

February 20, 2025

Contact:

Audrey Martin
AMartin@legal-aid.org

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

***Statement in Response to Governor Hochul Deploying National Guard Troops to
Upstate Prisons***

(NEW YORK, NY) - **The Legal Aid Society** released the following statement in response to the unauthorized work stoppage by New York State correction staff that has led Governor Kathy Hochul to deploy National Guard troops to upstate prisons:

“[According to published reports](#), New York State correctional officers in 30 facilities have abandoned their jobs to conduct an illegal strike. This alarming abdication of responsibility threatens the safety of all people inside the prisons, especially those who are particularly vulnerable and depend on staff to get food, medicine, medical care and other necessities. Indeed, our attorneys have already reported being unable to visit clients, as facilities shut down visitation from attorneys and families amid the work stoppage.

“It is deplorable that correctional officers have chosen to jeopardize the health and safety of incarcerated people to make a political point about opposition to New York’s lauded HALT Solitary law and to deflect from the brutal killing of Mr. Robert Brooks. Their actions this week only serve to reinforce The Legal Aid Society’s view that New York’s prison system is inherently brutal. This resistance to transparency and accountability gives us no confidence that DOCCS facilities can protect and respect the humanity and dignity of those in prison.

“Deploying the National Guard because DOCCS staff are not showing up to work is also gravely concerning. The Governor must ensure that the troops are there solely to provide civilian aid and support, not to serve in any military capacity. Ultimately, the Constitution places on the State the duty to ensure the safety of those it deprives of liberty.”

###

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.

<https://www.legalaidnyc.org>