

THE CITY OF NEW YORK

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NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 18, 2021, 1:50 PM

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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO, FIRST LADY MCCRAY DELIVER REMARKS
AT THE NATIONAL ACTION NETWORK'S DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY
CELEBRATION**

First Lady Chirlane McCray: I'll take off my little piece of love here – my little piece of love, to keep me safe and keep you safe. Thank you so much, Rev, for providing this space to honor the great Dr. Martin Luther King. He was a courageous man, a brave man, and it is so fitting to be inspired by his legacy, his enduring legacy, given the year – given the week that we've had. I'd like us to remember that there are many different ways to be great in this world. Like Dr. Martin Luther King, Rev speaks unpleasant truths to the powerful who would rather not hear them. That's brave. That's a special kind of brave. Am I right? That's right.

[Applause]

But being brave can also mean steeling yourself to accomplish something you fear and could never imagine yourself doing or processing painful emotions as you try to create a better life for yourself and your loved ones. I keep remembering Dr. King's words when he said, our ultimate measure is not where we stand in moments of convenience and comfort but in times of challenges and controversy. Well, we have plenty of challenge and controversy, don't we? And the brave are plenty among us. The brave are the folks who went door to door registering people for the census, registering them to vote, getting people out to vote in the middle of a pandemic. The brave are our young people – young, old who marched the dream forward in our streets this summer demanding, demonstrating that Black lives – our lives – matter.

They're our parents, grandparents, essential workers showing up, wearing the masks, and doing what they can to keep each other safe. Our fight for justice moves forward slowly but surely. Some might say we are changing history every day just by staying alive. But we have not reached the promised land. We are closer today than yesterday, and as Dr, King reminded us, everybody can be great because everybody can serve. No matter who you are, what skills you

have, use your voice, serve your community, be brave, keep bending the long arc [inaudible] universe towards justice. We can all do that. And now it is my pleasure to introduce a brave and tireless fighter for justice and equality and Dr. Martin Luther King's vision, my partner in all things, our Mayor, Bill de Blasio –

[Applause]

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Everyone – this microphone is too short.

[Laughter]

There we go, thank you. This is a special King Day. It's a special King Day because it comes in a moment when things are changing faster than ever. This is a moment Dr. King would have loved and been a part of. He would have loved what each and every one of you are doing to bring change. He would have taken heart from the power you are finding in yourselves. And that is the bravery that Chirlane refers to. By the way, I want to thank our First Lady for having the bravery to fight the stigma of mental health in this city every single day. Thank you.

[Applause]

I want to thank Rev. I didn't matter – I've watched Rev for decades – it didn't matter what slings and arrows were sent his way, it didn't stop him, it didn't change his sense of commitment. There is a bravery in forging on when it doesn't seem popular at all, but you know you're right. And that's what the National Action Network has done now for years and years, created the possibility here in New York City and all over the country that change could happen. And then you see it. Step by step you saw it on Election Day in November, you saw it Georgia, you saw it this summer, you see it over and over again. It is unmistakable not just that change can happen, that it must happen, and it will because of us, because of us, not someone we're waiting for, not a hero.

It's so powerful to remember Dr. King didn't try to put himself forward as the indispensable man, he asked us each to be indispensable men and women, to believe in change and act for it. I believe we're poised in a crown moment where things are possible like never before. And a lot of it is because of what each and every one of you have done but also because those who do not believe in fairness and equality have overreached time and time again, most notably in the Capitol building just days ago. They went too far. They showed who they really were. The whole nation watched. And now the door is open wider than ever for change.

Now, let me be really clear, there were some people in the Capitol that day who somehow had gotten jobs in public service. There were some people in the Capitol that day fighting against freedom and democracy, who somehow in another part of their life got to put on a uniform or collected a government paycheck. Let's be clear on this King Day that there is no room for any racist in public service. They need to be gone. That there is no room for any white supremacist in public service or in any uniform anywhere in America. They need to be fired now.

[Applause]

And this is the time to do it. This is the time to ensure that those who represent us, whether civilian or wearing a uniform, that they now truly must live by a higher standard. I want you to know that for months and months in this city, work has been going on not just to stop those who do the most heinous crimes of racism and exclusion, but anyone who wears a uniform and does the wrong thing needs to understand that consequences will be real and swift.

[Applause]

On Friday, this was published. This is a discipline matrix. I want you all, please, to take a few moments to look at this today. Go to nyc.gov/disciplinematrix. This is a new day and new reality for the NYPD. This says if you commit an offense, here's exactly what's going to happen to you. Now, we do not wish – friends, we do not wish ever to have to apply discipline because we would like everyone who wears a uniform to do everything right. But if anybody who wears a uniform does the wrong thing, here are the penalties. You can see them, they are stipulated, they are clear. And if they do the kinds of things that mean they should not wear a uniform again, they will be terminated. Period.

[Applause]

These are clear rules, and this is what we need going forward because there are many of all races and backgrounds who want to serve us and serve us well and serve us with a spirit of justice, and they are welcome. And there are some who do share the values of this city and this nation. There are some who have no right to a government paycheck, who have no right to put on a uniform. There are some who choose to do the wrong thing and when they make that choice, that is the last time they get to work for us.

[Applause]

Thank you for fighting every day for Dr. King's vision. It is a vision we can realize together. Keep fighting. That is what he would wish of us. Thank you, and God bless you all.

[Applause]

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