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

Legal Aid Calls for Immediate Action From Hochul Administration to Protect Over One Million New Yorkers at Risk of Losing Heat or Electricity

New York Must Extend Protections for Vulnerable Tenants Facing January Utility Shutoffs Amidst Omicron Surge

(NEW YORK, NY) - **The Legal Aid Society**, in a recently issued letter, called on Kathy Hochul's Administration to immediately extend the statewide utility shutoff moratorium - which is set to expire January 3, 2022 - to protect struggling households who are still reeling financially from the COVID-19 pandemic. Extending the moratorium will avert disaster for more than 1.3 million households, and avoid the public health consequences that would occur from water, telephone, internet and energy being disconnected in the midst of a surging COVID-19 variant.

"Many New Yorkers who are behind on their bills because of the pandemic could have critical utilities disconnected, which is both unconscionable and extremely dangerous while temperatures drop and COVID-19 surges," **said Kathleen Kelleher, Staff Attorney with the Civil Law Reform Unit at The Legal Aid Society.** "Governor Hochul must extend the utility moratorium to protect tenants suffering crushing utility debt from experiencing a massive disruption of access to fundamental utility services. Extending the moratorium until the spring will ensure that struggling tenants at risk of utility disruption stay safe and warm in their homes this winter."

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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