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

In Response to NYT Exposé, Legal Aid Calls on Local DAs to Better Hold Accountable Unscrupulous Actors Who Commit Deed Theft

(NEW YORK, NY) – The Legal Aid Society, in response to a *New York Times* [exposé](#) on rampant deed theft throughout New York City, called on local District Attorneys to better hold accountable those unscrupulous actors who commit deed theft, and on New York State lawmakers to codify tools to ensure that victims of deed theft are properly compensated for their losses.

According to the report, from July 2014 through February 2022, there were more than 3,350 complaints of deed theft in New York City, with more than half occurring in Brooklyn. However, the Brooklyn District Attorney’s Office has brought charges in only 27 deed theft cases since 2014. The report also notes that, although deed theft cases have fallen since a peak of 665 in 2015 to 154 in 2021, these numbers are likely to spike due to the recent lifting of moratoriums and other protections for homeowners.

“Deed theft disproportionately impacts the New Yorkers we serve - the elderly, disabled, Black and Latinx households - stripping our clients of their most significant asset, while compounding the local housing crisis,” said **Oda Friedheim, supervising attorney with the Foreclosure Prevention Unit at The Legal Aid Society**. “This alarming report reveals that local District Attorneys have failed to sufficiently hold these unscrupulous actors accountable. Prosecutors also play a role in the fight against housing injustices, and this dereliction of duty must be remedied immediately.”

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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 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