



**BROOKLYN
DEFENDER
SERVICES**

**THE
LEGAL AID
SOCIETY**
Justice in Every Borough.

**The Bronx
Defenders**
Redefining public defense

May 20, 2021

Contacts:

Alejandra Lopez, The Legal Aid Society, AiLopez@legal-aid.org, 917-294-9348

Daniel Ball Brooklyn Defender Services, dball@bds.org

Ryan Karerat, The Bronx Defenders, rkarerat@bronxdefenders.org

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

NYIFUP Urges Enactment of the Dignity Not Detention Act in New York State

Proposed Legislation Would End Immigration Detention Contracts with ICE in New York State

(New York, NY) – **The Legal Aid Society, Brooklyn Defender Services, and The Bronx Defenders** – New York City’s defender organizations providing free legal representation to detained immigrants through the New York Immigrant Family Unity Project (NYIFUP) – today released a [memorandum in support](#) of the **Dignity Not Detention Act**, sponsored by Assembly Member Karines Reyes ([A.7099A](#)) and Senator Julia Salazar (*bill no. pending*), upon its introduction in the New York State Legislature. **NYIFUP** also released the following statement:

“ICE enforcement and detention is racist, inhumane, and a danger to us all. It separates families, subjects people to the extensive trauma and harms of incarceration, deprives people of basic human needs and rights, and has killed hundreds of people. Yet in New York State, numerous county and city jails are paid by ICE to incarcerate people solely because of where they were born.

The Dignity Not Detention Act comes at a critical moment as the Biden Administration begins to reckon with the violence of the immigration detention system. Just today, ICE announced it will cut the contracts of two detention facilities, Irwin County Detention Center in Ocilla, Georgia, and the Bristol County Detention Center in North Dartmouth, Massachusetts. The end of these contracts is an important first step in ending ICE detention nationwide, and it is time for New York to join this growing movement.

The Dignity Not Detention Act will get New York State out of the immigrant detention business, putting an end to the inhumane and unnecessary incarceration of immigrants in New York jails and curtailing ICE enforcement by limiting its space to detain people.

The deportation machine must end in all of its forms, and this legislation is one critical step New York can take to reduce its power and scope.”

BACKGROUND: The New York Family Immigrant Unity Project (NYIFUP) is the nation’s first public defender system for immigrants facing deportation—defined as those in removal proceedings before an immigration judge. Funded by the New York City Council since July 2014, the program provides a free attorney to almost all detained indigent immigrants facing deportation at the Varick Street Immigration Court in New York City.

###