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

***Legal Aid Statement on IBO Report Detailing Right to Counsel Program Expansion***

**(NEW YORK, NY) - The Legal Aid Society** issued the following statement in response to the New York City Independent Budget Office's (IBO) today released [report](#) on the Right to Counsel (RTC) program's Citywide expansion, which found that years of underfunding have resulted in over half of tenants with RTC eligible cases not getting the full representation they are legally entitled to:

"Since its enactment in 2017, the Right to Counsel program has helped thousands of low-income New Yorkers facing eviction remain safely and stably housed by providing them with free legal representation in housing court.

"But despite the RTC program's proven effectiveness, today's IBO report shows that, for years, funding has not kept up with the rising demand for RTC services. According to the report, between 2019 and 2024, the annual number of cases eligible for RTC increased by 222%, yet program spending only increased by 129% over the same period. As a result, more than half of tenants with eligible cases are not getting the full representation they are legally entitled to.

"Now more than ever, there is an urgent need for increased funding to ensure all New Yorkers have full and fair access to the zealous legal representation they need and deserve. Amid a historic affordability crisis, continuing to chronically underfund the RTC program will only result in increased rates of eviction and displacement among New York City's most vulnerable populations.

"Moreover, particularly given the federal government's recent cuts to rental assistance, our City leaders must take immediate action to ensure RTC is fully funded to ensure all New Yorkers are protected against the devastating effects of eviction, displacement, and homelessness."

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*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.*

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