remedies, instead of issuing summonses in the first place."

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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>*