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

Legal Aid, Coalition for the Homeless Urge City to Bolster Measures to Protect Unhoused New Yorkers From Looming Subzero Temperatures

(NEW YORK, NY) – The Legal Aid Society and the Coalition for the Homeless issued the following statement calling on the City to bolster measures to protect unhoused New Yorkers ahead of this weekend's frigid weather and subzero temperatures:

“With 17 New Yorkers already having lost their lives during the extreme cold of the past two weeks, and with this weekend’s wind chills expected to fall well below zero, the City must immediately bolster measures to prevent further loss of life. This includes flooding the streets with additional outreach workers to offer New Yorkers a way inside from the cold, clearly ensuring that lack of government-issued identification is not a barrier to accessing shelter or services, ensuring enough capacity in warming centers, warming buses, and drop-in centers, and further expanding the availability of Safe Havens and single-room shelter beds.

“Additionally, the City should strengthen coordination among outreach teams and emergency service providers so individuals are connected to warming centers and warming buses as they are deployed, and so workers have up-to-date information about the individuals they encounter to support ongoing engagement efforts.

“Clear communication with all public and private hospitals is also needed to ensure frontline and emergency department staff are fully aware of and complying with Code Blue policies, and hospitals must coordinate with the Department of Homeless Services to ensure that no one without a warm place to go is discharged or released to the streets, regardless of health status.

“More lives are at stake, and the City must act with the urgency this moment demands.”

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The Legal Aid Society is a nonprofit law firm 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 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 the people we serve and helps improve our communities.

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