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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 30, 2015

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**RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY ON
EAST VILLAGE BUILDING COLLAPSE AND STATE BUDGET AGREEMENT**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: All right, we have a briefing for you on a couple of matters and then we'll proceed to the bill signing event. I want to talk to you about two things and two things only in advance of the bill signing – the state budget, which I'll do second, but of course, first, I want to talk about the situation in the East Village. You know, we obviously mourn the loss of the two individuals who perished in this tragedy. And this is the first moment of fully taking in, and having verification that these two individuals were lost, and knowing what it means to their families and their loved ones.

As everyone knows, Nicholas Figueroa has been publicly identified. The second victim is not – we are not yet publicly identifying, pending DNA identification and notification of family. But we do know that two families have lost their loved ones in a tragedy that obviously happened with such ferocity, and our hearts go out to the families.

Four patients who went to Bellevue Hospital in critical condition after the incident – three of them now, thank God, have been released. The last patient at Bellevue is in good condition. So, we had four folks who were originally in critical condition. We were very worried about each and every one of them. But thank God – three out – one more still in the hospital, but doing well.

The fire is now fully extinguished – a recovery effort – the cleanup effort, continuing. Obviously, an investigation underway now involving not only our fire marshals and NYPD detectives, but obviously involving the district attorney's office as well at this point.

We have a number of residential units that have been reoccupied in the surrounding areas. You know a number of buildings were evacuated in the process. Most residents who were originally evacuated in the surrounding buildings and the buildings across Second Avenue have gone back to their homes. There are still 60 residential units – 6–0 residential units under vacate order. Department of Buildings and department of housing – HPD – are working to get residents back into those homes as quickly as possible. The department of health is going door to door, providing information to residents in case any are experiencing mental health challenges as a result of this tragedy, so that DOH can support them in every way we can.

Again, this was a tragedy, but it was a tragedy that also showed us the bravery and the professionalism of our first responders. I had the opportunity on Saturday to spend time with some of those who were right there on the scene – the first to arrive on the scene from FDNY, including our firefighters and our EMS officers – and to hear what they dealt with – an extraordinarily fast-moving fire. Commissioner Nigro and I listened to these stories and he’s – he is the ultimate expert and a veteran of this fire department since the class of 1969. But as a layman listening to these stories, it was incredibly moving to hear how extraordinary the effort was and how every second counted in saving the lives of those who were in the building. So, FDNY has a lot to be proud of, and we thank them and all the other first responders. They did an extraordinary job as well.

Just quickly in Spanish, then we’ll take questions on this tragedy, and then we’ll switch over to the state budget.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that – questions on the East Village situations, if any. Questions on East Village? Yes?

Question: You mentioned the involvement of the district attorney. Does that mean that [inaudible] criminal activity or [inaudible]?

Mayor: Obviously, that question should be posed to the district attorney. I think it speaks for itself. Any other questions on the East Village? Yes?

Question: [inaudible] in light of this, you know, going forward, do you think there needs to be tougher regulations [inaudible]

Mayor: Well, first we have to complete the investigation and see what that shows us about what happened here. I think that’s going to give us a good sense of whether we see something that might indicate any kind of policy changes. But right now, we just don’t know the details enough to draw that conclusion. Any other questions on this? Okay, let me turn to the state budget. Thank you very much. Thank you.

We have a tentative budget framework in Albany. I’m joined by our budget director, Dean Fuleihan. So I’m going to speak about this based on the information we have at this moment. It is not complete information. Until we see the final language – the final numbers, we won’t be able to fully assess the impact on New York City. But based on the tentative budget framework, we want to make sure you get a sense of what we’re seeing so far. We are certainly pleased with the additional funding for our school system, the additional funding for pre-k, and for public housing. So those are all steps in the right direction that will certainly help people in New York City.

Obviously, a number of important issues were deferred to the later period of the legislative session. I think I made my views known on mayoral control of education. I made my views known on the DREAM Act. I was hoping both of those issues would be addressed here and now,

but they have been postponed. We'll obviously continue our efforts to get both the DREAM Act passed and mayoral control of schools renewed for a substantial period of time.

Over the last several months, what we've tried to do in Albany is a continuation of everything we've done in the struggle against income inequality and the issues that we face every day in the city. Again, some of the developments we know of, so far, will help us in that effort. The increase in school aid statewide last year to this, appears to be about \$1.4 billion dollars. That's a very substantial increase from one year to the next. So again, that's statewide. We will get a substantial share of that. If that proves to be true, that will be very helpful in our efforts to address a host of challenges in our school system. It is not, obviously, the same as addressing the core inequity created by the absence of a resolution in the Campaign for Fiscal Equity case. This is not a follow-through on that commitment by the state. But it does look like a substantial step forward for school aid. There is \$300 million dollars for our pre-k program – the same as last year. That's very, very good. It's not every dollar we wanted, but it's going to give us, obviously, the overwhelming majority of the money we need for the program this year.

A lot of talk, of course, was on the question of struggling schools and how to address it. We have a very aggressive \$150 million dollar renewal schools plan that I am very personally involved in the management of. I visited three of the renewal schools over the last few weeks. Per this budget agreement, the city will continue to play the primary role in determining the ways to best address those struggling schools.

Again, additional resources for the housing authority – about \$100 million dollars based on the tentative agreement we know of at this moment – a positive development, for sure, because this is against the backdrop of years – and in some cases – decades of disinvestment in NYCHA, first and foremost, by the federal government, but also by the state government. So, it is very important that the state government is now beginning the process of taking some responsibility, again, for helping us with affordable housing, and particularly with public housing. The \$100 million dollars will help us now – again, that is against the backdrop where there's billions of dollars of unmet capital need that comes from, again, years and years, and in many ways, decades of disinvestment. But it is a step in the right direction. A lot more to do up ahead – as I said, mayoral control – I remain hopeful, knowing the incredible consensus in this city on mayoral control, and the many, many voices that have been raised in the last few weeks demanding renewal of mayoral control. Obviously, a bipartisan consensus, if ever you've seen one.

DREAM Act – as I said, we're going to keep working for that. Again – tremendous support in this city for finally addressing the issue of these hardworking young people who have been left in the lurch because of unfair immigration laws. So, I'm very hopeful we can get the DREAM Act passed later in the session. So, some good developments, some steps forward on funding, some real important unaddressed issues, and a lot of work to do between now and the end of June. Just quickly in Spanish.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

Questions on the budget? Yes?

Question: In terms of the minimum wage being left out of the budget [inaudible] any optimism that it could be passed in session? Especially since the State Senate is controlled by the Republican Party?

Mayor: It's certainly disappointing because people are hurting right now. And those living at the current minimum wage in this city can barely get by, in many cases, can't get by without multiple jobs or other forms of support. So, this is something that should've been acted on already. We'll keep working hard to get it enacted in the remainder of the legislative session. I don't think this issue should ever be pre-judged, because the amount of public support is overwhelming. And I always say, when you look at the national perspective – in some of the reddest states in the country in 2014, referenda were passed in favor of increases in the minimum wage. So I think there's tremendous public support and I think the Senate will obviously feel that pressure.

Question: Do you think that the governor was wrong to allow the DREAM Act, and the minimum wage, and mayoral control to be left out of it? [Inaudible]

Mayor: I don't get into the intricacies of the Albany process. I think those things should have been handled as part of the budget, obviously. But we're going to keep working for them now.

Question: [Inaudible] in this budget agreement, there's still the threat of receivership hanging over the schools. [Inaudible] How do you plan to deal with that threat and the possibility that you might lose control?

Mayor: Well, first of all, we're very confident that the plan we put in place – the renewal schools plan and the \$150 million dollars we're investing initially and the other efforts that we're adding to the renewal schools – are going to have a profound impact. Again, this has never been tried before – changing leadership of schools, sending in master teachers, adding an additional period of course work every day, adding after-school programs, weekend programs. There's so much going on here – where every school will be a community school. This has never been tried in such a concentrated fashion. We believe it's going to work. But we also know that the tentative agreement makes clear that the – every step of the way, the action is led by the chancellor. And that's what we thought was important here. At each stage of the decision-making process, the chancellor plays the initiating role. And I feel very confident that we'll be able to get done what we need to get done to turn these schools around.

Phil Walzak: One more guys.

Mayor: I'll give them these three and then we'll get out. Go ahead.

Question: [Inaudible] the city will have to put up some money for the pre-k program. How much is that going to be?

Mayor: We will have more to say in the budget. You trained me well. When the budget comes out, there will be a deferential – we can handle it, but we'll have more to say in the budget.

Question: [Inaudible] increase, do you have a sense of what that can be used for? [Inaudible] Will any of that go to struggling schools? I know there's talk about \$75 million [inaudible]

Mayor: Again, I'm going to start and pass to Dean. This is a tentative agreement, so until we see the final numbers, we can't say anything too definitive. These additional resources – and again, I've talked many times about what we would do if we had the CFE resources – but it's all about addressing struggling schools, addressing the 171,000 kids who have special needs – all the core challenges that come with a big school system that obviously supports each and every child, no matter what challenges they bring to the table. So, yes, the resources will help us in that broader mission but – do you want to speak to it?

Director Dean Fuleihan, Office of Management and Budget: That's exactly right. This is for general – most of this will be for general support for schools and it meets the priorities the mayor has articulated and continues to – struggling schools, after-school programs – those priorities that we've established. There may be some discrete amounts of money for struggling schools, but that we don't have the details yet.

Mayor: Last one.

Question: Do you believe that your support of the Democrats trying to take over the Senate last year complicated your efforts to push the city's agenda in Albany this year? And secondly, your relationship with the governor – do you think things are better, worst, or about the same compared to last time?

Mayor: Thank you. I don't get into the personality issue. I think I made that clear. Again, this outcome is, in many ways, a good outcome for New York City. There's obviously a lot of unfinished business – some areas where we thought things could have been handled differently. But there's some very good news here too. So I'm just focused on the product here. On the question of the Senate, I think the most natural thing in the world is for someone who believes in their own belief structure, their own party membership, to act accordingly. I am doing something that people all over the country do every day, and try and work with people I share values with to help them get elected. I don't think that changed the outcome in any meaningful way here. As you can see, again, the results – reasonably good for New York City, and a lot of things up ahead. But on these issues, I'm not going to say anything naive here, I believe in my heart – the merits are going to win the day. On something like mayoral control of education, where there's an extraordinary consensus that this is the only effective way to reform education, and the alternative is to go back to a system that was rife with corruption. We're going to win the day on that issue, and I believe in my heart – regardless of things that happened last year. Thank you, everyone. We will now go to the bill signing.

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