



October 23, 2020

Contact:

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

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

***Legal Aid Calls on Cuomo, DOCCS to Immediately Release  
Vulnerable New Yorkers at COVID-19 Hotspot Prisons***

***As of October 21, 2020, Elmira C.F. has 337 Positive Virus Cases***

(NEW YORK, NY) – **The Legal Aid Society** called on Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) to release vulnerable New Yorkers incarcerated in prisons where COVID-19 is spreading unchecked. The call comes after 337 New Yorkers tested positive for COVID-19 at Elmira Correctional Facility, up from only three on October 1, 2020. Since March, 18 New Yorkers have died in DOCCS’ custody from COVID-19 and over 1,200 have tested positive. For those who have been infected, the lingering effects and long-term complications of the virus remain unknown.

Elmira is not the only facility in New York’s prison system grappling with exponential COVID-19 increases; Cayuga Correctional Facility, Clinton Correctional Facility, Greene Correctional Facility and Sing Sing Correctional Facility are all struggling with alarming COVID-19 outbreaks.

“The second wave of COVID-19 has reached New York’s prison system, and our clients are defenseless against the virus, particularly because DOCCS has proven itself unable to implement an adequate COVID-19 mitigation strategy,” said **Stefen Short, Supervising Attorney with the Prisoners’ Rights Project at The Legal Aid Society**. “Each day, the situation grows more dire.

Our clients' lives hang in the balance. The Governor and DOCCS must do the right thing by releasing our vulnerable clients now."

Latest DOCCS COVID-19 cases: <https://legalaidnyc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/October-21-DOCCS-COVID-19-Confirmed-by-Facility.pdf>

###

*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](http://www.legalaidnyc.org)*