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

Statement from the Alliance to Protect Kalief's Law on Discovery Rollbacks

(ALBANY, NY) - The Alliance to Protect Kalief's Law, a statewide coalition of impacted New Yorkers, public defender offices, civil rights organizations, leading advocacy groups, clergy, labor, and many others, issued the following statement on discovery rollbacks included in New York's Fiscal Year 2026 budget:

“Since the 2019 discovery reforms took effect, hundreds of thousands of people have been protected from coerced plea deals, excessive court delays, prolonged pretrial detention, and wrongful convictions. Nevertheless, Governor Hochul, at the behest of New York's District Attorneys, delayed the entire state budget with a campaign to roll back these fundamental protections, based on false information and misleading data.

Yesterday, the Legislature passed a budget that amended New York's discovery law, but thankfully did not incorporate all of the Governor's proposed changes. We are grateful to Speaker Heastie, Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, and many other lawmakers—including members of the Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic, and Asian Legislative Caucus—for fighting against the proposed rollbacks and seeking the input of impacted people, defenders, and advocates throughout this fight.

Since this law took effect, District Attorneys have been more interested in dismantling the discovery law than in implementing it. Enough is enough. They have the funding they need to meet their obligations under the law. Any future attempts to roll back these laws must be rejected. We know that evidence-sharing does not threaten public safety. True safety comes from investments in housing, healthcare, education, and community—not from stripping away fundamental fairness and transparency.

The Alliance to Protect Kalief's Law will never stop fighting to uphold the principles that discovery reform was built on: that every person accused of a crime has the right to evidence, the right to due process, and the right to a fair defense against the full power of the government. Those are the promises made in Kalief Browder's name and in recognition of the experience of the millions of New Yorkers—a disproportionate number of whom are Black and Brown—who have gone to trial or accepted a guilty plea without access to the evidence.”

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