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

Legal Aid Statement on Mayoral Veto of City Council Bill to Give NYPD Unfettered Discretion to Create Protest Buffer Zones Around Educational Facilities

(NEW YORK, NY) — The Legal Aid Society issued the following statement in response to Mayor Zohran Mamdani [announcing](#) that he will veto [Int. 175-2026](#), a New York City Council bill to give the New York City Police Department (NYPD) unfettered discretion to create and maintain security perimeters around public and private educational facilities:

“We commend Mayor Mamdani for his opposition to this bill, which would significantly expand police presence and discretion in ways that risk undermining the constitutional rights of New Yorkers engaged in First Amendment activity.

“Giving the NYPD broad discretion to create and enforce ‘security perimeters’ around schools invites unnecessary police intervention into peaceful protests and everyday public life and undoubtably would have led to an increase in discriminatory enforcement, particularly against Black and Brown New Yorkers, LGBTQ+ individuals, and young people.

“Rather than making these spaces safer, this bill would increase the likelihood of New Yorkers having unnecessary and harmful interactions with law enforcement and deter peaceful protests.

“By rejecting this proposal, the Mayor has affirmed the importance of safeguarding First Amendment protections and upholding the hard-won reforms established under the *Payne v. De Blasio, et al.* protest settlement – reforms that were designed to ensure that public safety and free expression can coexist without excessive or escalatory policing.

“This decision by Mayor Mamdani, along with the Councilmembers who voted ‘no’ on the bill, reflects a commitment to evidence-based public safety and to protecting the dignity and rights of all New Yorkers. We urge City leaders to build on this moment by advancing policies that prioritize community-based solutions over expanded criminalization to ensure that all New Yorkers can safely exercise their right to speak, assemble, and advocate for their communities.”

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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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