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

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Well, good morning, everybody. It's Monday, beginning of week, and what are we beginning with? Heat – intense heat. It's going to be a very hot week, particularly the first half of the week. And I'm going to talk about in a moment the heat advisory and what we're doing to address it. But first I want to talk about a challenge we have been facing over these last weeks as result of the perfect storm that we're experiencing here in this city, crisis, layered upon crisis – all the challenges created by the coronavirus. And we know there's been an uptick in shootings in recent weeks. We know there's been a real problem with violence that must be addressed, and we know the best way to address it is with communities. And you see all over the city, community members stepping forward, elected officials, clergy, Cure Violence movement and Crisis Management System, a whole host of people and organizations occupying the corners. What that means is taking back the neighborhood, making clear that violence won't be acceptable. All the good people who work so hard in this city, want their neighborhoods to be safe, need their neighbors to be safe, they're doing something about it. And they understand and we understand that the best way to achieve lasting safety is with communities and NYPD working together. And the outpouring of community involvement and support has been striking. It's also important that the City government keep investing in communities, going at the root causes of so many of the challenges we face and investing, particularly, in our young people. And that means investing in youth programs, youth centers. We're going to be talking about that in a moment as well. But because we're facing a perfect storm – and no one can doubt that – all of the combined crises and traumas together have created an aberrant situation where we saw crime uptick and a lot of the normal realities just weren't there to address it. We've got to fix that now. Thank God, New York City has made so much progress on the health front. We've got to keep that progress, defend that progress, but we also have to restart all the pieces of the criminal justice system to make sure that if, God forbid, someone has committed an act of violence and means to do harm to their community members, that we can do something about it. So, the bottom line is our criminal justice system needs to get back to full strength. Our courts not only need to reopen, they need to reopen fully as quickly as possible.

Now, remember, the disruption here has been striking. And I want to say to everyone in the court system, to the DA's, NYPD, everyone went through massive disruption. A lot of people were sick. It was impossible to do some of the normal things because of the precautions that had to be taken. So, this is very clearly something where we're all in it together. I want to make sure everyone hears that – we are all in this together and everyone's been through a tremendous amount of disruption, but now is the time to overcome that and start to rebuild so we can really address the violence issue together. A striking reality that there's a huge backlog when it comes to cases involving violent crime – only 50 percent of firearms charges have even gotten to the point of indictment. And obviously, we need to go from indictment through the trial process and determining the fair resolution, and those who need to feel consequences have to experience those consequences in a speedier fashion. That's not happening right now. So, I want to call

together all of the players. I've sent this letter this morning to the chief judge and the five district attorneys, saying let's all work together, let's get this right. I want to convene everyone and figure out what can the City of New York do to help each of you and all of your colleagues to get this right? Because, again, just a little beginning of the court system won't get it done. We need to find a way to get back to full strength. And there are obvious issues of health and safety – we want to help. We have a lot of spaces we can make available, personnel to help address the health and safety issues. But I'm going to work with all of my colleagues, the DA's, the chief judge, everyone in this system to get it right, because we owe it to the people of our communities. And I have spent time with some of the families that have lost loved ones. That is a searing painful experience. When you see what happens to a family, especially now thinking today, and the day of his funeral, little Davell Gardner Jr., and meeting with his family and the pain they're going through – no family in New York City should ever have to go through that. And when you think about that pain, it's incumbent upon all of us to re-glue the criminal justice system, get it going at full strength and make sure there are consequences for those who would harm their fellow New Yorker.

Now, that said, that is how we bring all the pieces together, but we have to keep moving each and every piece as energetically as possible. And this is why our focus on young people is crucial. After a really huge challenges in March and April, all of us together were able to rebound and restart summer programming for young people. I want to thank the City Council for the leading role they played in helping us put that together, but we also have to do more. We have to create more and better space safe spaces for young people. Think about it for a moment. If you're a young person in New York City, you need safe places to go. You need places to grow and develop. You need places for recreation and culture. We don't have enough of those spaces. We need to create more. So, today, we're going to talk about one of the examples of that kind of investment that's going to make such a big difference right in the heart of Brooklyn, in a community that needs this support. And remember, what's so important here – this is about our priorities, and this is an example of resources we took from the NYPD budget and are putting into young people, reprogramming our resources to help young people, to put them on the right path, to stop problems before they begin. So, today, we're going to talk about the new recreation center that will be created at the Nostrand Playground in Flatbush, Brooklyn. And it's going to be amazing. It's going to have an indoor pool, and a track, and a kitchen for community cooking lessons, and all sorts of wonderful amenities that will help community members to have great, great options, especially our young people. And we're going to begin a process of engagement with the community this fall on how to specifically create the center in a way that will be most helpful to the community. And now, I want to thank and celebrate and let you hear from the two driving forces behind this great project. Both of them put a huge amount of – excuse me – a huge amount of time and energy into envisioning this and bringing it to life. And I can attest to the many times they spoke to me about the need to get this done and we're getting it done now. So, first, I want to turn to Assembly Member Rodneyse Bichotte.

[...]

Thank you so much. Thank you, Assembly Member. Thank you for fighting for us in Albany and fighting for justice every day. And since you said exactly correctly, that Council Member Farah Louis has been extraordinarily persistent in making sure this came to fruition. I want to congratulate you Council Member, thank you for your huge focus on young people in particular

and all that you and the City Council has done, but particularly your achievement today with this recreation center. I'd love to hear from you.

[...]

Thank you. And you will make sure we expeditiously move this. I'm share you will. I'll be hearing from you. Alright, now, going back where I started at the very beginning today, we're celebrating this good news about the recreation center, but we're also dealing with a huge challenge today, and that's the heat we're all facing. And I want everyone to recognize, take this heat situation seriously. Everyone, look, New Yorkers do a great job of looking out for each other. In this situation, please look out for the people in your life, look out for the people on your block and your building. Seniors in particular, make sure they're okay and they have what they need. Everyone's got to stay hydrated. People should not be out in the heat any longer than they have to be. So, take it seriously today and tomorrow – we're talking about temperatures and heat index nearing 100, so this is serious stuff.

Now, the City will have cooling centers open today and tomorrow across all five boroughs. To find those cooling centers – and please, if you need them, take advantage of them, they're a good, safe place to be – you can go to [www.nyc.gov/chillout](http://www.nyc.gov/chillout). And, of course, you can call 3-1-1. Anyone who goes to one of these centers, you're going to find there's social distancing, there's face coverings. We're taking very seriously – we have to continue to fight against the coronavirus, but, right now, the heat's front and center. So, you can go to one of these centers and know you'll be safe in every way. And we opened up public pools – a number of public pools this Friday. We have eight more coming this coming Saturday, August 1st. And we'll talk about that again later in the week. But already, we've seen the pools that have opened, a huge number of New Yorkers coming out to enjoy them and appreciate them. And again, doing it safely with all the right social distancing. So, the pools are going to help a lot, and more coming up and opening up this Saturday.

Okay, let's go to our indicators. Number one, daily number of people admitted to hospitals for suspected COVID-19, threshold is 200 – today's report, 54 patients. Number two, daily number of people in Health + Hospitals ICU's, the threshold 375 – today, 286. And number three, most important, number of people testing positive citywide for a COVID-19, threshold, 15 percent – and today, it's – again, this is the best number we've seen, we've seen a few times, but we're back at it again today – one percent in New York City. That's absolutely outstanding and that's because of all the hard work all of you have put in. And I keep saying it, everybody, please do not let up. I was out and around the city this weekend, I saw a lot of people with face coverings, not as many as I'd like to see. Everyone, remember how important those face coverings are. Keep that social distancing, help the people in your life to remember how important it is.

Let me do a few words in Spanish.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

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

**Moderator:** Hi, all. We have with us here today Assembly Member Bichotte, Council Member Louis, Police Commissioner Shea, Parks Commissioner Silver, Emergency Management Commissioner Criswell, and Senior Advisor Dr. Varma. With that, we'll start with Andrew from NBC.

**Question:** Good morning, everybody. Hope everyone is doing well. Mayor, my first question is about schools. Our understanding is that Jumaane Williams, the Public Advocate, today, calling on a one-month delay in the start of the school year, and then, after that, asking that the DOE open it for kids under 10 only. I'm wondering your reaction to that plan and to clarify when exactly will parents know what the plan is at their school?

**Mayor:** Andrew, what was that last part – when my parents know?

**Question:** Yeah, because there've been some confusion about you saying you wouldn't make the call until September. So, maybe you can clarify that – but essentially your reaction to Jumaane Williams' plan to delay the school year. And then, if you could clarify, when exactly parents will know what the plan is at their individual school?

**Mayor:** Sure. First, appreciate the Public Advocate's suggestions. We'll certainly look at them. Right now, our intention is to open on schedule and to open with all grade levels, but, again, with blended learning – some part of the week kids in school, some part of the week kids online, and then for those kids and families who prefer just online, that will always be an option available to all families. If they want to do all remote at any point, they can do that. So, to the bigger point, Andrew, the fact is – I think I've said it a number of times, I really want to try and nail this point. We, right now, have a plan – plan A is open – open in September, maximum number kids in schools, blended learning. We've talked about it now for weeks and weeks. Every individual school is taking that basic plan and refining it according to their own space reality, and their ability to accommodate kids. And they'll be speaking with their parent community over the next weeks and give them exactly a sense of how the system will go. So, parents will have ample time, weeks ahead of school opening, to know exactly what the schedule will be. We're putting more and more childcare options into play. All of this is moving intensely in a crisis atmosphere. We're creating as we go along. We've got six weeks to put together and we will. But again, remember, the health realities that we see around the country and we see around the world. Today, at late July, we're doing very, very well in New York City. You heard one percent testing positive. We have to hang on to that. Six weeks from now as a long time. So, the logical thing to do is – and we're going to hear from the State in about 10 days or so, they're going to give the basic decision, then we're going to keep building from there. And then, we're going to inform parents of what their specific plan for their school will be. And then, ultimately, we have to see exactly what the health care situation is in the days leading up to school beginning. So, I was a public school parent for the whole time of my kids being in school – right now, parents should plan very clearly on their kids being in school if they want them to be in school. If they prefer them to be remote, that's great, but we're all going to be watching the data, the science, the health care indicators until we get very close to school beginning, and it would be irresponsible not to, Andrew. It would be irresponsible to make a decision in July or in August for something that's going to happen to September. That's what we've learned from looking around the country, make the final decisions based on the facts at that time. Go ahead.

**Question:** Just as a follow-up to that, what do you think of the idea of delaying the school year for one month so that you really know that the precautions are in place and that you have enough teachers? Because part of what we're hearing is you'll make the plan and then it may be that you don't have enough teachers to make that hybrid plan actually work. So, does it make sense to skew the start of the year to make sure you have the bodies in place and to make sure you have the procedures in place?

**Mayor:** At this point, no, Andrew, it doesn't add to the equation to delay. Again, we've surveyed parents, they desperately – a huge majority wants to get kids back into school for the right reasons, to help them learn again, and for their social development, because they know it's a safe place, and there's food available, and health support available. So, that is the plan, but we'll watch every step along the way, huge amount of energy and effort is going into working through the pieces. We're working very closely with the unions, representing all the folks who work in our schools. And we have a plan, and if something happens that causes us to need to adjust that plan, we'll talk about it. But, right now, we are moving forward with our plan.

**Moderator:** Next, we have Henry from Bloomberg.

**Question:** Hello, Mr. Mayor. How are you doing today?

**Mayor:** Good, Henry. How you doing?

**Question:** I'm doing well. Thank you. My question has to do with your support of violence interrupters, Cure Violence, community-centered crime fighting that's beyond police. The investment the City has made is relatively minuscule, right? I mean, it's like \$39 million. If this program is effective, why is the investment so small?

**Mayor:** Henry, I respect the question. I would say that there's an assumption in that question, that kind of misses the history. You go back to the beginning of our administration, the City of New York was barely investing at all, and we have steadily increased the amount of investment and continue to work with this model to prove its efficacy. And it keeps coming back clear that this works and it helps. And we've been building out the investment more and more, and we will continue to do that. So, I think the point is, these are – a lot of these organizations have been building up themselves from the grassroots, a lot of them have been creating organizations from scratch. It's not like going to some big nonprofit that's been around for decades. These are truly grassroots community organizations, takes time for them to build. But no, I think the growth pattern has been very strong and it will continue to develop further.

**Question:** Okay, if I could just follow up on that question. If the programs are so effective, why are we seeing so much violent crime – I mean, why are they unable to stem the violent crime that we're seeing?

**Mayor:** I think – I appreciate the question, but again, I think everything has to come back to this perfect storm we're in. And I will say it every time I'm asked, you cannot take a pandemic and layer with a massive unemployment crisis that only rivals the Great Depression, families that don't have any income any more, kids that can't go to school, you know, the court system not being able to function, huge number of police officers were sick for a long time - you cannot take all these dislocations and add them one on top of another, on top of another, and all the

frustration and pain that people have been through and expect business as usual. So, we're dealing with an extraordinarily high bar here in terms of the hand we've all been dealt. But I can tell you for fact, Cure Violence Movement and Crisis Management System had been out there making a huge difference. They've been doing it in terms of social distancing, they – you've seen them out in force in recent week addressing violence in the community. We've seen some incredible success stories over the year – over the years, and now we see this movement coming forward in this new situation to find solutions. So, no question in my mind, this is part of the solution overall.

**Moderator:** Next we have Juliet from 1010 WINS.

**Question:** Hey, good morning, Mr. Mayor, how are you doing?

**Mayor:** Good Juliet, how you been?

**Question:** I'm fine, thank you. I wanted to bring up the encampment issue. A listener sent me photos of an encampment at Prospect Park Pavilion at Plaza West next to the Green Market. He says he contacted 3-1-1 five times, nothing happened. Called the local precinct, told it's not a police matter. I hear similar stories from others who reach out. So is there a way to have a proactive, consistent response to identify and dismantle these encampments?

**Mayor:** Yeah. Juliet, thank you for raising that. One, yes, that's what we've had for years. That's why when I said years ago that we were getting rid of the encampments, we set up a system to very systematically make sure they're identified, they were addressed, including offering all the people involved the opportunity to come into shelter and get the services and support they need. So Homeless Services plays a crucial role, obviously, Sanitation, NYPD, any and all agencies we need, some - and Parks Department plays a role and it's worked overwhelmingly. Again, we've had a lot of dislocation in recent months, but we are going to make sure that this is put together clearly and strongly. It is a citywide strategy. To your specific example, I'm glad you're raising it. We're going to go deal with that today. I don't – whenever I get these reports of someone at a precinct said something, I really appreciate if you ever get specifics. I want to make sure the Precinct Commander knows that someone in the precinct said that. Of course, it is a police matter. It's first and foremost the Department of Homeless Services matter, but police are there to assist if needed and no one should ever blow off a problem in the city government, and certainly I want to know why 3-1-1 didn't respond more effectively. So we're going to go do a little bit of investigation and Juliet if you could give us any details you have, that'd be really helpful, but we will address that site today.

**Question:** Yeah, okay, but my experience with people that I speak to reporting these to me, the responses are very inconsistent. I've seen personally where encampment material is either completely removed, and where there is follow up by the NYPD with local residents on a daily basis, and others where the material is just piled up down the block so that people who return to that spot, just take it back and lay it back out. So, what is the better way to do this? You know, when your office calls out there is the response, but it seems like unless that happens, it's very inconsistent.

**Mayor:** It should be consistent. It's obviously the former, not the latter. Remove the material and offer the services and not allow the encampment to come back. But Juliet to be fair, we have

managed now for years to make sure that we're not the kinds of encampments we had in the past, which were large and numerous in New York City. We'll fight them back every time we'll give people the services they need, but you're actually right. I want a consistent approach and the consistent approach is there's no possibility of the encampment reasserting, but I will tell you having asked many, many people this question, they are a rarity in this city and we want them to be nonexistent.

**Moderator:** Next. We have Julia from The Post.

**Question:** Hey, good morning, Mr. Mayor and this is for you and the Commissioner. As I mentioned to both of you last week, the slowdown in courts does not correlate with the sharp uptick in shootings according to the NYPD's own data. For example, 16 percent of the people arrested on gun charges currently have an open case. So, what do you attribute that increase and how can you fix it outside of the returning the courts to full speed?

**Mayor:** Yeah, I don't agree with your assumption. I think there is a huge piece of this that is the fact that there is no outcome if someone is arrested, there's no process. Remember whether someone is in jail based on arrest or out of jail after being arrested on bail or whatever it may be, you can't adjudicate the case until there's a trial and that determines whether someone should be allowed to be on the streets or not, and jury of their peers and the whole nine yards, we just haven't had that anywhere near the level we need. So, it is by definition, a crucial, crucial piece of the equation, and again, Julia, against the backdrop of a perfect storm, where many, many factors are affecting the situation, including things that the NYPD is working to do better as well. We're not saying there's one piece to this and anyone who tries to typify it that way, they're just lying through their teeth. I've said a thousand times, the Commissioner said a thousand times, it's a perfect storm. There are many, many factors. City of New York needs to do more, NYPD needs to do more, but if you don't have a functioning court system you can't follow through the process the way we normally do. Commissioner? I think you're on mute. We can't hear you Commissioner. Hold on a sec. You may be on mute.

**Police Commissioner Dermot Shea:** Hey Julia, how are you? Mr. Mayor, can you hear me?

**Mayor:** Yup. There you go.

**Commissioner Shea:** Yep. So, Julie, I would turn the question around and just say in the last four months I would ask somebody to answer the question, how many people have had a court case disposed of which resulted in them being sentenced to state prison or Rikers Island? And you're going to see very low numbers because cases really are not being disposed of to my knowledge unless there's no jail attached to it, and you know, the court system, the violence question, I mean, it is indisputable. We have 2,000 – about 2,100 gun cases just in the last two years that are still open, half of them indicted and almost all of them are walking around next to you and me every day on the streets. It is – it is not disputable.

**Mayor:** Go ahead, Julia.

**Question:** Okay. My second question is on the, you know, the Cure Violence Movement, you know, you mentioned Mr. Mayor that it takes a while for these grassroots movements to get up and running, the leaders of the movement say the same thing. So, until they really become full

force, you know what is the NYPD doing to stop this increased bloodshed? We had 15 shootings on Sunday, including seven murders, 47 for the week compared to just 17 last year. So how long until the NYPD new crime fighting strategy kicks in? And what are you going to do to keep the violence down in the meantime?

**Mayor:** I appreciate the question, Julia, you know a week ago, the Commissioner and I outlined the basic strategy and he'll speak to it, but basically it is taking more officers and applying them to the very pinpointed areas where we're seeing the biggest problems. It is bringing out the community, not just Cure Violence, but all community leaderships and organizations ought to be a part of pushing back against the violence. And we will continue to develop a Cure Violence and Crisis Management System over the coming months and years and making it a bigger part of what we do in New York City. But really, again, it comes back to the NYPD's absolutely proven ability to adjust to a new challenge, that is what COMPSTAT is all about, this is the whole concept we've seen for a quarter century, many big challenges NYPD was able to overcome with refined strategies. And the Commissioner, I give him credit, I've watched him in COMPSTAT, no one understands this ability to adjust and take in new realities, new information, and try new strategies, no one understands it better than Commissioner Shea. So, Commissioner, you want to add?

**Moderator:** Commissioner?

**Commissioner Shea:** Yeah, good morning, Julia. Again, so when you look at what we saw last week, absolutely unacceptable. You're right. 15 shootings just on Sunday, that was following a day of a pretty heavy protest in Manhattan on Saturday. When you look at the 15 shootings, eight of them were in Brooklyn. When you look at what we're doing in terms of the Mayor outlined it, putting significant resources into the areas where we know that there is ongoing gang violence occurring. We're also working closely with community members, local elected officials, just raising awareness in these areas and trying to get a grassroots approach as well as pinpoint deployment and investigation. Just last week we closed 11 separate murders. They did not occur last week, but this is moving backwards, but the arrests occurred last week. We closed an additional 14 shooting incidents that were non-fatal just last week. I think if you look at the breadth of the, you know, the NYPD whether it's my Twitter account, @NYPDnews, Terry Monahan's, or the individual precincts, your seeing gun arrests picking up and starting to be made, which is a positive. And I think all of this is a start, but this is going to take some time to address the significant uptick in violence that we've seen.

**Moderator:** Next. We have Rich from WCBS880.

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

**Mayor:** Hey Rich, how you doing?

**Question:** I'm okay. Listen, I'm just wondering, you may have had eyes on this. So the cleanup of the graffiti at the DOE and the Dinkins building and the old Surrogate's Court, how is that going? I mean, I assume you're taking a look at it as you go by?

**Mayor:** Yeah, from what I've seen is coming along. Well, I have not looked carefully enough in every nook and cranny to know, and I know some of the older buildings, there's been a couple of



challenges, but the last I've seen I think it's going well. And look, this again, anytime we see this on a public building we are absolutely going to clean it up as we don't accept it being there, but I think that's coming along well, go ahead.

**Question:** Okay. And this is a little bit out of left field here. So, I was taking a look at the seal of the City of New York, as we were sort of waiting for the news conference here. It's a man at pantaloons holding a rope with a loop at the end of it, presumably a trapper or something, and then on the other side of the windmill and a couple of barrels, you have a Native American who is holding a bow. I'm just wondering whether you are or your commission or somebody is taking a look at that seal and wondering whether how relevant it is these days?

**Mayor:** That's a great question. I think we have to look at a lot of things and I appreciate you asking the question, Rich. I'm from time to time I've looked at – it's a good question. It's kind of – it's something of a unclear image what it's saying to us, but I think that's exactly right. It's the kind of thing a commission should look at carefully and decide if it still makes sense for the 21st century.

**Moderator:** Next we have Debralee from Bronx Free Press and Manhattan Times.

**Question:** Hey, good morning, everyone. Can you hear me?

**Mayor:** Debralee, how you doing?

**Question:** I'm well, thanks. I wanted to follow up, the City Comptroller released a letter today, questioning why it is that an audit that he conducted in April 2018 that showed the NYCHA playgrounds, the majority of them nearly 800 had dangerous or deficient conditions and that it's not been addressed, and in fact, since the NYCHA playgrounds have been reopened, that has not been addressed or has a plan, which was promised to address these issues that have been released. Can you speak to that?

**Mayor:** Yeah, I'll, we'll get you more details, Debralee, but I just think that is not accurate. NYCHA playgrounds, real work has been done to improve the issues. Some are still being worked on, but there are relatively small number that have any serious issue that as I understand it causes them to be offline and more major work has to be done. A huge effort was undertaken by NYCHA to reopen playgrounds once that was allowed and to my understanding a really big majority of their playgrounds are up and running. So, we'll get you the latest facts, but I don't think that characterization is accurate.

**Moderator:** Debralee?

**Question:** All right, and then another topic. There's been a renewed call to have Commissioner Shea more specifically address why it is that it seems that police officers are just not being disciplined or for that matter that their concerns are not being taken seriously of those that say that violent actions and overly aggressive actions by police officers are just not being addressed and some have gone so far as to call for his resignation or to ask you to prompt his resignation. And so I wonder if you could speak specifically to that renewed concern and also to the incident that had the police officer essentially assail a homeless person and have those charges then both

by you and the Commissioner questioned. I mean, essentially, you know, that that incident in particular has sparked some new concerns, can you speak to that, please?

**Mayor:** Yeah, sure. I mean, first of all, the Commissioner is here and I'll let him speak to it as well. I've been very clear about my faith in Commissioner Shea. I have known him over these whole seven years the administration, I've seen what he can do, both in terms of addressing crime and violence, but also his belief in neighborhood policing and even more so in focusing the police on working with young people in a whole new way. And you'll remember back in February, Commissioner talked about a new vision for the NYPD, I talked about in my State of the City, and it had not been for a global pandemic, that's exactly what we'd be deep in the middle of right now, reorienting the NYPD towards a different and better relationship with young people and we still have to do that now, as we fight back against the coronavirus, but on the specific reality, I want to be clear, every single incident, every single video, not only needs to be investigated quickly, but we need to show results to the public quickly. This was not the historic reality. We need to do it now. We need to be transparent about the outcomes, we know thank God have the change in Albany in terms of the 50-a law that's going to allow us to be much more transparent, but what I think we have not done well enough yet, and it's a new reality, but we have get this right, is to show the public very consistently, here's a video, here's a case, here's the immediate decision, whether it's a modification or suspension or not, here's a decision on whether there's further discipline, here's the outcome, and that has to be seen in a direct line in real time. And I've said it very publicly and had the conversation with the Commissioner, this is what we need to do better. Now even at a height of some of the most challenging realities weeks ago, the Commissioner made it a priority to address some of the incidents that were particularly troubling and to either suspend or modify officers and indicate that the discipline process was starting for larger charges. We just need to keep that as consistent as possible. Sometimes it's made more complicated Debra Lee, when there is again, another part of government involved and some in the media have said, oh, that's not a big issue. It is a big issue, and it's something we need to sort out and streamline with those agencies. So that's the overall situation, you can expect to see a more routinized approach going forward that'll I think be more helpful to you in the public tracing each of these cases. Commissioner, if you could speak to that and specifically speak to the situation with the homeless individual because if we can bring some closure to that, I think it would be helpful for everyone.

**Commissioner Shea:** Yeah. Thank you. Thank you for the question, Mr. Mayor. Thank you. I think Mr. Mayor, you touched on most of them. We certainly have spoken, you and I, a number of times about the need to be as transparent as possible and as do it in a swift manner. But the other thing that's missing from that is that has to be an investigative process, there has to be – and it has to be done. Right, and I think I've balanced that where I see something wrong, I've come out strongly and I've been pretty swift in a couple of cases recently in terms of changing duty status or doing other things. I make the decision as I see fit, and I'm going to continue to do that as the Police Commissioner, and I balanced always at the end of the day, what I think is right, and you know, you're going to have probably some people that don't agree with it and some people that do, and that's what I've found across the entire city.

In terms of the case with the transit officer, I would just caution people to remember that use of force does not equate to misconduct, and I think sometimes people see a video and anytime there is force, which does not appear to be pretty, and sometimes in fact it appears to be ugly, but this is the environment sometimes that our officers are working in and use of force, whether it's on a

detail or a protest involving a baton or mace, physical force can certainly be inappropriate and it can be excessive and it can be misconduct, but it also can be completely appropriate, and that those are tools that the officers are given. So that's what we do. We examine the facts of the case. We examine any evidence, we take into account the, the complaints that are made, I feel good that there is independent oversight of the NYPD as well with the Civilian Complaint Review Board who our Internal Affairs Bureau works hand in hand with, and I think most importantly is we've got to get it right, and the people have to have faith in the process that people will help be held accountable.

To the incident on the train, I've spoken to this last week there will not be any change of duty status for that opposite. Is it exactly how I would like the incident to have turned out? Absolutely not. I would like the incident to be able to be handled with no force as a matter of fact. But when you look at the entirety of the incident, when you look at it from the disregarding the lawful orders of the police, that going into the other train, the refusing to leave numerous commands, and then at one point putting his hands on the officer while it wasn't pretty, it wasn't something that I felt required a change in duty status. We'll certainly work with the opposite to receive additional training on top of what he already has. But I think also let's be honest. Training is not an absolute cure-all and it is effective, and it can be one more tool that the officers have, but it also requires a dynamic environment in which people sometimes don't respond to the training that's used.

**Moderator:** Last two for today. Next, we have Dana from the New York Times.

**Question:** Hi, Mr. Mayor. Commissioner Shea has said police reforms are handcuffing the police and suggested that City leaders are cowards for embracing the reforms. Why are you comfortable giving Commissioner Shea so much leeway to criticized city policy? It's, it's hard to imagine you would give that sort of leeway to other city commissioners.

**Mayor:** Look, the Commissioner and I had numerous talks about this, and we were dealing with a very, very dynamic, multilayered situation, and we had honest talks about the fact that there is a profound need for change and reform, and there's also realities that have left officers trying to figure out how to do their job effectively in this environment and would changing rules, and that, that some of that is hard to do in a fast timeline, and some of it is an imperfect reality. So this was based on a real dialogue and his belief that was important to express the concerns publicly in the name of some kind of balance in the name of making sure people understood what it could mean in terms of the complexities of fighting crime and reducing violence. So the best way to say it, Dana, it's a very fair question. But I would say to you, it's one thing when a member of my administration comes to me and says, this is something that we, we need to talk about. We need to express these concerns, and I understand that, and we agree on that versus a situation where there's not that kind of process. That's the bottom line here.

**Question:** Thanks, second question for you. In your State of the State address in February, which of course was the—

**Mayor:** State of the City.

**Question:** State of the City, thank you. You said you would be building seven new recreation centers. Does this new one fall within that seven? You know, what's the status of that? Has COVID made that goal unachievable?

**Mayor:** No, in fact, Dana, we are, we are doubling down on that goal. In the months after the crisis struck with the coronavirus, a lot of things were on hold, but in fact, we made the decision in shifting capital funding from the NYPD to youth centers and recreation centers. That allowed us to reinvigorate the effort because look, we've had to make a lot of tough decisions in our budget and a lot of things couldn't move forward, but finding money from one agency and applying it to another one so we could get this going again that opened the door. So not only in terms of the Nostrand Playground in Flatbush, but also a number of the others that we announced in the last few days around the five boroughs and particularly around NYCHA developments. No, that plan is now back on track.

**Moderator:** Last question for today, we have Gloria from NY1.

**Question:** Thank you. Good morning, Mr. Mayor. I wanted to ask again, on this question about the courts – it's my understanding that part of the problem as it pertains to gun charges specifically is that grand juries are not convening right now, and that, that is part of the Governor's pause order. So have you had a discussion with him about this, perhaps figuring out a way to bring back the grand jury process in a way that can be done safely and, and still, you know, do the things that need to be done right now in order to prevent the spread of the virus.

**Mayor:** Very important question, Gloria. Thank you. Look that pause ordered wasn't in effect, and I'll let the Commissioner speak to this as well, that was in effect until the announcement that the grand juries would start to reconvene, I believe the target date is August 10th. What we're trying to say is we understand, I understand a hundred percent why there couldn't be business as usual, you know, later in March, April, May, but now that the state has decided to bring grand juries back, the point I'm making the Commissioners making is we need them to come back to full strength. It can't just be a small number of grand juries. We need to get back to level we were at back in February because Gloria, think about the backlog that exists now, and again, just think about for a moment, if someone has committed an act of gun violence and they're out in our community, ask people who represent communities, what they feel about that. They want to see justice. They want to see adjudication of the case. If someone in fact is guilty and should not be on the streets, that resolution is absolutely crucial to the community. If someone's innocent or innocent and they then go about their lives, but you can't go through that process without the grand juries meeting, and we've got so many cases, backlog that we need to get back to full strength and work off that backlog as quickly as possible. So from my understanding, Gloria, the state has fully okayed that what we're saying is we want to work with the court system and the DA's to get that to maximum, we'll do whatever they need to help get them there. Commissioner, you want to add?

**Commissioner Shea:** Yeah, and Gloria, thank you for the question. When you look at the grand juries, it's a big piece of it, and I think it's a much bigger discussion when you look at the jail population, when you look at the state's prison population, when you look at the downward pressure on people not going into either of the above. When you look at the lowering of bails or the requirement that that can be no bail in some circumstances, all of these things play in and, and Gloria, I mean, I would, to the earlier question I would ask – the question is how many

people in the last four months have been sentenced to city jail or state prison because of an ongoing criminal case, and I think you're going to see a very extremely, extremely low number. There's no trials going on, and when you look at no grand juries and no trials, to my knowledge, I could be wrong, but no trials, and then you start saying, sit down in a room with district attorneys, defense attorneys, and what is the incentive to plea in this environment? And what we are seeing is there really is no incentive to take a plea when there's no ultimate hammer at the end of the process or potential hammer. So even though maybe one percent of cases go to trial, it's always a part of the negotiation that takes place in this criminal justice system of ours. It's not perfect, but it's the best we have, and it's, it's, it works at times. Sometimes we'd like it to work better, but in this environment, it's just not working as designed. I think that's playing for anyone to say.

**Mayor:** And just to finish that point, Gloria, just think about it for a moment. We've had an important discussion about bail over the last few years, a very good and important reform was made. There were some outstanding issues. I think back in April, a lot of those issues were addressed well by the legislature, but here's the bottom line, whatever someone's status, they get bail, they don't get bail, they're held pending trial. It all has to lead to a trial. So if someone is out on bail, for example, and there's no trial in sight, that is not what was intended by anyone. The intention was that they were supposed to be speedy trial. I mean, there's literally in the constitution, right? There's supposed to be a concept of justice happening on a timeline so that God forbid someone has committed an act of violence. There is an actual consequence, and one last point, this is why I often refer to what Bill Bratton said to me back in 2014, that what's misunderstood in New York City, 8.6 million people, and it is a few thousand people who do the most serious violence, only a few thousand, but if those few thousand never experience the consequences, because there are not enough trials, and if you can't take down a gang because there's not enough trials, then unfortunately the violence grows. We've got to bring this piece back into the equation fully. Go ahead, Gloria.

**Question:** Okay. Thank you, and if, well, if I could follow up on the, on the bail point and speedy trial point, some of the, especially the public defenders that have been sort of speaking out against you on this, say that, you know, it's rare when a case does even go to trial that these you know – it's not often resolved in a speedy manner, and if a gun charge is bail eligible to begin with, which they are, and this was the case before the pandemic, they say that the point that you're making is, is misguided that, that it's not like a person is arrested, they show up in jail that night, then the next day they're there, they present they're presented before a grand jury. It's not necessarily a speedy process. So, can you just respond to that?

**Mayor:** Gloria, no one is saying – I mean, I think Dermot made a really important point and it will be true of our justice system. It would be true of American democracy in general. No one's saying this is perfect, but at least what we found and part of why let's just use a real hard fact – for six years crime went down and a functioning criminal justice system was part of that, and Dermot just made the point – when there was an atmosphere of actual consequences, it encouraged movement in the system, whether it was a plea bargain in some cases, or going through a trial and getting to a resolution, and we only want the truth, right? If someone's innocent, we want them to be freed. If someone has hurt their fellow New Yorker, they should suffer whatever appropriate consequence. But think about it for a moment. Now, if there's no outcome in sight, cause remember you're talking about August 10th, just a small beginning. So, the notion of when will the court system function fully, and when do you create that kind of

movement again, that momentum that says, if someone's done something wrong, there's eventually going to be a larger consequence. It really throws off everything. There's just no question about it, and it's, again, we cannot deny that we were on a really clean, clear track of lowering crime, and then there's a huge disruption clearly because of the coronavirus, but we've got to deal with it in our way. We just can't do it alone. So, I would argue to you getting the court system back to full strength creates that momentum again. Are the trials speedy enough? No, I'd love to see the – we've talked about this a lot too, and I know our colleagues in Albany have been working on this. We all want the trial system to go faster for everyone's benefit and to help us reduce jail population. But if we thought there was a speedy trial problem last year, and the beginning of this year, a lot of us were fighting for speedier trials. We'll then try on for size, very few trials at all, and huge, huge delays because there's just not grand juries sitting. So again, we've all got to figure this out together, and we want to partner with the court system and with the DA's to get it right, and I'll just finish on that note.

Everyone, look, this is a problem we can overcome, and it goes back to – this is just the history of fighting back against crime in this city. Look at the last quarter century, the success year after year of communities and NYPD together fighting back crime. We know it can be done. Look at this city's heroic efforts fighting back the coronavirus, we've seen with our own eyes and the rest of the country is now looking to New York City and say, how did they possibly do that? We're going to keep doing that. But the point is we can solve our problems. We have the ability to do it, but everyone's got to come to the table and work together. So again, community members are out there, elected officials are out there, Cure Violence, Crisis Management System's out there. NYPD is out there. We got to do more and more, but we're saying to our colleagues in the court system, DA's come together with us. Let's figure this out, whatever we can do to contribute to a solution we want to, because when we all put our minds together, there's no question in my mind. We can overcome this crisis. Thank you, everyone.

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