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

Joint Statement from Legal Aid, Brooklyn Defenders on Death of Aramis Furse

(NEW YORK, NY) — The Legal Aid Society and Brooklyn Defender Services issued the following joint statement on the passing of their client, Aramis Furse, who died at Rikers Island this past weekend while in New York City Department of Correction (DOC) custody:

“This weekend, we were notified that Aramis Furse, 32 years old, passed away in DOC custody while incarcerated at Rikers Island. We express our sincere condolences to his family and loved ones, who are all impacted by his passing. The Legal Aid Society and Brooklyn Defender Services mourn the loss of Mr. Furse — a devoted son, brother, and partner, loved by friends, family, and the community.

“Furse’s family, loved ones, and counsel deserve immediate access to all information surrounding his death. Full transparency and accountability are essential, particularly given DOC’s repeated failure to keep families and attorneys informed or provide the answers they urgently need.

“Mr. Furse is at least the 14th person to die in New York City this year alone at Rikers Island or immediately upon release from DOC custody. His death comes shortly after the Board of Correction issued its report on deaths earlier this year, showing that the City has failed — in death after death after death — to implement the Board’s [recommendations](#) for how to save lives.

“With the City’s jail population reaching its highest level in years at nearly 7,000 people, Mr. Furse’s tragic death serves as yet another stark example of how dangerous conditions are inside Rikers Island and how ill-equipped DOC is to handle this crisis.

“Despite DOC’s ongoing failure to protect the health and safety of people incarcerated in its jails, judges and prosecutors continue to send more and more people to Rikers. As conditions continue to deteriorate, it is imperative that all criminal legal system stakeholders consider every possible alternative to incarcerating people at Rikers Island, and that the City fully embrace the appointment of a receiver to finally bring the wholesale change needed to reform our broken jail system.”

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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 the people we serve and helps improve our communities. www.legalaidnyc.org

Brooklyn Defender Services is a public defense office whose mission is to provide outstanding representation and advocacy free of cost to people facing loss of freedom, family separation and other serious legal harms by the government. We believe in a client-centered approach and work, in and out of court, to uphold the rights, freedom and dignity of people threatened by unjust, racist and harmful legal systems. www.bds.org