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

***Legal Aid Secures Release of 106 Incarcerated New Yorkers at
a high risk of COVID-19 from Technical Parole Violation
Holds on Rikers Island***

(NEW YORK, NY) – The Legal Aid Society - through [litigation](#) brought earlier this week in New York State Supreme Court, Bronx County - secured the immediate release of 106 individuals currently held at Rikers Island on a non-criminal technical parole violation. These individuals, by virtue of their age and/or underlying medical condition, are particularly vulnerable to serious illness or death if infected by COVID-19, and jail conditions make it impossible to protect them.

Technical parole violations are non-criminal matters for which individuals can be held in custody without bail for missing a curfew, failing to report, or failing to notify their parole officer of an address change.

“While the government should have released these people without need for judicial intervention, we applaud the Court for this ruling, which will help to save our vulnerable clients from contracting a virus that has already killed thousands worldwide,” said **Corey Stoughton, Attorney-in-Charge of the Special Litigation Unit with the Criminal Defense Practice at The Legal Aid Society**. “Rikers Island has emerged as the epicenter in the United States for COVID-19 with an infection rate significantly higher than New York City, New York State, and the rest of the country. Today’s ruling is a significant step forward, but we will not quit until all of our clients are safely released from custody back to their homes and their families”

Demonstrating the rapid pace at which the virus spreads within carceral settings, at local jails, 112 individuals – 75 incarcerated New Yorkers and 37 City employees – [have tested positive for COVID-19](#) as of March 25, 2020.

On Thursday, The Legal Aid Society released an analysis revealing that Rikers Island and other local jails lead the nation in terms of COVID-19 infection rates. The current infection rate at local jails is 14.51 per 1,000 people, [more than 7 times higher](#) than New York City and 87 times higher than the United States at large. If the daily COVID-19 infection rate remains this high, the virus will engulf the entire local jail population in a matter of weeks.

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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>