



Justice in Every Borough.

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

Statement in Response to NYS Assembly Reconvening Next Week to Resolve Unfinished Legislative Business

Legal Aid Demands Passage of the No Slavery in NY Act, Legislation to Increase Student Loan Assistance for Attorneys Serving the Public Interest, Key Measures to Protect NY's Rent Stabilized Housing Stock, Foster Care System Reforms and More

(NEW YORK, NY) — The Legal Aid Society, in response to Speaker Carl Heastie's announcement that the New York State Assembly will [reconvene](#) next week to resolve unfinished legislative business, released the following statement:

“When the Assembly reconvenes next week, Speaker Heastie and legislators must prioritize critically important legislation that already passed the Senate, including the No Slavery in NY Act, legislation to increase student loan aid for attorneys serving the public interest, measures to preserve New York's finite rent stabilized housing stock, foster care system reforms and more. Decisive and immediate action on these bills is especially needed as both the budget and subsequent weeks of session largely failed to advance a number of consequential legislation that our clients and their communities need and rightly deserve.”

Background

- [No Slavery in NY Act](#): This bill would abolish slavery in New York State's Constitution without exception, including for those in the custody of New York State's Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS). The legislation must pass the full Legislature again in 2025 to ensure its inclusion as a ballot referendum for the general public's consideration.

- Expand the [High Education Services Corporation/District Attorney and Indigent Legal Services Attorney Loan Forgiveness Program](#): Public defender and civil legal services offices are in the midst of an unprecedented staffing and attrition crisis, and with the federal moratorium on student loan payments sunseting later this year, lawmakers must prioritize this bill's passage to ensure that attorneys serving the public interest have additional resources to assist with student loan payments.
- [Challenging Wrongful Convictions Act](#): The Act improves the existing framework in New York State that allows those who pleaded guilty to file a claim of actual innocence only if DNA evidence emerges – a framework that few cases can meet, even as huge numbers of people plead guilty when they did not commit the crime. This bill also brings New York law in line with five other states and the District of Columbia that have mechanisms for people to clear old convictions for crimes that have subsequently been decriminalized.
- [Coverage for All](#): An estimated 245,000 uninsured New Yorkers ages 19-65 are excluded from federally funded health insurance (such as Medicaid and the Essential Plan) because of their immigration status. This bill would solve this problem by expanding the Essential Plan for all low-income New Yorkers who meet income requirements (up to 250% of the federal poverty level).
- [Wage Theft Attachment Act](#): This bill would strengthen current laws to increase the likelihood that victims of wage theft will be able to secure payment of unpaid wages for work already performed from their employers. It would create a new ground for attachment, allowing victims of wage theft to seek attachment of the employers' assets during the pendency of a court action, among other provisions.
- [Preserving Family Bonds Act](#): This bill would provide Family Court judges with discretion to order continued contact between children and their families of origin after a parent's rights are involuntarily terminated when it is in the child's best interest to do so. Post-termination contact with parents and/or siblings can reduce trauma experienced by many children removed from their families, promote child wellbeing and enhance the stability of adoptive families.
- [S2980/A6216](#): This legislation would address “[frankensteining](#),” a practice that has grown following the implementation of the Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act of 2019 where landlords combine rent-regulated apartments to evict or increase rents on tenants.
- [S2943/A4047](#): The pool of rent regulated apartments in New York contains an unacceptably high number of apartments in which the current rents are based on prior rents that exceeded the legal regulated rent at the time they were charged. This bill will amend the Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act of 2019 to clarify the rent history timeframe when determining rent overcharges.
- [S962/A1920](#): This bill creates the Center for Employee Ownership, housed within the State University of New York, to support the expansion of employee-owned enterprises or worker cooperative businesses.

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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