

# THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY

Justice in Every Borough.

April 3, 2024

Contact:

Redmond Haskins  
Director of Media Relations  
The Legal Aid Society  
[rhaskins@legal-aid.org](mailto:rhaskins@legal-aid.org)  
929.441.2384

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

## ***Legal Aid Condemns New York State for Denying Family Prison Visits and Locking In Incarcerated People For Eclipse***

(NEW YORK, NY) - The Legal Aid Society Prisoners' Rights Project condemned the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Services' (DOCCS) plan to cancel visiting at upstate prisons and to lock people into their cells during the upcoming eclipse.

According to [reporting](#), DOCCS will close 23 prisons to all visitors on eclipse day, and limit visits at other prisons. DOCCS is also locking incarcerated people into cells for several hours in the middle of the day of the eclipse.

“It is complete nonsense for state prisons to say that an eclipse means they cannot safely handle visitors and that people must be locked in cells,” said **Mary Lynne Werlwas, Director of The Legal Aid Society Prisoners' Rights Project**. “The absence of any rational connection between sunlight and visitor policy or the safe movement within a prison makes clear that this is simply an excuse to hurt families and incarcerated people. All New Yorkers must take precautions to view an eclipse safely, but this exaggerated and illogical response has nothing to do with safe viewing. We call on Governor Hochul to rescind this senseless and cynical policy, and allow ordinary visiting in all prison facilities and ordinary movement of people held therein.”

###

*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](http://www.legalaidnyc.org)*