

July 15, 2025

Contact:

Press@legal-aid.org

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

Legal Aid Statement on Passage of City Council Bill to Mandate Reporting of Deaths in DOC Custody

(NEW YORK, NY) – The Legal Aid Society issued the following statement in response to the New York City Council passing a [bill](#) to require jail personnel to promptly notify family, defense attorneys, and the public if an individual dies while in custody of the Department of Correction (DOC):

“In 2023, DOC abruptly ended its practice of notifying the public of deaths in custody. Since then, dozens of individuals have died in custody under a system with no standards or protocol for notifying the deceased's family members – nor their defense attorneys or the public – of the individual's death and the circumstances surrounding it.

“The bill passed by the City Council will enhance public transparency and accountability by mandating that DOC inform the family, defense attorneys, and the public in a timely manner about any deaths that occur in their custody. The bill also requires that, following a death in custody, DOC provide all relevant records to the Board of Correction (BOC) for immediate investigation.

“After the investigation, the bill mandates, DOC and Correctional Health Services (CHS) – which oversees healthcare for people in jail – must respond to any recommendations and provide regular updates on the status of any staff misconduct cases related to the circumstances that contributed to an individual's death.

“In short, this bill will mandate what should already be standard policy for DOC: accurate, detailed, and timely reporting on the circumstances surrounding any deaths that occur in their jail facilities. [Eight people](#) have already died in DOC custody this year, shrouded in secrecy. This legislation will help put an end to this practice.

"The people we serve deserve better from the Department entrusted with their care. We laud City Councilmember Carlina Rivera for sponsoring this critical bill and thank the City Council for securing its passage.”

###

The Legal Aid Society is a nonprofit organization that 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