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

Statement on Senate Passing Legislation to Create the Youth Justice Innovation Fund

(ALBANY, NY) – **The Legal Aid Society** released the following statement in response to the New York State Senate passing legislation to create the [Youth Justice Innovation Fund](#), which would make funds available to community-based organizations for services and programs focused on youth development and the prevention of youth arrest and incarceration:

“We commend the New York State Senate for passing the Youth Justice Innovation Fund, an important step toward fulfilling the promises made under the Raise the Age law and addressing the urgent needs of young people across our state.

“In 2018, New York pledged to invest in meaningful supervision and treatment services for youth. Yet six years later, less than a third of the \$1.5 billion allocated has actually reached the communities it was meant to support. This failure has left essential youth-serving organizations underfunded and denied countless young people access to the resources they need to grow and thrive.

“The Youth Justice Innovation Fund begins to correct that failure by directing \$50 million annually from the existing youth justice appropriation to trusted, community-based organizations that serve youth up to age 25. These funds will support violence prevention, alternatives to incarceration, and critical reentry, education, and employment programs — all proven tools for building safer communities and brighter futures.

“The Legal Aid Society lauds sponsor Senator Cordell Cleare and the other senators who fought to secure passage of this bill. We now urge the Assembly to follow suit and bring this legislation to a full body vote without any further delay.”

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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.legallaidnyc.org