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

Joint Statement from Legal Aid, Coalition for the Homeless Ahead of the City’s Planned Encampment Sweep of Randall’s Island Scheduled for Monday

(NEW YORK, NY) - **The Legal Aid Society** and the **Coalition for the Homeless** released the following joint statement ahead of the City’s planned encampment sweep of Randall’s Island scheduled for this coming Monday:

“Instead of uprooting new arrivals and seizing important documents, clothing, and what little belongings they have, the City should deploy trained outreach workers unaccompanied by NYPD to engage our newest neighbors and connect them with information about how to access shelter, legal services, and other resources to ensure that they are properly housed and not exposed to the elements.

“These continued sweeps are cruel, confusing, and have a chilling effect on our clients and their willingness to seek City services to which they are entitled. They further traumatize our clients and disrupt any progress they are making towards securing and maintaining employment,

completing ESL courses, and taking other steps to secure more stable housing and economic security.

“Many clients have been forced to live outside because the shelter system has not offered them the help they need. While they could reenter shelter after completing an asylum application, the City has not offered them a means to access appointments at the Asylum Application Help Center, so clients are left with no safe shelter options.

“Moreover, over the last few days, we’ve learned of troubling police behavior, including officers threatening new arrivals with ‘deportation orders’ for failing to disperse. We can surmise that officers are emboldened by the recent dangerous rhetoric coming from Mayor Eric Adams and NYPD brass calling for rollbacks of sanctuary city policies and New York City’s detainer law.

“City Hall should call off this planned sweep, bolster their outreach efforts, and better coordinate with service providers to safeguard our clients’ well-being and further public safety.”

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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 nearly 150 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.

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