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Redmond Haskins
The Legal Aid Society
rhaskins@legal-aid.org
(929) 441-2384

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

Advocates Call on City Council to Pass Critical Package of Legislation to Provide Oversight and Accountability for Families and Children in Foster Care

(NEW YORK, NY) – The Legal Aid Society, Brooklyn Defender Services, The Children’s Law Center, Lawyers For Children, Center for Family Representation, The Bronx Defenders, and Neighborhood Defender Service called on Speaker Corey Johnson, Majority Leader Laurie Cumbo, Minority Leader Steven Matteo, and the Members of the New York City Council to pass Int. No. 2419, Int. No. 2420, and Int. No. 1358 - three bills that are essential to ensure that New York City fulfills its duty to children and youth placed in foster care.

- Int. 2419 will provide critical oversight over how long children in foster care are kept in temporary congregate placement facilities overseen by the Administration of Children’s Services (“ACS”).
- Int. 2420 will require ACS to audit and report on its system of providing mandated notice to attorneys for children and parents when children are moved through the foster care system.
- Finally, Int. 1358 will require ACS to provide data about the prescription of psychotropic medication for children in ACS custody.

“Through our work representing children placed in foster care, as well as families thrust into the child welfare system, we know that transparency and accountability are essential elements of oversight of the system. These bills are necessary to enhance City Council’s oversight of ACS and better serve children while in foster care,” said **Dawne Mitchell, Attorney-in-Charge of the Juvenile Rights Practice at The Legal Aid Society**. “We urge the Council to pass these critical bills immediately.”

“These bills are critical to ensure that ACS provides timely, appropriate placements for children; provides proper notice to children’s parents and attorneys when children are moved from one placement to another; and curtails

the overuse of psychotropic medication on children in foster care. We urge the Council to pass this package of bills, which will help to reduce the trauma inflicted on children who spend weeks or months in the Children's Center awaiting placement, who are cut off from their families when they move from placement to placement, and who are treated for that traumatic experience with a cocktail of psychotropic medications," said **Karen Freedman, Executive Director of Lawyers For Children.**

"Transparency and accountability to children and families involved with child welfare, advocates and the community at large promotes the safety and well-being of New York City children," said **Karen P. Simmons, Executive Director of The Children's Law Center.**

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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