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

Statement on NYS Senate Vote Passage to Roll Back Bail Reform

(NEW YORK, NY) – Tina Luongo, Attorney-in-Charge of the Criminal Defense Practice at The Legal Aid Society, released the following statement in response to the New York State Senate’s vote to roll back bail reform:

“Today is a dark day for thousands of New Yorkers whose lives have been put in jeopardy. Even when the decisions are life or death, it’s politics that reign supreme in Albany, and we have witnessed a complete disregard for the safety of Black, Brown and low-income New Yorkers. To roll back bail reform and put more people in jail is always wrong. It is especially shameful and immoral to do so under a shroud of secrecy while leveraging a global pandemic. In what is the most cynical capitulation ever to fear-mongering and racist dog whistles, the Senate has put the political seats of a handful of electeds over the hundreds of thousands of Black and Brown New Yorkers who will cycle through our system. It is politics over people- and over sound policy. We pray the Assembly does not follow suit.

Our state will be more unequal and less safe if the bail reforms are undone. The bail reform bill that passed last year allowed thousands of people to reunite with their families, to return to work, and made their communities stronger. We had finally begun to move past the broken and racist system that criminalized poverty and targeted people of color. Yet in the face of racial fear mongering, our ‘progressive’ leaders cowered to the law enforcement agenda, bringing us back to the old status quo and betraying those who have fought so hard for change. This fight is just beginning, and we will hold those accountable who have put politics over justice.”

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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/>