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Contact:

Redmond Haskins
The Legal Aid Society
(929) 441-2384
rhaskins@legal-aid.org

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

Ahead Of Hearing, Legal Aid Files Amicus Brief Against Police Union Efforts To Deny New Yorkers Access To Law Enforcement Officer Disciplinary Records

(NEW YORK, NY) – The Legal Aid Society filed an amicus brief in *Uniformed Fire Officers Association, et al. v. Bill de Blasio* against union efforts to deny New Yorkers access to critical law enforcement officer disciplinary records. On June 12, 2020, Governor Andrew Cuomo enacted legislation that fully repealed Police Secrecy Law 50-a. Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP partnered with Legal Aid in drafting and filing the amicus brief.

In a backdoor effort to stymie the repeal of Section 50-a, law enforcement unions filed the aforementioned lawsuit. The matter is currently pending before the Honorable Katherine Polk Failla, a federal judge for the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York (“SDNY”).

The Legal Aid Society’s amicus brief raises the following points:

- **The Legislature Intended to Permit the Release of the Disciplinary Records at Issue in this Case when Repealing Police Secrecy Law 50-a:** When New York State passed a platform of policing reforms in June, an essential component was to remove the special protections afforded to local law enforcement disciplinary records, making those records – like most government records in the State of New York – available for public inspection under FOIL. The repeal legislation addressed the disturbing pattern of police violence against and harassment of people of color and the inability of policymakers and members of the public to retrieve the information they needed to evaluate the NYPD’s promise of self-regulation.
- **The Police Unions’ Arguments for Blocking the Release of the Disciplinary Records at Issue in this Case Lack Merit:** The police unions’ invocation of largely frivolous legal arguments is an attempt to use the federal courts to undermine clear state legislative prerogatives and fundamental values of civil

rights and open government.

"This lawsuit is a baseless attempt to undo the Legislature's decisive repeal of Police Secrecy Law 50-a and restore the toxic culture of impunity for police harassment and abuse of predominantly Black and Latinx New Yorkers," said **Corey Stoughton, Attorney-in-Charge of the Special Litigation Unit with the Criminal Defense Practice at The Legal Aid Society**. "We urge the Court to deny the preliminary injunction and allow for the disclosure of these records to promote accountability for officers who commit acts of misconduct and betray public trust."

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