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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY**

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Good morning, everyone. So, let's first talk about the election. Obviously, the count continues. And let's look at the big picture – people in the city, people all over the country turned out in record numbers. That's amazing and that's the very, very good news here. And election officials all over the country are obviously in a very careful, meticulous manner, counting ballots of all kinds, whether they are early voting, same-day voting, absentee ballots, everything's being counted from what we can see in a very open, transparent manner. Really want to note from – considering what we, for years and years, worried about everything from foreign interference in the election to voter suppression, real concerns – thank God, it looks like our election process all over the country was clean and fair and without interference. So, that's something we should feel very good about. The count continues. The count's going continue for a number of days, depending on the state. Obviously, I'm not going to be surprised by any number of legal challenges and other issues, but here's what I think we see overall – Joe Biden and Kamala Harris are in a very strong position right now. So, however, many days it takes to get clear, what I see is a map that increasingly favors them and I think that's very good for New York City. In terms of the U.S. Senate, a lot still to play out. Obviously, there's not only going to be one, there could be two special elections in Georgia in January. So, this could play out for quite a while. But what appears to be the case right now is a U.S. Senate that is certainly no worse for New York City than the one we have now, likely to be at least a little better. And, obviously, every step in the right direction counts when we're trying to get the thing we need the most, which is a stimulus. But the most important reality in terms of getting a stimulus is having a president who cares about New York City and cares about cities all over the country, and Joe Biden certainly will be that president.

So, look, it will play out for a while. What everyone needs to do is respect that process. If people have concerns, express them, but express them peacefully. And some patience is called for here, but, obviously, a real focus to make sure that our democratic institutions are respected and that efforts to undermine them are addressed peacefully. And I think that can and will happen, and I expect a good outcome at the end of the day.

All right. So, now, while we're waiting for the votes to be counted and we're waiting for that process to unfold, we've got a lot of work to do right here in New York City – got to go right back to focusing on the number-one challenge we face, which is the coronavirus. While the national picture sorts itself out, we're going to keep doing what we have to do to protect the people in New York City. So, let's do the overview for a moment. For the summer, basically a whole summer, the city made amazing progress, fought back this disease to very low levels, became one of the safest places in the country in terms of our health care situation and low levels

of coronavirus infection. We started to see some challenges in September, going into October, particularly in Brooklyn and Queens. We saw a belt of Brooklyn, a belt of Queens where there was a pronounced problem and an interconnected problem within neighborhoods. That problem has been largely addressed – not entirely, but much, much better situation Queens, increasingly a better situation in Brooklyn. Still some work to do, but unquestionably we're in a much better place than we were even just a few weeks ago in Brooklyn, Queens. And important improvements in terms of how people are responding, a whole lot more people going out and getting tested, a lot more people wearing masks. We've got more work to do, but that's been good news. So, overall, we have proven time and time again that we can address a situation, bring it back down. In the case of Brooklyn, Queens, it took some very strong measures. In other parts of the city before that, we saw him in August into September other measures were used at a lighter level, lower level that worked really well. Sunset Park, Brooklyn is a great example – really the first place toward the end of the summer where we had a problem. We did intensive testing, intensive outreach, masks distribution. It worked well, it worked quickly to bring down the problem there – same with Soundview in the Bronx, same with Southeast, Queens. That approach worked and that approach is what we will employ anytime we see a problem, going forward, when we see it isolated to a smaller area and not part of a bigger trend. So, we have one of those situations now in a couple of ZIP codes in Staten Island. We see the kind of increase that makes us concerned that needs that very hyper-local approach that we used in Sunset Park, in Soundview, in Southeast Queens successfully. We're going to apply that in Staten Island as well. And it's in a couple of places. And, again, this is, at this point, a pretty narrow problem, isolated primarily to two ZIP codes – some concerns in a few others ZIP codes, but the real issue we're focused on now is two ZIP codes – 10305 and 10314 in Staten Island. So, we're going to send out a lot of activity now to address this. Fully expect the community, community leaders, elected officials, clergy, everyone's going to get involved as we've seen everywhere else so we can address this problem.

Here to give you an update on this hyper-local focus and the outreach effort we'll be doing in Staten Island, the head of our Test and Trace Corps, Dr. Ted Long.

**Executive Director Ted Long, NYC Test and Trace Corps.:** Thank you, sir. We never want to see an uptick in any of our communities. However, we've built out a massive testing system, so across New York City, if there is an uptick or an increase in the level of the virus anywhere, we will know about it early, and we can then intervene immediately and decisively. Our intervention is our hyper-local response. As the Mayor said, this is a proven strategy that we've used in Sunset Park and in Soundview. In each of those communities, we brought in substantial new testing, contact tracing, and substantial new outreach. And in each of those, we were able to drive down the percent of people testing positive by two-thirds through our actions. Now, we're going to apply those same proven principles to these two ZIP codes in Staten Island. In particular, we've built out 10 new testing sites in Staten Island across the island. In addition to that, we're now building out several very large rapid testing sites, including that the ferry terminal, where you can come in, get your test done quickly, have a result back within 15 minutes. And then, if it's positive, you'll join with one of our in-person contact tracers who will interview you in your language and ask you who could you have exposed to the virus when you were contagious? Or, who are your close contacts? We then will reach out to those close contacts that same day and offer to bring them in for testing immediately. Then, before you leave the building, we're going

to pair you up with one of our resource navigators where we're going to ask, what would it take to keep you and your family safe and have you stay at home to get through this? We will offer you things like free food delivery, a free hotel stay, help with their medications. Even now, we will offer you a free service where we're going to come and offer to walk your dog for you so that you can stay safe and stay inside.

In addition to testing and contact tracing, we also are doing substantial new outreach. We're going to have 70 new boots-on-the-ground staff members that are going to go around in these communities, talk about what's going on, talk about how to get tested and to help you to get tested, and even give you a mask, which is one of the cornerstones of everything we do – prevention.

Now, I want to say something specifically to Staten Islanders in these communities. We never want to see an uptick in any community, but, in this case, in your case, we've caught it early, and we will do everything in our power to deploy resources and join the fight with you by your side. We're in this together with you and we will succeed together. Thank you, sir.

**Mayor:** Thank you very much, Dr. Long. And thank you to everyone at Test and Trace Corp. So, look, you're going to see this intensive effort play out over these next days. And we fully expect it will work in turning around the situation. We want to stop it early and get it right. And look, we'll talk in a few minutes about our overall indicators, but what's abundantly clear is when the people of this city apply themselves to the challenge, we can overcome anything, and specifically the challenges related to the coronavirus. So, we have a challenge. We're identifying it, we're acting on it. Everyone, join with us, help us in those ZIP codes. Go out, get tested, wear masks, do all the things that will help us push this back and move forward.

Okay, let's go to another topic, which is so important. And it really is because New Yorkers did so much to fight back the coronavirus so successfully, that we ended up in a unique place in this nation. We're already are, obviously, the biggest city in the nation, the largest school system in the nation. A lot of people wondered, would it be possible to open up schools? Well, in fact, all of you made it possible by doing so much to fight back this disease. And we were able to open up our schools and our schools have been exceptional. I want to thank all the educators, all the staff, the parents, the students, because everyone's been working together. Everyone's been doing great at getting tested and we continue to see a really safe situation in our schools. So, now, what we have to do is make sure that every one of those precious seats in our schools gets used to the maximum. We really want to respect the families who want in-person learning for their kids. We want those kids to get as many days in school each week as possible. So, this is really important. Every family's had an opportunity to choose throughout. And for the families who prefer remote instruction, that's great. If that's what works for them, we're going to have it available constantly, obviously, and we're going to make sure it's as good as it possibly can be. But for families that want in-person learning, our job is to make sure that every day that opportunity is given to the maximum number of families who want it and that a child goes to school the maximum number of days in a week. So, that's crucial to think about as we're now in the opt-in period for parents who started out in remote learning and now want their kids to be in in-person learning. Again, you have this week and next week, up to November 15th to opt in.

And the goal here, when everything is said and done, is to ensure that everyone has the right plan for their child. And really, it's either to be an all remote or to be in blended learning, but we want real participation in blended learning. So, we'd be talking more in the days to come about how to make sure that every child who is in blended learning is getting that maximum opportunity to participate. And look, in the end, I want a situation where everyone is clearly delineated, either as being in remote or being in blended and then fully participant in blended. That's what we'll be working on in these coming days. So, reminding people, again – opt-in period is till November 15th. And all you have to do is go to [schools.nyc.gov/returntoschool2020](https://schools.nyc.gov/returntoschool2020) for any parent, any family that want to make that choice, you have that opportunity now.

Okay, let's go over our daily indicators. And, again, today we see a mix of features. I want to talk them through. So, number one, daily number of people admitted to New York City hospitals for suspected COVID-19, threshold 200 – today's report, 95 patients. So, we went down a little bit from yesterday – that's good. And I want to see that number go down some more to where it was for many months. Confirmed positivity level of 23.7 percent – again, higher than we've seen recently, but still low compared to where we were in the spring, for sure. Okay. So, finishing, just saying on hospitalization in general – area of concern, but a hell of a lot better than what we experienced in the spring and still well within the boundaries of what we can address and handle. We don't want to see anyone in the hospital, but what this tells us is our hospital system is doing fine accommodating the challenge. Number two, new reported cases, seven-day average, threshold 550 – again, today, we're noticeably above that threshold – that's an area of concern – 633 cases. Some of that because of more testing, for sure, but we need to see that number start to go down. Even with more testing, we want to see that number go down. And, obviously, number three, most importantly, percentage of people testing citywide positive for COVID 19 threshold, five percent – today's report – the daily report actually is a better one, 1.43 percent. But the number we look at most carefully, seven-day rolling average, 1.1 – excuse me, 1.81 – 1.81 percent. That number puts it pretty much right in the middle of where we've been for the last few weeks, a level that we can work with, but a level we want to push down. At least it shows, again, a leveling off in the city, but it's a number that we still want to do a lot better on over the coming weeks.

Okay. A few words in Spanish. And in the Spanish, I'm going to talk again about the thing that's on everyone's mind, which is the outcome of the election and the vote counting process.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, we are going to turn to our colleagues in the media and please let me know the name and outlet of each journalist.

**Moderator:** Good morning, all. We'll now begin our Q-and-A. As a reminder, we're joined today by Dr. Ted Long, the Executive Director of the Test and Trace Corps, Dr. Chokshi, and Senior Advisor Dr. Jay Varma. The first question today goes to Gloria from NY1.

**Question:** Good morning, Mr. Mayor.

**Mayor:** Hey, Gloria. How are you doing?

**Question:** Good. Thank you. I wanted to ask you about the Staten Island increase, first. I guess I'm wondering, for you and for the health officials, if there are any similarities in some of these communities that you are tracking between what you're seeing in Staten Island now and what you saw in parts of Brooklyn and Queens? And if you could just speak to a passable trigger of the restrictions. I know the Governor has a role to play there, but just where you're at from your end.

**Mayor:** Yeah, thank you, Gloria. Very, very good and important question. No this is different than what we saw in Brooklyn and Queens. I'm the layman, we'll let the doctors jump in, but this is different than what we saw in Brooklyn and Queens, which were extended areas, interconnected areas, a bigger phenomenon, a bigger trend. This is more isolated, less of an uptick for sure, much more like we saw in Sunset Park and Soundview, and we think much more addressable quickly, not something that at this moment would trigger restrictions. That's obviously the State's decision, but by the numbers not something that would trigger restrictions, something that we think can be handled quickly with a lot of community involvement. Dr. Chokshi, Dr. Varma, you want to add?

**Commissioner Dave Chokshi, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene:** Yes, sir. The only point that I would add to the second part of Gloria's question is that another aspect that we really focus on is how sustained the issues and the problems are. One of the reasons that the Mayor felt strongly about making sure that we act quickly in this case is just as we saw in some of those other examples that Dr. Long mentioned, Sunset Park, Tremont, et cetera, when we do act quickly and bring to bear our testing resources, as well as that community engagement, we can try to prevent those more sustained increases that we've seen in parts of Brooklyn and Queens.

**Mayor:** Thank you. Dr. Varma, you want to add?

**Senior Advisor Jay Varma:** Nothing from me.

**Mayor:** Thank you. Go ahead, Gloria.

**Question:** Okay. Thank you. And then my other question is on school testing, not COVID testing, but the specialized high school exam and the high school admission process. I believe the test was supposed to be this weekend but it's been delayed and I don't think we have a timeline, similar situation with high school applications. Do you have a date for when the city might administer the test or outlined, you know, some of these changes are – some of these kids get ready to make some of these, you know –

**Mayor:** Yeah, Gloria, we're going to speak to it soon. Obviously with something like administering a standardized test, we're in a whole different reality now because it's hard to do it in person, and it historically it has been done in person and very carefully regulated. So we're sorting that out right now. Don't have a specific date, but we will speak to that, you know, in the next week or two, we're going to have updates for people on how we're going to handle that going forward.

**Moderator:** The next is Marcia from WCBS.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor I'd like to thank you for taking the question. There's been a number of demonstrations last night in New York City. A woman from Pennsylvania was arrested for spitting the face of a cop. I wonder how worried you are about outside agitators coming into New York to disrupt things, especially typified by this woman who came from Pennsylvania and started trouble?

**Mayor:** Marcia, it's a fair question and we certainly have seen some of that earlier in the year. Look, last night, we saw relatively few people out, certainly nowhere near some of what has been projected that was raising concern. I think we can safely say the vast, vast majority of people simply want to see the election results counted fairly, they want to know a result as soon as possible, and then we're in a position to all move forward. So I do not see at this moment a particular problem like you described. I think, you know, clearly what most overwhelming majority of New Yorkers want is just a peaceful approach to this election dynamic and the ability to move forward and move on. Go ahead, Marcia.

**Question:** Well, last night we also saw demonstrators lighting fires and doing other things. What's your position on protestors who would do violence in the city? Will they be dealt with severely or will they be given desk appearance tickets like sometimes happens?

**Mayor:** Marcia, look, anyone who does violence clearly will experience the consequences of it that, you know, you cannot do violence without consequences, as simple as that. So you're not supposed to set fires. That's really dangerous. I want to remind people, setting a fire can lead to something really horrible. We won't tolerate that. We won't tolerate attacks on anybody, so we're going to deal with it, and the court system, which is now increasingly ramping up, is going to deal with it as well. And look, the vast majority of people will protest, protest peacefully, we know that. The vast majority have come out and come out out of concern for their community and their country. A very few do acts of violence, but those who do violence will really have to understand there's going to be real consequences for them.

**Moderator:** The next is Paul from the Staten Island Advance.

**Question:** Good morning, Mr. Mayor. Thanks for taking my question.

**Mayor:** How are you doing Paul? How are you doing?

**Question:** Hello sir, how are you? I'm well how are you?

**Mayor:** Good, man.

**Question:** I just wanted to get a sense – I mean, obviously we had that mask wearing slight controversy, I want to get a sense if there was any info on – from the city's perspective as to what is causing this outbreak in Staten Island?

**Mayor:** I'll let the doctors speak to it, but Paul, I think, look, we know everyone's fatigued, let's be clear. We know it's been a very long road, eight months, going into nine, and we constantly have to remind people how important it is to do the basics, to get tested, to wear masks, to practice social distancing. So it's never a surprise where we see some areas where we've got to address a challenge. Important thing is that people engage and answer the call, and we've seen that time and time again. We saw that in Sunset Park, we saw that in Soundview, we saw that in Sunset - excuse me – in Southeast Queens, took longer because Brooklyn, Queens obviously much bigger areas were covered, but we did see ultimately a lot of people do what needed to be done and we saw the situation get a lot better. So I'm absolutely convinced folks in these ZIP codes in Staten Island will do the same. Dr. Varma, Dr. Chokshi, you want to add? Can't hear you if you're speaking.

**Senior Advisor Varma:** Oh, yeah, sorry. No, I think as we discussed in the increases that we've been tracking in other parts of the city we unfortunately don't have a single common event or single common exposure that explains the increases. You know, there are many factors that are going on right now all at the same time, and there are similar factors that you see in other parts of the country and other parts of the world. As the weather gets colder people move indoors and we know indoors is a higher risk than outdoors. As people continue to try to maintain these measures, they get tired, they become a little bit more relaxed about wearing masks in certain places and about maintaining that distance. So we have found no specific explanation that we could target immediately, and that's really why we need to move to a very aggressive attempt to improve adherence to all of the important measures, and of course use our tests and trace resources and help support people through the difficult task of isolation and quarantine, if necessary.

**Mayor:** Dr. Chokshi, anything to add?

**Commissioner Chokshi:** Yes, sir. I just wanted to add that even, even though there is not a specific exposure event or explanation as yet, just as Dr. Varma said, what we can do about it is very clear and specific. You know, six feet and a mask is what can separate us from further increases, you know, what can separate us from a second wave? And so making sure that we remain vigilant about distancing, mask wearing, washing your hands, staying home if you're sick, getting tested, these things work, we've seen them work in communities around New York City, we've seen them work citywide. I know it's hard for us to to maintain that vigilance and that discipline, but particularly for the areas that we're talking about in Staten Island, it is important and urgent for us to recommit to them.

**Mayor:** Amen, Paul, go ahead.

**Question:** Yeah, thank you so much guys. Just kind of, I think this is for the Test and Trace Corps, just regarding Staten Island, obviously a very different part of the city than the rest of the boroughs, what unique challenges does that present to the test and trace process?

**Mayor:** I'll say also what unique solutions will you be using in Staten Island, Dr. Long?

**Executive Director Long:** Yeah. So the way that we approach community outreach is we really do think about what each community needs and what community based organizations and trusted voices are there. So what you can count on is any community that we go into, which is Staten Island or any community across New York City, we're going to look at who the trusted voices are, we're going to ask to work with them, we're going to work with community-based organizations, we're going to get the word out in the way that people want to hear it through different media outlets that they're used to, that they trust, and that's going to be our approach on Staten Island. And that's exactly what we did in Soundview, what we did in Sunset Park and how we were successful there.

**Mayor:** Yeah. Paul, look, and Staten Island – I mean, people in Staten Island are so concerned for their community, deeply engaged in the community. You know, a borough where there's tremendous love for their neighborhoods. We're going to turn to elected officials, clergy community-based organizations, you know, health care providers, you name it, and we found when you bring together that coalition, you reach deep, deep into communities and it makes a huge difference. So that's what you will be seeing in these next few days in Staten Island for sure.

**Moderator:** The next is Erin from Politico.

**Question:** I'm just wondering, you know, you've talked a lot about preventing a second wave and the importance of making sure that doesn't happen. Do you have a definition that you're going by of what exactly that means, you know, how we would know if we were in a second wave?

**Mayor:** Yeah, Erin, a very important question and I think the indicators speak for themselves. I mean, we've given you those threshold numbers. I think one way to think about this is if you are surpassing all three, you clearly have a serious issue on your hands. Look, I think it's fair to say, we know what the first wave looked like. It was horrendous. We know what it looked like to bring the disease way, way down, that was June, July, August, the city did an amazing job. We've seen an uptick, but remember for a lot of the summer, we were one percent, you know, 1.5 percent kind of range sometimes pushing up higher. Now we find ourselves between 1.5 to two percent on our seven-day rolling average. It's not a massive change, but it's worrisome and we have to deal with it. What we cannot see is a huge number of people going into hospitals every day with a really high level of positivity for COVID. What we cannot see is going past that two percent on a seven-day rolling average to three percent, four percent, pushing up towards five percent. If all that's happening at once, that's when, you know, unfortunately you're facing a second wave. Go ahead, Erin.

**Question:** Okay, and then, you know, I'm just wondering, as far as the upticks in Staten Island, you talked a bit in Brooklyn about, you know, some of the disinformation that was out there, and I'm just wondering, are you seeing any of that here? And is there any kind of nexus to, you know, basically politics in terms of where people are getting their information from and what their political leanings are and sort of, you know, any thing that might be influencing behavior?

**Mayor:** It's a really fair question, Erin, I would say we don't have sufficient evidence to say that. I mean, remember the pattern we've seen. What we saw in Sunset Park, we saw in Soundview,



what we saw in Southeast Queens, certainly we wouldn't ascribe a political reality of that. I think it is the fatigue's a big factor. Again, just people needing to be reminded how important it is to wear masks and do social distancing. People needing to have testing made really readily available. When testing is made available and it's made simple, people really do engage it. So I think that's the essence of what we're dealing with here. There may be other factors. I think we've seen from time to time indications of other factors, more philosophical factors, but I don't think we can say that is the central problem here. I think we just need to go in really let people know what's going on, give them the option to get tested, give out a lot of face masks, do the things that have worked before.

**Question:** The next is Dana from the New York Times.

**Question:** Hi my first question is for Ted. I was wondering if he could tell us any more about how many people have availed themselves of this dog walking service, how many, you know, how much it's cost, that sort of thing?

**Executive Director Long:** That's a great question. I don't off the top of my head know how many people have taken this up, but it's called Wag, with an exclamation point at the bottom, but I'd be very happy to research it and get back to you.

**Mayor:** Okay. It's got a good name. Go ahead, Dana.

**Question:** Thanks, and then a question for you, Mr. Mayor today on, you know, WAMC, the Governor suggested that you were to blame to some extent for the GOP's surprising surprisingly good election showing here in New York. He said, you know, they ran Mayor de Blasio his picture all over the state and used the city's rising homelessness, lots of jobs, et cetera, as sort of campaign fodder. I was wondering if you have any thoughts on that?

**Mayor:** I – look, I don't know enough about the details of what happened in different races around the state. I also think we should remember Democrats overwhelmingly won around the state. Obviously this state came in really strong for Joe Biden, Democrats continue to have a clear majority in the State Senate, huge majority in the State Assembly. So I think whatever the Republicans did, was pretty modest honestly, but you know, I'll look at that for sure, Dana, I think what I'll do going forward is just make sure I strongly endorsed the Republican candidates and confused matters going forward in New York State. So that'll be my plan for the years ahead. Okay, go ahead.

**Moderator:** The next is Sydney from Gothamist.

**Question:** Hi, Mr. Mayor. So just a few minutes ago, you spoke about how you denounced some of the violence near Washington Square Park with the small garbage fires that occurred. But I really want to specify there were two different incidents of arrests last night during the protest and the other group had faced arrest after hours of marching in the street without incident. It was a relatively small group taking up less than a city block marching from 59th street to the East Village, and out of – all of a sudden, they faced these aggressive arrests, with pushing with batons and the bikes and pushed to the ground, and being arrested, and at the same time, they're

ordered onto the sidewalks with little to no time to actually get on the sidewalks, and this happened essentially simultaneously, and, one protestor told me this basically sparked because a cop on a bicycle and a cyclist who was riding alongside protesters to keep them safe from traffic bumped into each other and spurred this domino effect of shoving and tackling and making arrests that cops were doing. And I saw the fall in the domino effect of this. But I'm just wondering, why is your Police Department using this type of force against people, mostly for standing in the street? Do you defend this type of approach? And did you – were you aware that there were two different arrest incidents?

**Mayor:** So Sydney, first of all, look, it's an extraordinary time in history to say the least there's such deep feeling. There's such concern. There's a lot of tension. Everyone wants to see what's going to happen with this vote count and make sure it's free and fair. We can move forward. Vast majority of people who protest, protest peacefully clearly. But what we have to do as a city and we got to NYPD has to do is always deescalate situations, that has to be the consistent approach, and that's what I expect. I'm not familiar with all the details of what happened last night. I will be talking it through with the Police Department leadership later and reviewing exactly what happened. But, the crucial point here is that we obviously cannot allow violence, let's be clear, attacks on people, setting fires, attacks on officers, attacks on property. We just can't allow that, and we won't. But at the same time, the goal is always to deescalate and that's what is important to ensure and everything we do. So I have more to say as I review the specifics of last night. Go ahead.

**Question:** Okay, and then my follow-up question is just on the de-escalation point, do you think the Police Department is fully using these de-escalation tactics that you know, they apparently have and their toolbox and why after all these months of protest, does it seem like de-escalation is not the first choice?

**Mayor:** Well, I'd say I disagree with that for sure. Look overwhelmingly, what we've seen now for six months is peaceful protest, managed peacefully by the NYPD. That's just the overwhelming reality. I've seen so much of it with my own eyes. I get the reports all the time – that doesn't make the headlines, honestly. The – you know, so many times when people organized a protest, communicated with the police, what they were trying to do, worked out routes together. Police stood back accompanied on the sides, accompanied company that the back, whatever it may be, that's actually been the norm. There've been some situations where police officers individually did the wrong thing, and those cases there needs to be consequences and discipline. There've been some decisions to address the situation that we're reviewing to see if they were handled right. But the broader approach is just to absolutely respect and facilitate peaceful protest. What I need to know constantly, and we're watching this very carefully, is that where there are more difficult situations that a de-escalation approach is used. So your question's a fair one. We're going to be looking at every single situation. Was it used effectively or not – it needs to be. So, de-escalation, that's what we train in the Police Academy. That's what been crucial to neighborhood policing. It's worked enables all of us city. It has to work with protest as well.

**Moderator:** We have time for two more for today. The next is Juliet from 1010 WINS.

**Question:** Yeah, hi, good morning, Mr. Mayor. So just to follow up on the protests. Given that there are concerns for other organizations so-called hijacking these protests and the NYPD now forming a looting task force, has any consideration been given to close off certain parts of the city, or parts of Manhattan or commercial areas to avoid that kind of activity?

**Mayor:** Again, Juliet, right now, we see a very limited protest and overwhelmingly peaceful protest. We're going to watch every day and I expect in general that you're going to see, you know, people are going to respond obviously to what's happening with the election. The faster we get a clear result, the better off we're all be the more respect for the electoral process, the better off we'll all be. But if we see any evidence of folks intending violence or intending looting, we're going to deal with it. There's a whole set of tools to address that. But right now we do not see that, and so I'm not going to speculate on approaches that, you know, we're all going to hope and pray are not going to be necessary at all. Go ahead.

**Question:** Yeah. What about this looting task force? What is your understanding of it, what they're going to do and how they will approach incidents or demonstrations going forward?

**Mayor:** Well, you know, Juliet. We – I've often used the phrase perfect storm. We've been through something this year that's unimaginable. I think because we're all in the middle of it, we've sort of somehow adapted to it and it's become a little bit of a new normal to us, but what's going on this year is anything but normal, and so, so many problems got unleashed simultaneously. Those few days where we saw looting – we hadn't seen anything like that in a long time, and thank God we haven't seen anything like that since, and we do not intend to allow that going forward ever. So the idea is simply to learn what that was available, the lessons available from what happened back in the late spring and just know how we can move resources when needed very quickly to address a problem if we have it. It's just constantly learning from experience and improving the approach. I think that's the essence of what that strategy is about.

**Moderator:** Last question for today goes to Abu on from Bangla Patrika.

**Question:** Hello, Mayor, how are you?

**Mayor:** Good. How are you?

**Question:** Good. Thank you so much. Mayor, the question is if someone had detected COVID-19 and if he lived with his family, and if [inaudible] doesn't have enough room to live separate, what is the other option?

**Mayor:** I'm going to turn to Dr. Long, who will enthusiastically tell you about the options available? But if someone – look, Abu, we know this is a challenge all over New York City. You know, we're one of the most densely populated cities in the country. Lots of people live in multi-generational families together, and honestly, particularly in the communities that have been hardest hit by COVID, that's the reality. So if a family member tests positive and needs to safely separate from the rest of the family, we will support them in doing that. Even if it means giving them a hotel room for free, so they can do that and be safe themselves and not spread the disease. Dr. Long, you want to tell people how they can learn about that.

**Executive Director Long:** 212-COVID-19, call the number and we'll give you all of the information you need. Now to build on that a little bit, this a really important issue. It is hard for people that have been diagnosed with COVID to go home and to separate themselves from their family members, especially if they may share one bedroom or one bathroom. So our goal has been to give you as many options as possible to keep you and your family safe and to prevent you from going out and potentially infecting other New Yorkers. We'll deliver you food for free. Again, we'll walk your dog for free. You can come to our hotel for free. We'll pick you up for free and we'll give you medical care in the hotel as well. Because we give you whatever we, whatever you've told us you need in order to safely stay at home or to come to our hotel the outcome of that is we have some of the best compliance rates with people that are cases being, having been diagnosed, isolating and contacts, quarantining, or not leaving their homes of any place that I'm familiar with in the whole world. 98 percent of our cases tell us that they haven't left their homes or the hotel since we last talked to them, and 96 percent of our contacts tell us that they haven't left their homes or a hotel after we last talked to them. Those numbers show that almost a hundred percent of people that are potentially contagious are staying at home or doing the right thing for New York, and it's just another example of New Yorkers helping New Yorkers, and our goal, our role here is just to help them to get through this for them and their families. So thank you for your question.

**Mayor:** Amen. Go ahead, Abu.

**Question:** The second question is, since the [inaudible] you know affect the community, do you have any statistic on how many businesses closed in the city or since the city has been open, how they are doing, the businesses?

**Mayor:** Abu, it's a fluid situation. Obviously – look, we know so many businesses have been hurt, smaller businesses are the most vulnerable, some tragically have closed permanently. A number, I think have a chance to come back, and the number one factor that would help them is a stimulus. The stimulus we should have not only puts the city government, state government back on its feet, but puts the people back on their feet. The stimulus we should have would provide a lot more support to small business owners and would provide a lot more support to renters. So, there's a lot of businesses, I think if they got the kind of support they deserve quickly, could come back. So we don't have a sense of the final outcome because we know a lot of businesses will make an attempt to come back and if they get support, they can. We do know it's going to be tough, tough for small business under any situation, particularly in communities of color. We do know we've lost some businesses permanently, which is horrible for those families and their employees, but it's just too soon to draw bigger judgments because the biggest x-factor out there is the stimulus and the stimulus will be decided by the vote count, and we all anxiously await that.

This is the perfect segue to my conclusion, which is we all do anxiously await the vote count, but let's be proud of the fact that people got out there and voted and participated, and this is part of a pattern. People deciding to do something in the midst of crisis. It was a decision to vote in record numbers, despite the pandemic, just like it has been a decision by New Yorkers to where masks, practice social distancing, get tested. New Yorkers decided that we needed our schools open and

have been coming out to make that work and make that safe, and our schools being so safe is because New Yorkers, whether they're kids, parents, educators, staff, are getting tested and keeping schools safe. So you look across the spectrum, all the small businesses that have fought to stay open. Those restaurants have done so much for the city. Participating in Open Restaurants, helping us have hope for our future. These are all decisions, big and small, by everyday New Yorkers, but they add up to something that really has an impact on all of us. So step by step, we're going to move forward as a city, and again, it all comes back to the people. The people have been deciding that New York City will move forward, will come back and I have great faith in that future. Thanks, everyone.

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