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

Statement on Governor Andrew Cuomo's 2020 Budget Address

(NEW YORK, NY) – **The Legal Aid Society** released the following statement in response to New York Governor Andrew Cuomo's 2020 budget address, particularly concerning bail reform:

“Governor Andrew Cuomo was right to join the Legislature to enact bail reform last year to free thousands of presumed innocent New Yorkers who could not buy their freedom from pretrial detention. Reversing this historic reform because of fear mongering and falsehoods from law enforcement and other critics who have always opposed any change is a direct affront to New York's progressive promise.

It is also a slap in the face to our clients and communities of color who have shouldered the brunt of a racist and carceral criminal legal system. The Legal Aid Society urges Governor Cuomo and the Legislature to resist calls to revert to a system that ignored the presumption of innocence and inflicted punishment on New Yorkers without any finding of guilt, solely because they lacked the deep pockets to purchase their freedom.”

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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>

