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

Statement on Senate Passing the Anti-Harassment in Reporting Bill

(ALBANY, NY) – **The Legal Aid Society** released the following statement in response to the New York State Senate’s passage of the [Anti-Harassment in Reporting Bill](#), legislation that requires individuals making a report of suspected child abuse or maltreatment to the Statewide Central Register to provide their name and contact information, while prohibiting the Office of Children and Family Services from disclosing identifying information about the reporter:

“We applaud the New York State Senate for taking a critical step toward protecting families and children by passing the Anti-Harassment in Reporting Bill, sponsored by Senator Jabari Brisport. This landmark legislation will replace the current system of anonymous reporting of child maltreatment with a confidential reporting process, striking a more just balance to ensure child safety while protecting families from the harms of unnecessary investigations.

“The data is undeniable. According to the [NYC Family Policy Project](#), in 2023 alone, more than 4,000 children in New York City were subjected to traumatic investigations based on anonymous reports — yet just 6.7 percent of those reports were substantiated. In contrast, the overall substantiation rate was more than triple that figure. Legal Services NYC’s recent [report](#) adds further urgency, revealing that domestic violence survivors — often targeted by abusive ex-partners through false anonymous reports—were subjected to 28 percent of all investigations.

“The misuse of anonymous reporting is widespread. Families of color are disproportionately impacted, as acknowledged by New York City Administration for Children’s Services Commissioner Jess Dannhauser, who noted that many investigations are unnecessary and counterproductive. These intrusive investigations often entail late-night home visits, unannounced school interrogations, and even strip searches of children, causing lasting harm, particularly when they stem from baseless claims made with impunity.

“This bill would address systemic flaws by requiring reporters to provide identifying information, which remains confidential unless a case is substantiated and proceeds to court. It is a commonsense reform that deters bad actors, protects vulnerable families, and allows child protection workers to focus on the cases where children are truly at risk.

“We commend the Senate for recognizing the urgent need for change. Now, we call on the Assembly to pass the Anti-Harassment in Reporting Bill without delay. New York’s children and families deserve a system that prioritizes their safety, dignity, and well-being.”

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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