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Contact:

[Press@legal-aid.org](mailto:Press@legal-aid.org)

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

***Legal Aid Hails Senate, Assembly, and The Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic & Asian Legislative Caucus for Fighting Back Against Governor Hochul’s Attempt to Repeal Discovery Reform***

***Public Defenders Lament Governor Hochul for Exploiting the Budget Process to Ram Through Policies that Deserve Scrutiny and Debate***

(ALBANY, NY) - **The Legal Aid Society** issued the following statement on the New York State Senate, the New York State Assembly, and The Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic & Asian Legislative Caucus standing firm against Governor Kathy Hochul’s misguided attempt to repeal discovery reform:

“Reflecting the call from their constituents, many of whom are from communities of color that have long disproportionately shouldered the consequences of the criminal legal system, the Senate, the Assembly, and the Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic & Asian Legislative Caucus are rightfully pushing back against Governor Kathy Hochul’s effort, at the behest of New York City District Attorneys and Mayor Eric Adams, to repeal discovery reform.

“Only six short years ago, the Legislature, recognizing New York’s inherently flawed laws—defined by wrongful convictions, case delays, mass incarceration, and coerced pleas—passed critical pre-trial reforms that marked a turning point, shifting New York’s approach from one heavily biased toward law enforcement to one grounded in basic fairness. We cannot, and will not, return to those days.

“For decades, prosecutors benefited from evidence-sharing laws that were more restrictive than almost every other state, and failed to require the timely and full disclosure of discovery to the defense —long known as the Blindfold Law. Now, they yearn for a return to that system, using cherry-picked data and sensationalized anecdotes in an attempt to sway the hearts and minds of lawmakers.

“Any changes to New York’s discovery statute, which will affect hundreds of thousands of criminal cases across the state each year, require a rigorous, thoughtful debate in the Legislature—the branch of government where these decisions rightfully belong. Yet, that debate has not taken place, and it is precisely why the public has become disillusioned with the policymaking process, which continually silences the voices of those most directly impacted.

“We join the Legislature and the Caucus in calling on the Governor to stop obstructing the budget process and allow the co-equal branch of government to perform the duties they were elected to carry out. At this unprecedented and perilous moment, with our democracy hanging in the balance, the Governor cannot look New Yorkers in the eye and claim that bringing Albany to a standstill over legislation the public knows nothing about is in their best interests.”

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