

# THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY

Justice in Every Borough.

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

## ***Legal Aid Calls on Governor Hochul to Sign Two Critical Bills to Advance Juvenile Justice in NYS***

### ***S.6598/A.7796 Would Limit the Use of Restraints on Children in Family Court***

### ***S.7172/A.7601 Improves Access to Due Process for Detained Youth***

(NEW YORK, NY) – **The Legal Aid Society** called on Governor Kathy Hochul to sign two critical bills - S.6598/A.7796 and S.7172/A.7601 - to help reform New York’s juvenile justice system, which were just transmitted from the New York State Legislature to her office for consideration.

S.6598/A.7796 would prohibit the use of mechanical restraints on children appearing in Family Court unless a judge finds, after a hearing, that the restraint is the least restrictive alternative necessary to prevent physical injury to the child or another person, physically disruptive courtroom behavior or flight from the courtroom. In addition, the bill sets evidentiary requirements for establishing physically disruptive courtroom behavior and risk of flight, and limits the use of restraints to handcuffs or footcuffs that cannot be joined together.

S.7172/A.7601 would require that when a youth is returned on a warrant in a juvenile delinquency matter and the Family Court is not in session, the young person be brought before the most accessible magistrate, if any, designated by the appellate division. In determining whether the youth will be detained or released, the magistrate shall apply the Family Court Act.

“These bills address two problematic areas in the juvenile justice system that need reform now, ensuring that young New Yorkers are not subject to harm due to needless and prejudicial shackling in the courtroom, and ensuring that our clients are not detained longer than necessary as a result of the timing of a return on a warrant,” said **Dawne Mitchell, Attorney-in-Charge of the Juvenile Rights Practice**. “The Legal Aid Society thanks the Legislature for passing these measures and we urge Governor Hochul to sign them into law at once.”

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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. [www.legalaidnyc.org](http://www.legalaidnyc.org)*