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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**GOVERNOR CUOMO AND NYS LAWMAKERS VASTLY EXPAND PRETRIAL  
DETENTION DURING PANDEMIC, SUBJECTING THOUSANDS MORE TO DEATH**

**NEW YORK, NY** - On April 2, New York lawmakers voted to pass the state budget, which includes provisions that vastly expand pretrial detention by increasing the number of people who are eligible for money bail and pretrial jailing—including people accused of misdemeanors—and incentivizes the criminalization of Black and Brown New Yorkers through for-profit electronic monitoring. These sweeping changes to the state’s three-month old bail reform law come in the middle of a deadly global pandemic and will result in thousands more New Yorkers being subjected to unsafe conditions, turned life-threatening by COVID-19. In response, **Peter Goldberg, Executive Director of the Brooklyn Community Bail Fund** issued the following statement:

“Last year, New York State passed bail reform that began to address the oppressive impact of mass incarceration on Black and Brown New Yorkers. Even then, we were left with a harmful money bail system and a deadly system of pretrial jailing. We needed further decarceration. Instead, Governor Cuomo and state lawmakers—in their zeal to lock human beings in cages—pushed through a backroom deal to expand pretrial jailing so thousands more New Yorkers will be subjected to imprisonment and unspeakable harm. Our jails have always been notoriously unsafe and unsanitary. Any increase in pretrial detention is unacceptable. Doing so at this time, when New York City’s jails have a COVID-19 infection rate seven times higher than the citywide rate, feels like a cruel joke that will have deadly consequences. Instead of working to end pretrial detention once and for all, state lawmakers ceded to protect monied interests and a right-wing agenda through the expansion of pretrial detention and for-profit exploitation of legally innocent people.

For nearly five years we fought to abolish this unjust system and freed nearly 5,000 people from pretrial detention. We’ve seen the harmful effects that just a few nights in jail can cause to individuals, families and entire communities: lost housing or employment, disruption to vital

health care, and children separated from their caregivers. We've also witnessed the importance of pretrial freedom in keeping families together and communities safe and strong: a young woman able to return home to care for her elderly mother, a man who can keep working to support his two children, and a high school senior able to reunite with his parents. When given the opportunity to protect thousands of marginalized New Yorkers, lawmakers turned their backs. This decision to expand pretrial incarceration is a betrayal to the health and safety of thousands of New Yorkers and one that will quite literally cost people their lives.”