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

***Legal Aid, Coalition for the Homeless Release Letter in Opposition to City's Attempt to Eviscerate Life-Saving Right to Shelter Protections***

***Mayor Adams' Proposal Could Dramatically Increase Street Homelessness, as Seen in Cities like San Francisco and LA***

(NEW YORK, NY) – The Legal Aid Society and Coalition for the Homeless issued a [response](#) today, vigorously opposing Mayor Eric Adams' request to suspend the consent decree that grants a right to shelter for single homeless individuals in New York City.

The letter states:

*New York City has had the distinction of providing a right to shelter for single homeless individuals for over forty years, saving countless lives that would have been lost without the provision of safe shelter. Rather than propose a narrowly tailored request to temporarily modify particular standards in the Judgment that they believe are inhibiting their ability to respond to the recent influx of migrants into New York City, Defendants have proposed to eviscerate the bedrock legal protections in the Judgment and make it completely unenforceable. Doing so would relegate vulnerable people, longtime New Yorkers and recent migrants alike, to sleeping in public and unsafe spaces: on sidewalks, in parks, in the transit system, or returning to homes with people who have harmed them.*

Following the end of Title 42, New York City, as well as other sanctuary cities, has seen an [increase](#) in the number of migrants seeking asylum in City shelters. However, the Adams Administration's attempt to use the present situation as justification for turning away thousands of people in need, and effectively relegating them to city streets, is misguided and unethical.

Mass homelessness in New York City, as the letter states, is not a recent phenomenon, nor is it the sole fault of the recent influx of migrants. For forty years, the City has met its legal Right to Shelter obligations [regardless of sharp increases in demand](#) by mobilizing the resources necessary to help those in need — resources that still exist today. There are numerous common-sense ways to address the current situation that Legal Aid, the Coalition and other organizations touted for a year.

The Administration’s attempt to sidestep these practical solutions and eviscerate the right to shelter for single adults by obligating the City to provide shelter only when there are adequate “resources and capacity” is nonsensical, allowing for the City to deny shelter to unhoused people at their whim with no legal consequences. Such a move would likely dramatically increase the number of unhoused people living on New York City streets, as seen in cities like San Francisco and Los Angeles.

“Now more than ever, it is critical to uphold the provisions of New York City’s landmark Right to Shelter law in order to ensure the safety and well-being of thousands of unhoused New Yorkers,” said **Adriene Holder, chief attorney of the Civil Practice at The Legal Aid Society**. “The Adams Administration must not use temporary difficulties to justify the erasure of a law that has protected New Yorkers for decades from immeasurable harm and prevented our city from experiencing dangerous mass street homelessness.”

“The Mayor’s attempt to abdicate his moral and legal obligation to provide safe and decent shelter to those without homes is shameful, and would result in countless more people bedding down on the streets and in the transit system - something no one in our city wants to see happen,” said **Dave Giffen, Executive Director of the Coalition for the Homeless**. “The Coalition for the Homeless and Legal Aid stand with all New Yorkers in opposing anything that would cause such tremendous harm to so many people in need.”

New York City’s long-established State Constitutional Right to Shelter not only protects vulnerable New Yorkers but defines the city as a whole. Any attempt to diminish or eliminate these life-saving protections will continue to be met with vigorous opposition from Legal Aid, Coalition for the Homeless, advocacy groups, and fellow New Yorkers.

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