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

Statement on Prison Reform Package That Fails to Include Decarceration Measures

(ALBANY, NY) – The Legal Aid Society issued the following statement on a [prison reform legislative package](#) that fails to include bills to decarcerate New York State prisons:

“Albany’s refusal to include decarceration legislation in this package — including Fair and Timely Parole, Elder Parole, the Earned Time Act, and the Second Look Act — represents a colossal failure by lawmakers to meet this moment following the brutal killings of Robert Brooks and Messiah Nantwi, and the continued suffering of so many of our incarcerated clients condemned to survive such harsh conditions at these facilities.

“Despite broad support, including from many in law enforcement, these bills would have directly addressed the systemic problems that contributed to the deaths of Mr. Brooks and Mr. Nantwi within the State’s prison system by reducing the prison population and shifting the focus from punishment to rehabilitation. Without these reforms, the system will continue to perpetuate harm, disproportionately impacting communities of color. This legislative package fails to confront the impunity correction staff enjoy when they abuse those in their custody.

“The package includes an important and long-overdue requirement that all prisons be under video surveillance. Cameras were essential for exposing the horrors of Mr. Brooks’ death to the world. However, without efforts to hold staff accountable and restore the liberties that so many incarcerated New Yorkers deserve, this package falls short of addressing the crisis with the comprehensive and bold action it demands.

“The Legal Aid Society will continue working closely with directly impacted New Yorkers, fellow public defenders, advocates, and lawmakers to push forward meaningful legislation that advances justice and creates pathways to decarceration.”

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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