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

***Statement in Response to City Jail Population Ballooning to Over 7,000
Incarcerated New Yorkers***

***If Adopted in the Final Budget, Governor Hochul’s Proposal to Repeal Discovery
Reform Would Lead to Case Delays and Further Increase Jail Populations
Throughout New York State***

(NEW YORK, NY) - **The Legal Aid Society** issued the following statement regarding the ballooning City jail population, which now [exceeds 7,000 incarcerated New Yorkers](#), and how Governor Kathy Hochul’s misguided effort to repeal discovery reform would only lead to case delays and further increase the number of New Yorkers condemned to suffer on Rikers Island:

“Make no mistake: if Governor Kathy Hochul’s misguided proposal to repeal discovery reform is adopted in the final budget this April, jail populations across the state—beyond just Rikers Island—will inevitably rise due to case delays.

“What the Governor seeks would return New York to an era when prosecutors were not required to disclose all evidence against the accused until the eve of trial – and strategically withheld evidence with complete impunity. Case resolutions were delayed as defense attorneys and their clients were deprived of critical evidence needed to make informed decisions. As a result, Legal Aid’s clients languished on Rikers Island — a facility long mired in a full-blown humanitarian crisis — for days, weeks, months, and even years, trapped by this outdated, broken system.

“What Governor Hochul has proposed is not a mere set of ‘tweaks,’ as she and others have tried to characterize, but a reincarnation of the very system that led to the same disturbing outcomes, which originally compelled the Legislature to modernize New York’s discovery statute just a few short years ago. If adopted, this proposal would increase inefficiency in the courts and further delay the resolution of cases.

“We applaud the Senate and the Assembly for rejecting this dangerous proposal in their respective one-house budgets and encourage lawmakers to stand strong and refuse to undo the progress they fought so hard to secure just a few short years ago.”

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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>