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Contact:

Daniel Ball, Brooklyn Defender Services (Dball@bds.org)

Ryan Karerat, The Bronx Defenders (RKarerat@bronxdefenders.org)

Redmond Haskins, The Legal Aid Society (RHaskins@legal-aid.org)

Sam McCann, The Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem (SMccann@ndsny.org)

Lupe Todd-Medina, New York County Defender Services (LToddmedina@nycds.org)

Hettie Powell, Queens Defenders (HPowell@queensdefenders.org)

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

NYC Defenders Call for an end to All Recordings of Phone Calls Made by New Yorkers Incarcerated in City Jails

Attorneys Also Call on City to not Renew its Contract with Securus, Which is Slated to Expire March 31

(NEW YORK, NY) – The Legal Aid Society, Brooklyn Defender Services, The Bronx Defenders, Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem, New York County Defender Services, and Queens Defenders called for an immediate end to all recording of phone calls made by people incarcerated in New York City jails. The [recent disclosure](#) of illegal recordings of privileged attorney phone calls highlights the intrusive practice of recording phone calls made by people who have no other way to communicate with their parents, children, loved ones, and legal counsel.

The New York City Public Defenders stated, “The City and Securus have failed incarcerated New Yorkers and undermined the very foundation of our legal system. This problem is far more widespread than anyone could have expected, impacting hundreds and possibly thousands of people who believed their phone calls were not being recorded and needed to have an open conversation with their legal representative.

The Department has failed to ensure that the constitutional right of incarcerated New Yorkers to consult with counsel is protected and respected, and has not acted on the well-established fact that Securus’s system cannot be trusted despite significant evidence of these failings in New York and around the country.

Perhaps even more importantly, though, this highlights the pernicious policy of recording calls at all. Even if legal calls were properly protected, conversations with family are intimate and should not be subject to surveillance. In addition, since many of our clients seek the advice of their trusted family and friends when it comes to decisions about their case, it is almost impossible to truly protect an incarcerated person’s rights when conversations are overheard and recorded. We demand an immediate end to recording of any phone calls made by New Yorkers incarcerated at New York City’s jails.

People in City jails, particularly through the pandemic, are isolated and afraid, facing unsafe conditions and few visits. The impact of their only lifeline being recorded, monitored, and even overtly mocked by State actors, is unacceptable. And the impact on communities of color, who bear the brunt of both incarceration and COVID-19, makes this an urgent issue for New York City.

Securus is a private company that makes profit on incarceration, and although the City recently changed its rules to allow for free calls within the City, there is no place for private for-profit services in our jails or prisons. Given

all of this, New York City must not renew its contract with Securus, which is scheduled to expire at the end of this month.”

The Defenders plan to raise this issue today at two separate City Council hearings including the [Committee on Public Safety](#) and the [Committee on Criminal Justice](#).

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