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Community Bail Funds Across New York State Call Out District Attorneys & Regressive Politicians for Lies on Bail Reform

New York - Today, community bail funds across the state, including the Columbia County Bail Fund, the OAR of Tompkins County, the Jail Ministry of Onondaga County, the Brooklyn Community Bail Fund, and the Bronx Freedom Fund released the following statement in support of full implementation of the new bail law:

“With the implementation of historic bail reform, many presumptively innocent New Yorkers will be able to safely return home to their families and communities, no longer subject to the emotional and physical abuse of pretrial jailing simply because they cannot afford money bail.

Unfortunately, the District Attorneys Association of New York and other supporters of mass incarceration have spread the lie that without bail, people will not return for their court dates. As community bail funds, we know these claims are false.

Since 2015, we have paid bail for more than 8,000 presumptively innocent New Yorkers across the state. Our clients have no financial obligation to us, yet statewide over 90% have made all required court dates, no matter how numerous. Research shows that it is court reminders - now required by law - and resources like access to transportation that ensure return to court.

Bail fund clients, and the thousands of other people across the state who have returned to court on their own accord, are proof that money bail is needless and cruel, serving only to criminalize poverty, ensure prolonged detention of legally innocent people and coerce guilty pleas.”

Background
Since 2015, we have collectively secured the freedom of over 8,000 presumptively innocent New Yorkers across the State. We have years of proof that bail is not only unjust, it is unnecessary. Our clients have no financial obligation to us, yet statewide over 90% (95% in the case of the Brooklyn Community Bail Fund and the Bronx Freedom Fund) have made all required court dates - no matter how numerous.

For example, last winter, we secured the freedom of a father who was released at 1am into the freezing cold without a winter coat, but nonetheless returned to court three days later. He came back for a total of 11 appearances while working full time and caring for 3 kids, and ultimately saw his case dismissed and sealed.

Prosecutors and shameless politicians who continue to spread misinformation seem determined to demonize, criminalize and target communities that have already borne the brunt of the crisis of mass incarceration. Community bail funds across the state are proud that New Yorkers have repeatedly rejected this fear-mongering and are confident they will continue to do so.