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

## ***Legal Aid Releases 2022 Statewide Child Welfare and Juvenile Legal System Post-Budget Legislative Priorities***

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

With regard to the juvenile legal system, Legal Aid calls on Albany to enact legislation that would prohibit the interrogation of youth until they have counsel; reduce collateral consequences that follow young people into adulthood by preserving the confidentiality of juvenile delinquency records and providing for their expungement; end draconian suspension practices that feed the school to prison pipeline; clarify that discriminatory hyper-surveillance is prohibited; and provide fair discovery in delinquency proceedings.

On child welfare, lawmakers should prioritize reforms that adequately fund preventive services to support families, overhaul the State Central Register to reduce abuse, provide adequate resources for youth aging out of foster care, and prohibit discrimination against unmarried parents.

“Our clients continue to suffer from decades of deeply flawed practices in both the juvenile legal and child welfare systems that forever shape 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. The Legal Aid Society calls 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 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](http://www.legalaidnyc.org)*