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

Ahead of Extreme Heat, Legal Aid Calls on Governments at All Levels to Protect People in Their Care

Demand Includes People Held in ICE Detention, Rikers Island, State Prisons, Youth Detention Facilities, and Other Custodial Settings

(NEW YORK, NY) — Ahead of forecasted extreme heat expected to impact much of the Northeast later this week, The Legal Aid Society released the following statement calling on federal, state, and local governments to take immediate action to protect people in their custody in jails, prisons, immigration detention centers, youth detention facilities, and other custodial settings:

“Many of the jails, prisons, immigration detention centers, youth detention facilities, and other custodial facilities where people are held have long been plagued by unsafe and deplorable conditions, including inadequate protections from extreme weather. As another period of extreme heat approaches, federal, state, and local governments have both a legal and moral obligation to protect the health and safety of the people in their charge.

“Federal, state, and local governments must ensure that people in their custody have access to air-conditioned housing whenever possible. At facilities where air conditioning is unavailable, governments must provide effective heat mitigation measures, including free access to cool showers, ample ice, potable drinking water, and other safeguards necessary to prevent heat-related illness and death.

“The Legal Aid Society has communicated these concerns directly to the agencies responsible for operating these facilities and is urging them to take immediate action to protect the people in their custody. Over the coming days, Legal Aid staff will be on the ground in many of these facilities, monitoring conditions and working to ensure the health, safety, and rights of the people we represent throughout the extreme heat.”

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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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