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FOR IMMEDIATE PRESS RELEASE

**THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF ROCKLAND COUNTY & ROCKLAND BAR ASSOCIATION PARTNER
ON COVID-19 RESPONSE**

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating effect upon all of us. Tens of thousands have died, more than a million have been infected, the health of every one of us is threatened. In addition to the catastrophic health consequences many of us have suffered devastating economic losses resulting in unanticipated legal problems. With thousands of businesses shuttered, the Legal Aid Society of Rockland County (LASRC) and the Rockland County Bar Association (RCBA) expect that a great many Rockland County residents will need legal representation to obtain unemployment benefits, to prevent homelessness and to obtain or retain basic necessities of life such as food, shelter, minimum income and access to health care.

RCBA and LASRC have formed a partnership designed to meet the need for legal representation in civil cases during the pandemic. It is our hope that by combining the resources and the expertise of the private bar and an experienced provider of legal services to the indigent, we will be able to meet the civil legal needs of all the Rockland County residents unable to afford private counsel.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, LASRC has continued to serve Rockland County's most vulnerable residents by having its staff work remotely. LASRC continues to assist people facing critical legal issues such as mortgage foreclosures, evictions and other landlord/tenant disputes, and public benefits including Unemployment, Social Security, SSI, Safety Net, Food Stamps and Medicaid Benefits. LASRC's phone lines remain open; its advocacy staff, with more than two hundred years of combined legal experience, remains available to assist those seeking help.

"Since the start of the pandemic, LASRC has continued providing legal representation to children, families and seniors, while ensuring that our staff and clients are kept safe," said Alexander Bursztein, LASRC's Executive Director. "During this next phase of the disaster, Legal Aid, in a partnership with Rockland County Bar Association, is expanding its services to all residents in need of legal assistance in obtaining unemployment and other public benefits, as well as in other areas in which people's basic necessities of life are at stake, including, resources permitting, immigration, labor and consumer matters."

The partnership with the RCBA is crucial. *“By combining our resources and network of attorneys, the Bar Association and Rockland Legal Aid will help our community weather the storm and provide access to legal services that prevent homelessness and puts food on the table, The RCBA has a long and proud tradition of providing pro bono assistance to those unable to afford legal counsel. Expanding pro bono assistance during the pandemic represents a natural expansion of our pro bono efforts,” said Keith Braunfotel, President, Rockland County Bar Association.*

Working remotely, the staff at the Rockland County Bar Association are continuing to work with member firms on their pro bono assistance and Lawyer Referral Service (LRS), which matches highly qualified attorneys with people in need of legal assistance.

Rockland County residents in need of assistance can contact LASRC at (800)454-3627, info@legallaidrockland.org, or submit an emergency contact form at www.legallaidrockland.org.

For more information about the Lawyer Referral Service, pro bono assistance or other programs, please contact the RCBA at (845)634-2149, office@rocklandbar.org or www.rocklandbar.org

About the Legal Aid Society of Rockland County

Legal Aid Society of Rockland County (LASRC) provides free civil legal services to Rockland County residents who cannot afford private attorneys. LASRC’s Civil Division strives to ensure that Rockland County families and individuals, seniors and children, have access to safe, decent and affordable shelter, have enough food to eat, receive public benefits to which they are entitled, and receive medical care. The organization’s Children’s Rights Division represents children in cases, heard in the Rockland County Family Court in which children’s lives are directly at stake: abuse and neglect, custody and visitation, juvenile delinquency and family offenses. The Children’s Rights Division is dedicated to ensuring that children’s voices are heard in court, their wishes known, and their legal rights protected family court proceedings. LASRC is a local non-profit that relies upon governmental and charitable support in order to provide services to over 4,000 Rockland County residents each year.

About the Rockland County Bar Association – Helping Attorneys and The Public

The Rockland County Bar Association was established in 1893. Our Mission is to maintain the dignity of the profession of law and increase its usefulness in promoting the development of the law; the due administration of justice; and the mutual improvement and social intercourse of its Members. We promote the professional growth of our Members through the offering of professional development programs, continuing legal education, committee participation and volunteer activities. The Rockland County Bar Association supports our local community through our Lawyer Referral Service, Assigned Counsel program, High School Mock Trial program and other programs and services.