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

Joint Statement from Legal Aid, Coalition for the Homeless in Response to the City's Plan to Shelter Families with Children in Semi-Congregate Settings at Floyd Bennett Field

Attorneys, Advocates also Respond to Official News that the City Will Limit Shelter Stays to 60-Days for Families with Children

(NEW YORK, NY) – The Legal Aid Society and the Coalition for the Homeless issued the following statement responding to the City's plan to shelter families with children in semi-congregate settings at Floyd Bennett Field and limit shelter stays for the same population to just 60 days:

“As we [stated](#) last week, forcing families with children who have already endured unthinkable suffering on their journey to New York - trauma the Mayor reportedly saw with his own eyes when he visited the Darién Gap - to be denied safe shelter after 60 days is devoid of any humanity and is a stain on our city's long-standing reputation as a welcoming home for all.

“This new policy, along with the City's announcement that it will place families with children in semi-congregate settings at Floyd Bennett Field, will disrupt access to education, which has provided much needed stability for our newest neighbors, and also cause chaos for school administrators. We are also concerned about access to medical care and other vital services.

“Further, sheltering families with children in cramped and open cubicles at Floyd Bennett Field not only raises serious legal questions, but runs afoul of this Administration's previous [statements](#) to provide safe and appropriate shelter to this extremely vulnerable population.

“Private rooms, not open cubicles, are needed to ensure the safety of families with children and to reduce the transmission of infectious disease, among other obvious reasons.

“We are still waiting for specifics, but, should this plan contradict the *Boston* consent decree (which guarantees the legal right to shelter for homeless families with minor children) or relevant laws, we will have no choice but to seek an immediate injunction from the court.”

Background

Last week, religious leaders, organized labor, and advocates launched a [new coalition](#) to defend the Right to Shelter in New York. Members of the newly-formed New York Shelter for All in Need Equally Coalition — or NY SANE Coalition — came together at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church to discuss humane and sustainable solutions to meet this moment, pledged to sign a potential amicus brief in the ongoing lawsuit over the Right to Shelter, and signed letters to Mayor Eric Adams and Governor Kathy Hochul urging them to not undermine the City's long-standing Right to Shelter for all homeless individuals and families.

In September, Legal Aid, the Coalition for the Homeless and more than 100 other organizations from around New York State representing advocates, services providers, and faith groups issued a [letter](#) to Governor Kathy Hochul [urging](#) her to develop a comprehensive statewide decompression and resettlement plan for the new arrivals and to immediately prioritize deploying state resources to ensure sufficient temporary housing capacity for new arrivals and other unhoused New Yorkers.

In July, Legal Aid and the Coalition for the Homeless also called on the City to [advance a variety of reforms](#) to increase shelter capacity.

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