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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO DELIVERS REMARKS AT THE NEW YORK  
STATE COUNTY EXECUTIVES' ASSOCIATION MEETING**

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Well, I want to thank County Executive Marc Molinaro for his leadership. And this organization, thank you for hosting us. We're all gratified to be together. Just the fact that we're together says progress is happening, that things are changing, and it's because everyone worked so hard to make it that way. This is a story that needs to be told. The fact is, something extraordinary happened in this last year and more because people work together. And all those notions that we get told all the time that we can't work together across regional lines or party lines, we've been disproving that through our actions, everyone in this room.

And I want to tell the story very quickly in three parts – past, present, and future. The county executives of this state were heroic fighting COVID. We all came together, and shared, and thought together, and struggled together. But it was not only COVID that brought us together. This is the past that needs to be understood – we were already engaged. Sometimes it was to stop things that were not fair to our people. When the State of New York tried to foist Medicaid costs on us in a way that was unsupportable. We all banded together. It didn't matter if you were Democrat or Republican, upstate, downstate – we banded together. When the MTA tried to take away our local land-use rights, we banded together. This was well before COVID. When COVID struck, we found a deeper kind of common cause. We needed each other. We needed to hear each other, think together, innovate together. Sometimes we cried on each shoulder – each other's shoulders a little bit because we were all going through so much.

What we saw over this last year is a model of what should be in this state and beyond – people actually can sit in a room in a true sense of fellowship. That's what we experienced and it helped to save lives. Present – the present to me is very clear, and I send this message respectfully to all our colleagues and all the – to our friends in the Legislature. We need to restore democracy in the State of New York. We need to restore local control. It's time. It's time. We, rightfully, all of us are celebrating the progress against COVID. Well, that progress also sends a signal – restore to localities our ability to do our job fully and navigate what we have to do now for our people. We are closest to our people. We hear our people. We meet them in the supermarket on the corner. We understand and we need to be able to do our jobs again fully.

Future – the future's recovery. There's such an incredible spirit here in this room in Rhinebeck. We are all talking about what's next with energy and with hope. There's an incredible sense that we're going to go someplace together. And recovery is happening, but it requires all of us to have a different mindset. We have to put COVID behind us. We have to stop thinking through COVID, because we're defeating COVID. We've got to start envisioning what we're all going to do together in a new and better situation. That's our future. Our future is not to be mired. We all

talked about things like opening up our schools and all the other things that are going to bring people back to a better, a more normal life. We, as leaders, have to show that that path can and will be done.

So, I just want to say thank you to everyone here in this room. I feel truly honored to be with you – seriously honored, because you fought through this war, and you won, and you were there for your people when it mattered most no matter what was thrown at you. And we are going to take this partnership forward for the good of all. Thank you.

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