

THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY

Justice in Every Borough.

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Contact:

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

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

Legal Aid Statement on NYS Marijuana Legalization

(NEW YORK, NY) – Anne Oredeko, Supervising Attorney of the Racial Justice Unit, and Anthony Posada, Supervising Attorney of the Community Justice Unit at The Legal Aid Society, issued the following joint statement in response to news that Albany leaders have agreed on final legislative language to legalize marijuana:

“For decades, New York State’s racist war on marijuana ensnared thousands of our clients - nearly all of whom are from Black and Latinx communities - and other New Yorkers from communities of color across the state, resulting in needless incarceration and a host of other devastating consequences.

This landmark legislation brings justice to New York State by ending prohibition, expunging conviction records that have curtailed the opportunities of countless predominately young Black and Latinx New Yorkers, and delivers economic justice to ensure that communities who have suffered the brunt of aggressive and disparate marijuana enforcement are first in line to reap the economic gain.

The Legal Aid Society thanks our leaders in Albany for securing this result, and we look forward to working with lawmakers to ensure that this bill is properly implemented.”

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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 145 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