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*****MEDIA ADVISORY*****

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**Defenders, Advocates Call on Mayor & City Council to Take Action to End Harmful NYPD Practices
Depriving Black & Brown New Yorkers of their Personal Property**

New York, NY - On Wednesday, April 28th, Defenders and Advocates will rally on Zoom to call on the Mayor and City Council to end harmful NYPD property seizure practices that deprive New Yorkers of their cell phones, cars, and other personal property for months, and sometimes years. Most of the New Yorkers targeted by the NYPD are low-income Black and brown people who can least afford the long-term seizure of their property.

During the pandemic, as court cases linger on for months without end, NYPD's policy to seize and voucher the personal property of an arrested person is particularly harmful. Youth are deprived of devices necessary to attend virtual school and court-mandated programming and adults are deprived of their cars and cell phones necessary to ensure they can work and support their families. The city must enact common-sense reform to ensure that most people are able to easily retrieve any seized property and that in the rare case where personal property constitutes evidence in the case, that they are afforded due process to challenge that assessment.

WHAT: Virtual rally and press conference. [Must register in advance.](#)

WHEN: Wednesday, April 28th, 9:30-10 am

WHERE: Online via zoom (link provided upon RSVP)

WHO: Council Member Adrienne Adams and racial justice, community-based, legal services, and advocacy organizations including: Bronx Defenders, Brooklyn Defender Services, Center for Community Alternatives, Families Rising, Getting Out & Staying Out, Legal Aid Society, New York County Defender Services, Teachers United, Youth for Justice, and Youth Represent.

BACKGROUND:

- When someone is arrested in New York City, the NYPD confiscates their property, which can include the car they are in, their cell phone, their wallet and any cash.
- The property should be vouchered for "safekeeping" and returned to the owner as soon as he or she can pick it up, unless it is evidence in the case.
- Yet increasingly, NYPD voucher phones and other property as "arrest evidence" or "investigatory evidence," forcing New Yorkers to embark on a sometimes-months-long quest to retrieve their property, navigating a process that is confusing and not transparent.
- [NYPD data shows](#) that the department seized more than 55,000 phones in 2020, but only 60% of people successfully retrieved their phones. In 2020, NYPD failed to return 22,000 phones to their owners.

- Youth, in particular, have been harmed by the NYPD’s seizure policy during the pandemic, as their phones and DOE-issued laptops are a lifeline to ensure they can access remote schooling, court appearances and court-mandated programming, as chronicled in a [recent report by The City](#).

In a [statement released earlier this month](#), Mayor de Blasio said that his office will be “reviewing internal procedures to see how, if at all, the process can be expedited given the [virus-related] disruption to the criminal justice system.”

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