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Contact:

Redmond Haskins
The Legal Aid Society
(929) 441-2384
rhaskins@legal-aid.org

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

Council Speaker Corey Johnson And Advocates Call On Albany To Invest Critical Funding To Combat New York State's Housing Crisis

Demands Include \$3 Billion For Public Housing Statewide, \$2 Billion For NYCHA; \$500 Million To Fight Evictions And Homelessness; And The Construction Of 20,000 New Supportive Housing Units

(CITY HALL) – New York City Council Speaker Corey Johnson, The Legal Aid Society, Community Voices Heard, New York Communities For Change, Tenants PAC, VOCAL-NY, Citizen Action of New York, members of the statewide Housing Justice For All coalition, and others called on Albany today to immediately enact key measures to combat New York State's unprecedented housing crisis.

The demands come days after Governor Andrew Cuomo unveiled his Fiscal Year 2021 Executive Budget proposal, which [did not include](#) any new funding for public housing authorities – including the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) – or other sufficient funding for initiatives to combat evictions and homelessness.

The Albany demands include:

- **Invest \$3 billion** in public housing across New York state, with **\$2 billion allocated to NYCHA** to combat emergency living conditions like lead paint, broken boilers, and leaky roofs.

- **Invest at least \$500 million** in rent support vouchers such as the [Home Stability Support](#) (HSS) program. HSS would provide strong rent subsidies for families and individuals on public assistance who are facing eviction, homelessness, or loss of housing due to domestic violence or hazardous living conditions.
- **Fund and construct 20,000 units of supportive housing:** In 2016, Governor Cuomo pledged to create 20,000 units of supportive housing, but his Administration has only financed a fraction of these homes to date. Supportive housing breaks the cycle of homelessness by pairing permanent housing with on-site services for people with a history of substance abuse, and/or who have mental and physical health needs.

Later this week, the New York State Senate and Assembly will hold a joint budget hearing involving many of these issues.

“It is extremely disappointing that Governor Andrew Cuomo failed to include sufficient funding in his Executive Budget to combat the serious housing problems New Yorkers currently face,” said **Judith Goldiner, Attorney-in-Charge of the Civil Law Reform Unit at The Legal Aid Society**. “New Yorkers need a budget that fully funds NYCHA, invests in rent support vouchers such as Home Stability Support, and prioritizes the immediate construction of 20,000 units of supportive housings. Our clients and others cannot wait another budget cycle. We need these measures passed this session. The Legal Aid Society thanks Council Speaker Corey Johnson and other Council Members for their support.”

“Our city is in the midst of a housing crisis, and we need the State to do its part. Our public housing system is crumbling and desperately needs more funding. We also need serious investments in rent vouchers to get people experiencing homelessness into permanent housing. We cannot solve these problems on our own, but without proper funding and investments that’s exactly what the State is telling New Yorkers. My deepest gratitude to the advocates who are fighting to ensure New York is and continues to be a city for all,” said **Council Speaker Corey Johnson**.

“Albany needs to step up if we are ever going to solve New York’s housing crisis. Failed policies in Albany helped create this crisis, now Albany needs to invest in solving it. Billionaires get tax break after tax break in Albany. It’s time we end those tax breaks and make the wealthiest pay to house the poorest New Yorkers,” said **Jonathan Westin, Executive Director of New York Communities For Change**.

“We must overcome the ‘We can’t afford it’ syndrome that has gripped Albany for many years. Albany has cut taxes on rich people and big corporations, while wasting billions of dollars on ‘economic development’ projects that reward the already-rich and produce virtually no benefits for working New Yorkers. With the help of Corey and other Council members we have a chance to convince our friends in Albany that New York State CAN afford to tax the rich and house the poor,” said **Michael McKee, Treasurer of Tenants Political Action Committee**.

“We have more than enough money in New York State to solve the housing crisis -- we just don’t have the political will,” said **Cea Weaver, Coordinator of the Housing Justice for All Coalition**. “At a time of unprecedented need, we must work together -- at every level of

government -- to fully fund our public housing, and invest in ending homelessness. Last week's executive budget makes no mention of public housing and does not sufficiently fund housing for homeless New Yorkers. We're glad to have Speaker Corey Johnson as an ally in this fight, as we look to the State Legislature to right this wrong."

"You may be used to seeing on TV what a failure NYCHA is but that is not the whole story. Without public housing my husband and I would not have been able to afford to raise a family in gentrified Harlem. Where public housing has failed is because it has been starved of the funding it needs to succeed. We are here today to demand public housing be fully funded across the state and that Governor Cuomo put a down payment of \$3 billion toward that in this year's budget!" said **Barbara Williams, Community Voices Heard Member-Leader.**

"A lot of the programs that we have right now do not really solve the issue, but rather maintain it," said **Clayton Roulhac-Carr, a leader with VOCAL-NY.** "We need permanent housing that is truly affordable for people living in the street, that means supportive housing and a voucher program to humanize people instead of showing them as a problem. I want to thank Corey Johnson for being a supporter of the homeless in New York - we need our state politicians to be more like him."

"We are grateful to Council Speaker Corey Johnson for calling on the state legislature to prioritize the housing needs of New York City during this legislative session. While the Governor's budget ignores the plight of NYCHA residents and provides no meaningful increase in funding for those experiencing housing insecurity, Speaker Johnson recognizes the housing crisis that impacts his constituents daily. We must invest \$3 billion in NYCHA, expand rental supplements to those at risk of homelessness, and meaningfully invest in the construction of supportive housing units in 2020," said **Stanley Fritz, Political Director of Citizen Action of New York.**

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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>