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

Marking 100+ Days Since Albany Rolled Back Bail Reform, Defenders Decry 16 Percent Rise in Jail Population as Alarming Second Wave of COVID-19 Threatens NYC

With Jails Functioning as Deadly Incubators for COVID-19, Officials Must Commit to Decarceration to Save Lives

(NEW YORK, NY) – The Legal Aid Society, Brooklyn Defender Services, The Bronx Defenders, New York County Defender Services, Queens Defenders and Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem issued the following joint statement decrying the increase in New York City’s jail population by [455 people](#) - roughly 16 percent - held pretrial, amid a second wave of COVID-19, following the implementation of rollbacks to New York State’s bail reform law, which went into effect on July 2, 2020:

“It is unconscionable that Albany capitulated to racist fear-mongering and subjected more people to pretrial detention during the COVID-19 pandemic – a betrayal that is both cruel and dangerous. One hundred days after the implementation of these bail rollbacks, our fears have been realized as more and more people are in jail at the very moment that the City braces for a resurgence of COVID-19. Forcing people to share dorms, meals, sinks, toilets, and poorly-ventilated air, and having people constantly coming in and out of custody and moving from facility to facility goes against everything public health experts have told us. This makes us all less safe, and particularly threatens the Black, Latinx, and working class communities that were already disproportionately devastated by the pandemic. New York needs a commitment from all stakeholders, from prosecutors to lawmakers, to resume decarceration and help New Yorkers protect themselves and each other from this deadly virus.”

Background: On July 2, 2020, the day bail reform rollbacks took effect, there were [2,909 people](#) languishing pretrial in New York City jails. As of October 10, 2020, there were [3,364 people](#) held pretrial in local jails. This amounts to an increase of 455 people. This increase reflects even larger number of people who are admitted to New York City jails and exposed to others there, as people cycle in and out and every day.

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