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

Joint NYC Defender Statement On Efforts to Circumvent Law and Detain Protestors

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(NEW YORK, NY) – Brooklyn Defender Services, The Bronx Defenders, The Legal Aid Society, Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem, Queens Defenders, and New York County Defender Services issued the following statement on Manhattan District Attorney Cy Vance's and Governor Andrew Cuomo's attempt to detain New Yorkers fighting for justice on bail.

“Last night, Manhattan District Attorney Cy Vance called for an Executive Order altering the bail statute to permit the detention of people protesting and mourning the death of George Floyd and other Black people and brown people killed by the police. We are appalled DA Vance would use this opportunity to suppress New Yorkers' constitutional rights by detaining protestors on unaffordable money bail instead of standing with Black people. At a moment in which Black people and their allies are rightfully protesting state sanctioned racial violence while simultaneously bearing the brunt of a global pandemic – a crisis that makes brutal and dangerous city jails even more deadly – DA Vance offers incarceration as the solution.

Cy Vance's ask that Governor Cuomo issue an executive order allowing judges to hold protestors is outrageous. Already, there is a backlog of hundreds of New Yorkers who are being illegally held because the NYPD refuses to issue Desk

Appearance Tickets in lieu of arrests or complete the paperwork necessary to arraign them, despite the fact that the state requires a court appearance within 24 hours of arrest. Vance's proposal would increase incarceration at a time when prisons and jails account for eight of the 10 largest COVID-19 outbreaks in the country and when the City's own correctional health experts are calling for decarceration.

It is also a naked attempt to lock up more Black and brown people at a moment in which New Yorkers are demanding justice for communities of color.

Governor Cuomo's response instructs District Attorneys to trump up charges and inflate allegations against New Yorkers in order to jail them. This blatant disregard for truth in prosecution is aberrant to the demand for a fair justice system that protesters are now demanding. We demand that Governor Cuomo reject this dangerous plea, and urge concerned New Yorkers to call his office at 518-474-8390.”

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