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

***Statement on Introduction of Statewide Legislation that would Unfairly Prejudice  
New Yorkers Accused of Certain Crimes***

**(NEW YORK, NY) - Amanda Jack, Policy Director for the Criminal Defense Practice at The Legal Aid Society,** issued the following statement in response to the introduction of statewide [legislation](#) sponsored by New York State Senate Deputy Majority Leader Michael Gianaris and Assemblywoman Amy Paulin that would unfairly prejudice New Yorkers accused of certain crimes:

“This overly broad proposal would destroy a fundamental protection against wrongful convictions and unjust incarceration - in a system that already disproportionately entraps Black and Latinx New Yorkers and in a state that now ranks 3rd in the nation for wrongful convictions.

“It would undo centuries-old due process protections that ensure people receive a fair trial by making any evidence of ‘sexual assault’ automatically admissible with no balancing test and no duty upon the prosecutor to present to court why the evidence is relevant and probative to the charges at hand.

“Furthermore, it would create a definite risk of unfair prejudice to the person accused of a crime, create a confusion of the issues for the jury, promote the troubling assumption that defendants have an apparent propensity to commit the crime at trial if they have committed a similar crime in the past, and, in short, will move us so far away from any sense of fairness and due process that it must be rejected as a dangerous undoing of our system of criminal trials.”

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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. <https://www.legalaidnyc.org>*