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

***Statement In Response To “COVID-19 Related” Arrest Data Released Today By The
New York City Police Department***

(NEW YORK, NY) – Corey Stoughton, Attorney-in-Charge of the Special Litigation Unit with the Criminal Defense Practice at The Legal Aid Society, issued the following statement in response to “COVID-19 related” arrest data released today by the New York City Police Department (NYPD):

“The release of this data is in no way responsive to demands from elected officials and community leaders for the NYPD to be more transparent about how it is policing social distancing requirements. The NYPD’s definition of ‘COVID-related’ in this data set is meaningless. Most importantly, it sheds no light on the critical question of how the NYPD can explain and begin to address its pattern of racially discriminatory enforcement of social distancing requirements and the startling examples of police misconduct revealed in recent days.

We call on the NYPD to release a full and transparent accounting of all police encounters related to social distancing enforcement, including those resulting in a summons or an arrest, along with critical information on the location of the encounter and demographic information of those stopped, issued summonses, and arrested. We also call upon the NYPD to release its guidance to officers on social distancing enforcement so that the public can better understand the protocols leading to the problematic and likely unconstitutional policing tactics that New Yorkers of color are experiencing.”

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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.

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