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

## ***Number of New Yorkers Incarcerated in City Jails on Technical Parole Violations Hits Nine Month High***

### ***Legal Aid Calls on Albany to “Enact the Less is More Act” Immediately***

(NEW YORK, NY) – The Legal Aid Society called on Governor Andrew Cuomo, Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie to enact the “Less is More Act” - legislation that would overhaul New York’s parole system - in response to [data](#) which shows that the number of New Yorkers incarcerated in City jails on technical parole violations - [244 people as of February 9, 2021](#) - has reached a nine month high.

New York State incarcerates people found to have committed technical parole violations more than any other state in the country, except for Illinois. Such violations often include missing curfew, failing to report to a parole officer, failing to update contact information with parole, and failing a marijuana test, among other non-criminal acts.

Unlike in the criminal court context, where bail is available following arrest, when someone is charged with committing a technical parole violation, their incarceration is mandatory and they’re held in jail until their parole revocation hearing takes place. This often leaves Legal Aid clients incarcerated at Rikers Island or another City jail for weeks and months at a time. This mandatory detention tears clients from their families, their homes, their employment and community-based health care.

Three New Yorkers incarcerated locally have succumbed to the virus since March. Two of those persons were incarcerated on a technical parole violation.

According to a recent report from Columbia University, while the number of New Yorkers incarcerated pretrial and on City sentences have declined in recent years, the number of those people incarcerated on technical parole violations remains stubbornly high.

The Less Is More Act, which has already garnered support from prosecutors and public defenders alike, would provide much-needed reforms to the administration of parole supervision by eliminating incarceration for most minor non-criminal violations, requiring prompt judicial review of parole warrants, placing caps on revocation

sanctions, and providing incentives for parole compliance by shortening supervision terms based on good behavior.

“Every year, thousands of Black and Latinx New Yorkers are sent back to prison for technical violations of parole although they pose no risk to public safety. Their lives are upended, their families are torn apart and they face serious risk of contracting COVID-19 in prison, all because they missed an office report or tested positive for marijuana,” said **Phil Desgranges, Supervising Attorney of the Special Litigation Unit with the Criminal Defense Practice at The Legal Aid Society**. “Albany needs to enact the ‘Less Is More Act’, which would keep our clients safe in their communities, stable in their jobs, and create incentives to earn early discharge from parole supervision. Less Is More is supported by a broad statewide coalition — from public defenders and faith communities to sheriffs and district attorneys — and we urge Albany to enact this critical legislation immediately.”

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