



# CHIEF DEFENDERS ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **CDANY Applauds NYS Assembly's One House Bill Which Acknowledges The Important Work of Criminal Defense Attorneys**

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**NEW YORK** – The New York State Assembly's budget proposal recognizes the importance of criminal defense attorneys in our criminal legal system. Mark Funk, President of the Chief Defenders Association of New York (CDANY), said "as we prepare to celebrate the Sixtieth Anniversary of *Gideon v. Wainwright*, the landmark right to counsel case, it is encouraging that the New York State Assembly recognizes the importance of criminal defense attorneys in New York. The Assembly's proposal regarding an increase in assigned counsel (18-b) rates, rates that have not been raised in twenty years, recognizes the importance of quality representation for poor people."

This rate increase, if adopted into the final budget, will increase the number and quality of attorneys who are willing to represent indigent clients in the criminal and Family Courts of the State of New York. With no pay raise for assigned attorneys in the past twenty years, many experienced, qualified attorneys have stopped accepting assigned cases. The smaller pool of attorneys and resulting higher caseloads affects the quality of representation poor people receive.

This rate increase will put our State closer to the promise of the *Gideon* decision, which is fair, just and equitable criminal legal system.

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*The Chief Defenders Association of New York ("CDANY") is a membership organization of the appointed Public Defenders, Conflict Defenders, Executive Directors of non-profit public defense offices, and Administrators of Assigned Counsel Panels throughout New York State. Our organizations collectively represent the vast majority of people prosecuted in every county of New York State – hundreds of thousands of*

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*people each year. Collectively, public defense offices represent close to 400,000 individuals in the criminal, family, and appellate courts, every year.*