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

***Legal Aid Statement on Governor Cuomo Granting Clemency to Ten
Deserving New Yorkers***

(NEW YORK, NY) - The Legal Aid Society released the following statement in response to outgoing Governor Andrew Cuomo commuting the sentences of five individuals, and fully pardoning five more.

“We are pleased by the news that the Governor has granted clemency to our client George Martinez, who is 60 years old and is serving a harsh 17 ½ to life sentence for his role in a non-violent burglary. Mr. Martinez has used his time in prison to further his education and hone his skills as a cook, and he has remained close with his father, children, and grandchildren. He looks forward to living with his son in the Bronx and continuing to work as a cook. Mr. Martinez’s application for clemency was prepared by The Legal Aid Society together with pro bono partner Shearman & Sterling.

While we are thankful for the good news for Mr. Martinez, we urge the Governor to use his remaining time in office to provide clemency to the many New Yorkers who are eligible for this relief. Given the longtime over-incarceration of poor New Yorkers—particularly People of Color—the Governor should act boldly to commute the sentences of the many individuals who are serving harsh sentences and who are ready to return to their families and to their communities.”

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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.

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