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

Legal Aid Statement on Governor Hochul’s Continued Budget Delays to Push Misguided Policies Without Meaningful Debate or Input from Impacted New Yorkers

(ALBANY, NY) - **The Legal Aid Society** released the following statement regarding Governor Kathy Hochul’s continued delay of the budget in order to push through misguided policies without meaningful debate in the Legislature or adequate input from impacted New Yorkers:

“With no effort to hide her intentions, Governor Hochul continues to delay the budget to ram through misguided policies, without meaningful debate and depriving New Yorkers the opportunity to weigh in on a policy change that could impact hundreds of thousands of criminal cases each year.

“Process aside, since the legislative session began in January, Governor Hochul has failed to make the case that discovery reform makes New York less safe. The supposed increase in case dismissals – the Governor’s main complaint – is not a statewide trend nor is it impacting serious cases. This casts further doubt on the Governor’s argument and should be the subject of debate and scrutiny — the kind of scrutiny that has been devoid since the budget was introduced.

“Governor Hochul has a full suite of policy options at her disposal to strengthen New York’s evidence-sharing practices rather than weakening them. These include:

- [legislation](#) to grant prosecutors direct access to police databases—a measure District Attorneys support, acknowledging the New York City Police Department’s intransigence in assisting their offices with securing evidence;
- continued funding for District Attorney offices to hire staff and implement technological systems, an effort that New York City prosecutors have not yet fully implemented despite the reform taking effect five years ago;
- a recently introduced [bill](#) that would codify a New York State Court of Appeals ruling, which establishes clear standards for how judges assess prosecutors’ efforts to meet discovery obligations.

“These are deliberate, well-considered proposals that will benefit public defender and District Attorney offices alike, as well as New Yorkers navigating the criminal legal system. The Legal Aid Society commends the Legislature for continuing to champion these measures in the face of efforts to gut this historic, hard-fought reform.”

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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