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

Statement on Budget Language Amending New York’s Discovery Statute

(ALBANY, NY) - **The Legal Aid Society** issued the following statement on budget language amending New York’s discovery statute:

“We are awaiting the final language in order to fully assess the changes made to this complex statute and their impact on New York’s evidence-sharing practices and the hard-fought reforms achieved in 2019.

“Regardless of these amendments, we will continue to vigorously litigate our clients’ cases to hold prosecutors accountable when they fail to meet their discovery obligations. The people we serve are entitled to see the full weight of the evidence pending against them, in a timely manner — a basic principle of fairness and due process, and the bare minimum necessary to ensure a zealous defense.

“Lastly, we are grateful that, despite a closed-door, backroom approach to policy-making in the budget process, the Legislature was able to fight back against the worst of the Governor’s proposals.

“We commend Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, and the many lawmakers who have stood with us since January for their commitment to ensuring that both the spirit and the intent of ‘Kalief’s Law’ persevere.”

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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