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

Legal Aid Statement on the Passing of Christopher Cruz, a Client who had Been Held Pretrial on Cash Bail at Rikers Island

(NEW YORK, NY) – The Legal Aid Society released the following statement in response to the passing of Christopher Cruz, a client who was incarcerated pretrial at Rikers Island:

“We are heartbroken to learn that our client, Christopher Cruz, passed away yesterday while incarcerated pretrial at Rikers Island. Mr. Cruz, like too many of our clients, could not afford to pay bail, and, thus, he spent his final days confined to a cage. This is an all-too-common tragedy, the inevitable product of an unjust cash bail system that should outrage all New Yorkers.

Mr. Cruz, just 27-years-old, was a son, a brother and a father. The lack of information his family has received thus far from the City about his untimely death is disturbing and only serves to engender suspicion. We demand answers and call for an immediate, swift, thorough and independent investigation. The Legal Aid Society extends the deepest sympathy to Mr. Cruz’s family and his community during this extremely difficult time.”

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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. www.legalaidnyc.org