

October 21, 2021

Contact:

Redmond Haskins, The Legal Aid Society (rhaskins@legal-aid.org)

Sam McCann, Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem (SMccann@ndsny.org)

Daniel Ball, Brooklyn Defender Services (DBall@bds.org)

Emily Whitfield, The Bronx Defenders (Ewhitfield@bronxdefenders.org)

Hettie Powell, Queens Defenders (hpowell@queensdefenders.org)

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

NYC Defenders Decry Commencement of Transfers of Women and Transgender People on Rikers Island to Upstate Prisons

Initial Transfers of People from the Rose M. Singer Center in NYC to the Bedford Hills and Taconic Correctional Facilities Begin Today

(NEW YORK, NY) – **The Legal Aid Society, Brooklyn Defender Services, The Bronx Defenders, Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem, and Queens Defenders** decried the commencement of Mayor Bill de Blasio and Governor Kathy Hochul’s plan to transfer nearly all of the women and transgender people currently in detention on Rikers Island to two upstate prisons operated by the state’s Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS).

The NYC Defenders stated: “This morning, the first group of people have been transferred from the Rose M. Singer Center to upstate prisons, away from their families, friends, attorneys, social workers, and support networks. This ill-conceived plan was developed without the input of the women and transgender people - those directly impacted by the move - nor their advocates.

This decision was a false choice, and Governor Hochul and Mayor de Blasio could have urged that people be released to programs to keep them in New York City close to loved ones and services. Both offices ignored this obvious and humane approach but instead opted for a political stunt.

These New Yorkers signed a [petition](#), and begged Albany and City Hall not to force them away from their family and community, which inflicts life-altering pain and trauma. This decision infringes on incarcerated people’s rights. We stand in solidarity with the people incarcerated at Rose M. Singer, and will continue to fight these transfers and stand ready to file litigation if necessary.”

###