

THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY

Justice in Every Borough.

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

Legal Aid Statement on Governor Hochul Signing Legislation That Will Allow New Yorkers Initially Eligible But Denied Youthful Offender Status the Opportunity to Apply for Retroactive Designation

(NEW YORK, NY) - Tina Luongo, Attorney-In-Charge of the Criminal Defense Practice at The Legal Aid Society, issued the following statement in response to Governor Kathy Hochul signing legislation (S.282/A.6769) that allows New Yorkers who were convicted for crimes committed when they were younger than the age of 19, and eligible for youthful offender status, but denied the designation to reapply for youthful offender status retroactively:

“Youth should not have to shoulder the consequences of a criminal conviction for a lifetime, and these punitive laws only hurt our communities rather than keeping them safe. Creating lifelong barriers for behavior that has been shown, for the most part, to be time-limited is an unnecessarily harsh consequence for young people and fails to support true community safety.

Relieving the civil consequences of a conviction will allow many young people, particularly young people of color, to meaningfully join the workforce and housing market and reach their full potential as contributing members of our communities.

The Legal Aid Society thanks Governor Hochul for enacting S.282/A.6769, and bill sponsors Senator Zellnor Myrie and Assembly Member Alicia Hyndman and former Assembly Member Aravella Simotas for their unwavering support on this critical issue.”

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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 145 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