



CHIEF DEFENDERS ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 14, 2023

CDANY Applauds Senate One House Bill Which Acknowledges

The Work of Criminal Defense Attorneys and Adds Funding for Discovery Reform

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NEW YORK – On Tuesday, March 14, Senator Stewart-Cousins released a Resolution in response to the 2023-2024 Executive Budget submission expressing the position of the New York State Senate relating to the 2023-2024 New York State Budget. Mark Funk, President of the Chief Defenders Association of New York (CDANY), an association of Chiefs of indigent defense providers and Public Defenders statewide, said “we greatly appreciate that the Senate recognizes the importance of the work of public defense institutions in New York State with the addition of \$47 million to support Criminal Defender services, plus an added \$40 million to support Discovery Reform for Criminal Defenders. This funding, if allocated in the final budget process, will go a long way to equal the playing field with prosecutors who received similar funding in the Governor’s proposed budget.”

These allocations will fund reciprocal responsibilities of prosecutors and defense attorneys to provide timely disclosure of evidence pursuant to discovery reform enacted in 2019. Prosecutors and defense attorneys alike have borne the brunt of increased workloads due to the new law. Both sides have suffered attrition and recruitment issues due to the stress of discovery obligations. Additional funding will enable these organizations on both sides of the criminal justice equation to hire more staff, including paralegals who have provided support in fulfilling discovery duties.

“As we prepare to celebrate the Sixtieth Anniversary of *Gideon*, the landmark right to counsel case, it is encouraging that public defenders in New York get this recognition,” said Funk. “It’s long overdue.”

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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

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