

April 17, 2023

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

***With Lawmakers Back in Albany, Legal Aid Calls on Legislators to Hold the Line
Against Governor Hochul’s Proposed Rollbacks to Bail, Discovery Reforms***

(NEW YORK, NY) - **The Legal Aid Society** released the following statement in response to lawmakers returning to Albany to negotiate New York’s Fiscal Year 2024 budget and Governor Kathy Hochul’s proposed rollbacks to bail and discovery reforms:

“Governor Hochul continues to delay the budget, now for a third time, to ram through her regressive changes to New York’s successful bail and discovery reform statutes. This process epitomizes flawed policy making and failed leadership, depriving New Yorkers of any opportunity to voice their concerns about the proposals.

“The Governor has stated, on-the-record, that the data on bail reform has not [contributed to any significant increase in crime rates](#), yet she is demanding wholesale changes to the law that will end up jailing more Black and Latinx New Yorkers who lack the financial means to secure their own liberty. This cynical campaign is one of political calculus, not rooted in the facts, to advance a short-sighted electoral agenda.

“The last-minute push to return New York’s evidence sharing practices to an era when prosecutors had carte blanche over when and what to disclose would prove equally catastrophic.

“The current proposal would once again place the burden on the defense to demand discovery and enable prosecutors to avoid consequences for their inaction or withholding of evidence. This all is driven by non-practitioners at the behest of law enforcement and would upend the criminal legal system statewide to the detriment of our clients and overall fairness.

“Funding, which the 2019 reform failed to include, is the solution, and we fully support proposed appropriations of resources to District Attorney’s offices throughout New York to assist with discovery obligations.

“The Legislature failing to fend off rollbacks for a third time will only embolden the opposition and open the door to future rollbacks of other transformative reforms ushered into law in recent years, measures that took decades to enact. Lawmakers must continue to say no.”

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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