

THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY

Justice in Every Borough.

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

Legal Aid Statement on Juneteenth

(New York, NY) – Janet Sabel, CEO and Attorney-in-Chief of The Legal Aid Society, released the following statement in honor of Juneteenth:

“On this day, 155 years ago, thousands of enslaved people who had not been made aware of emancipation because they were isolated in remote areas in Texas, were freed. Their freedom came almost two and half years after the Emancipation Proclamation.

As we celebrate Juneteenth commemorating the end of slavery in the United States and the resilience of the Black community, it is impossible not to feel its duality. The stain of slavery permeates almost every facet of life today, and freedom and justice have always been delayed for Black people. In all of our work, every day, we fight against the disproportionate impact of mass incarceration, discriminatory housing policies, the racial profiling and over-policing of our communities, and many other racist policies. Still, every day systemic barriers and institutional racism impede true justice.

We are in a desperately needed moment of reckoning as a nation. As we grapple with police brutality and the legacy of slavery, the importance of our work and mission to fight for those impacted by systemic and structural racism is clearer than ever.

We are also at a critical moment as an institution as we embark on our own efforts to eliminate the legacy of racism in our own workplace and community.

Juneteenth is a much needed moment to celebrate our Black colleagues, friends and communities as well as a call to action and reminder of how much more work we have to do.”

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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>