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

## ***NYC Defenders Release 2022 Statewide Criminal Legal System Reform Priorities***

### ***Attorneys Call on Hochul, Stewart-Cousins and Heastie to Enact the Priorities Immediately***

**(NEW YORK, NY) - The Legal Aid Society, Brooklyn Defender Services, The Bronx Defenders, New York County Defender Services, Queens Defenders and Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem [called](#) on Governor Kathy Hochul, Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, and Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie to [enact](#) an ambitious agenda of urgent and necessary criminal legal system reforms when session convenes next month.**

The letter states:

*We applaud Albany's passage of marijuana legalization, elimination of long-term solitary confinement, repeal of the walking while trans ban, and overhaul of New York's draconian parole revocation process. Each victory was the result of tireless advocacy by communities directly impacted by New York's criminal legal system.*

*Despite those victories, thousands of our clients continue to suffer from decades of carceral policies that have bred lethal conditions in New York's jails<sup>1</sup> and prisons,<sup>2</sup> unchecked surveillance,<sup>3</sup> permanent disenfranchisement, categorical denial of alternatives to incarceration,<sup>4</sup> and coercive bail. The devastating effects of those policies have been borne by Black and Latinx communities for decades and have been on raw display at Rikers Island where our clients have been stripped of human dignity. <sup>5</sup> The images below are a sampling of the humanitarian crisis currently taking place in New York City's jails, where 16 people have died.*

*We urge your offices to do everything in your power to reduce the number of people being held inside these jails and to reduce the number of people being sent to jail across the state. Albany must lead by enacting legislation that invests in communities, not cages, overhauls our racist parole system, seals records and empowers New Yorkers, reduces law enforcement budgets, curbs discriminatory hyper-surveillance, protects New York's immigrant communities, recognizes the harm of family separation caused by removal of children from their parents and placing them in the foster system, and protects young people who deserve compassion, not incarceration.*

*And we must defend critical reforms — bail, discovery reform, and Raise the Age legislation principal among them. The legislation we are championing below is a reinvestment: not in expanding dangerous jails and prisons, but in the communities disproportionately targeted by our criminal legal system*

## **We urge Governor Hochul to sign the following bills:**

- Ensure the Right to a Jury Trial for All – S689 (Hoylman) / A4319 (Dinowitz)
- Technical Fixes to Driver’s License Suspension Reform Act – S7053 (Kennedy) / A7874A (Hunter)

## **We urge the Legislature to pass the following critical bills:**

### Overhaul New York’s Costly, Racially Discriminatory Parole System

- Elder Parole – S15 (Hoylman) / A3475 (De La Rosa) and Fair and Timely Parole – S1415 (Rivera) / A4231 (Weprin)

### Empower Communities and Support Civic Engagement

- Enact Clean Slate Legislation to Create Broad Automatic Record Clearance – S1553C (Myrie) / A6399A (Cruz)
- End Predatory Court Fees – S3979C (Salazar) / A2348B (Niou)

### Build Communities Not Cages: Overhaul New York’s Punitive Sentencing Laws

New York’s current sentencing laws strip judges of discretion, grant outsized power to prosecutors, fail to account for personal transformation, and drive mass incarceration. This session legislators will introduce three bills to overhaul New York’s sentencing laws including: (1) legislation that will eliminate mandatory minimums and predicate sentencing enhancements and create a statutory presumption against incarceration, (2) legislation that will allow judges to review and reconsider excessive sentences where a person has served 10 years or more in prison, and (3) legislation that will afford incarcerated people more opportunities to earn “good time” and “merit time” to account for personal transformation and reunite families.

### Expand Youthful Offender Status, Create Young Adult Status

- Youth Justice and Opportunities Act – A3536A (O’Donnell) / S5749A (Myrie)

### Expand Alternatives to Incarceration

- Treatment Not Jail – S2881A (Ramos) / A8524 (Forrest)

### Improve Conditions of Confinement

- The Gender Identity Respect and Dignity Act – S6677(Salazar) / A7001 (Rozić)
- Freedom from Forced Labor – Two Acts – S308 (Myrie) / A3142 (Epstein)

### Hold Law Enforcement Accountable

- Banning Qualified Immunity – S1991 (Jackson) / A4331 (Hunter)

### Protect Immigrant Communities

- The New York for All Act S3076A (Salazar) /A2328 (Reyes)

### Shrink the Penal Law to Reduce Discriminatory Enforcement

- Stop Violence in the Sex Trades – S3075 (Salazar) / A849 (Gottfried)

## Ban Invasive and Dangerous Surveillance

- End Rogue DNA Databanks – S1347 (Hoylman) / A6124 (Zinerman)
- Prohibit Use of Biometric Surveillance – S79 (Hoylman) / A5492 (Glick)
- Protect Our Privacy (POP) Act – S675 (Ramos) / A3311 (Kim)
- Prohibit Geofence Searches – S296A (Myrie) / A84A (Quart)

## Secure Due Process Protections

- Protect Fundamental Rights to Appellate Review – S1280 and S1281 (Bailey) / A5687 and A5688
- Address Wrongful Convictions through Post-Conviction Reform – S266 (Myrie) / A98 (Quart)
- Promote Pre-Trial Stability and Ensure Judicial Review of Orders of Protection (PromPT Stability Act) – S2832B (Ramos) / A4558B (Quart)
- Preclude Introduction of Confessions Obtained by Deceptive Tactics (The “Exonerated 5 Bill”) – S324A (Myrie)
- End the Lifetime Felony Ban on Jury Duty Service – S1014 (Benjamin) / A2377 (Aubry)

## Protect Young People

- Increase Protections for Youth Interrogated by Police – S2800B (Bailey) / A5891B (Joyner)
- Family Court Delinquency Discovery Reform – S4554 (Bailey) / A4952 (Joyner)
- Exclusionary School Discipline – S7198 (Jackson) / A5197 (Nolan)

## Increase Transparency in Pre-Arrest Detention

- Transparency in Police Custody – S1184A (Gianaris) / A5264 (Richardson)

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