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

## ***Legal Aid Releases 2022 Statewide Child Welfare and Juvenile Legal System Legislative Agenda***

(NEW YORK, NY) – The Legal Aid Society released its 2022 statewide child welfare and juvenile legal system legislative [agenda](#) calling on Albany to enact a sweeping package of reforms to improve the lives of young New Yorkers.

Reforms to New York’s juvenile legal system include prohibiting the interrogation of youth until they have counsel, sealing and expunging juvenile delinquency records, ending draconian suspension practices that feed the school to prison pipeline, curbing discriminatory hyper-surveillance, and providing fair discovery in delinquency proceedings. Lawmakers must also defend the reforms brought by New York’s historic Raise the Age legislation.

Reforms to child welfare include adequately funding preventive services to support families, overhauling the State Central Register to reduce abuse, protecting the Social Security benefits of children in foster care, providing adequate resources for youth aging out of foster care, and prohibiting discrimination against unmarried parents.

“Our clients continue to suffer from decades of deeply flawed practices in both the juvenile legal system and child welfare, forever shaping the lives of Black and Latinx children and families,” said **Dawne Mitchell, Attorney-in-Charge of the Juvenile Rights Practice at The Legal Aid Society**. “This package of legislation reinvests in children and families and ushers in key overdue reforms to these broken systems, and we call on Governor Hochul, Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins and Speaker Heastie to enact these measures immediately this session.”

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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](http://www.legalaidnyc.org)*