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

As Two More Incarcerated New Yorkers Succumb to COVID-19 in DOCCS' Custody, Legal Aid Calls for Meaningful Release

24 New Yorkers Incarcerated in NYS Prisons Have Now Died From COVID-19; Another 3,100 Have Been Infected with the Virus

(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 New Yorkers who are vulnerable to COVID-19 as [two more incarcerated people have died](#) from the virus in as many days. This brings the total death count to 24 avoidable deaths. Another 3,101 New Yorkers incarcerated at state prisons have been infected with the virus since the pandemic began. For those who have been infected, the lingering effects and long-term complications of the virus remain unknown.

“It’s unconscionable that, despite the rising death toll and over 3,000 confirmed cases, Governor Cuomo and DOCCS continue to ignore the humanitarian crisis endangering thousands of lives across New York State,” said **Stefen Short, Supervising Attorney of the Prisoners’ Rights Project at The Legal Aid Society**. “Release of a meaningful number of incarcerated individuals, particularly those especially vulnerable to the virus, serves both to protect those individuals and to allow others, who remain in DOCCS custody, to engage in the type of social distancing that is the best protection against further spread of the disease. It is the only remaining solution to stave off additional loss of life. Anything short of a meaningful release initiative is a dereliction of the State’s duty.”

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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