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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO, COMMISSIONER O'NEILL HOST PRESS
CONFERENCE TO DISCUSS CRIME STATISTICS**

Police Commissioner James P. O'Neill: Good morning everyone. Thanks for being here. You'll hear from the Mayor in a moment and then Dermot Shea will give you the January crime figures.

I tell all the – you know I tell all the cops all the time what a tremendous job they're doing and they truly are. If you look at 17 and the beginning of 18, month after month, year after year the hardworking men and women of this police department are not only keeping people safe but we have to make people feel safe too. And in terms of crime reduction, as you know, we're coming off the safest year New York City has experienced in about seven decades. This means each of the last three generations of New Yorkers has been made safer than the last. And what this means for us in the NYPD is that we have to continue to focus on our mission. Now we're just one month into the new year and we're doing well again. Dermot will get into the specifics in a couple of minutes.

But I will tell you what I – and what I know is that to keep driving crime and violence down and to keep New Yorkers in every neighborhood feeling safe we need to keep the same – the seamless coordination going on with our police department and with our City, State, and federal law enforcement partners and specifically our relationship with the FBI. They continue to do a great job. They understand what their mission is in New York City. And we absolutely need the full and willing partnership of all the people we serve in every neighborhood. As I've said a hundred times before, public safety is a shared responsibility. And that's what New York policing means today in 2018. And that's what New York policing has to mean as we make our way forward.

I'd like to remind people that the historic gains we've made over the past couple of decades or so, none of this happened by accident. It took a lot of hard work by a lot of dedicated people. Our future success won't be an accident either. All this applies to so-called traditional crime as well to – as well to the threat of terrorism and quite importantly, to the quality of life concerns that New Yorkers living and working in all corners of our great city express every single day. Mr. Mayor?

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Thank you very much Commissioner, and congratulations to you and First Deputy Commissioner Tucker and all the leadership at the NYPD and all the men and women of the NYPD for once again continuing to make us safer. I want to remind everyone, at the outset of this year classic questions kept coming up: how much safer can we get, did we reach the end of the line in 2017? We got overall crime down to levels we had not seen the 1950s. We got homicides down to a level we had not seen since 1951. I like to say the last time we had that few homicides in New York City the Dodgers were still playing in Ebbets Field. That's what the NYPD has accomplished working more closely than ever with community partners.

So, was 2017 as good as it gets? That's the question I keep getting. The answer is no, it's not as good as it gets. It's an amazing accomplishment but we're going to go farther. And that's been the attitude here at One Police Plaza throughout the last four years. Relentlessly looking to get even better and to make us even safer. And we're certainly off to a strong start in 2018.

And I want to emphasize this extraordinary success combined with, not only the massive reduction in stop-and-frisk, but also much less use of arrest. This is something that Commissioner O'Neill has pointed out, Commissioner Bratton before him pointed out. The whole idea was to free up our officers to do what they have been trained to do as professionals and give them discretion, give them the ability to do their jobs properly, not based on the quotas of the past and not based on simply how many forceful interactions can you have. But in fact freeing up our officers to be as effective and creative as possible. That's what neighborhood policing is all about.

So, 2017 compared to 2013. 100,000 fewer arrests in 2017 compared to 2013 and much less crime at the same time. Powerful fact. Also points out where we go next. The fact that we can keep building a stronger bond with community and it will make us all safer. It will make our officers safer, it will make our residents safer at the same time.

Look, I want to say the NYPD has really contributed to something crucial, not just in terms of safety but also in terms of the social fabric of this city. This city is never – you know we don't sing in perfect harmony but we all get along a lot better than we used to and anyone who's been around for a while can see that. The NYPD has contributed a lot to that: creating a different tone in this city, a different approach, a lot more dialogue. I've been really struck by what we've seen with these community meetings. In fact the NYPD is inviting communities in to a deeper dialogue. That is good for the social fabric of this city. It is good to see our officers talking more and more with community members one on one, individually knowing each other's names. It's good to see greater respect for our offices. It's good to see our officers getting a thank you more often. That's all about building a different kind of social fabric and one that will work better for the future of this city. So, a lot is happening here, but I want to emphasize, 2018 we're going to keep getting safer.

Just a quick note on the numbers because they are striking. So, January 2018 compared to January 2017, crime is down – total crime down 7.6 percent this last month compared to a year ago. Murders down as well. We see consistent progress. We've got more to do. But something clearly is working, neighborhood policing is working, precision policing is working. It's

producing real results. And you know, Terry Monahan when he was sworn in as Chief of Department said something very simple, very powerful – what the NYPD is doing is actually inventing an entirely different type of policing, and it's working. And it's going to be a model for the whole country.

Whenever I talk to my fellow mayors, one of the things the – the number one request I get is can I come to New York City and meeting with the NYPD, can I see CompStat, can I understand what you guys are doing. Big cities, small cities, people want to understand what the NYPD is achieving and this model is going to do a lot of good for this whole country, not just for the five boroughs.

Finally, really important that we're doing more to engender trust, to give people a sense there's real transparency, real accountability. Obviously I want to thank everyone up here with me for their excellent effort to increase the time – the speed with which we brought body cameras online. You heard the announcement last week, all our patrol officers will have them a year earlier. I think that's going to be great for the relationship between police and community. And, now, implicit bias training is beginning, and I think that's a great step forward too. That recognizes a human reality. Every single one of us, we're all brought up with certain assumptions and stereotypes and biases, our job as public servants is to weed those out and that training could make a huge difference. So this is another important step for the NYPD and for the city.

Let me just say a few words in Spanish.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, my pleasure to turn to Chief Dermot Shea.

Chief of Crime Control Strategies Dermot Shea, NYPD: Good morning everyone. Overall we're seeing some very strong crime reduction efforts to start 2018. We matched last January's record low number of shootings for the month of January with 58 this January. And we saw the number of homicides recorded drop even further. Overall, as the Mayor said, index crime is down nearly eight percent to start the year. Despite setting these new milestones, including fewest number of recorded index crimes for January, fewest number of murders, robberies, burglaries, stolen vehicles, and tying the shooting incident number, there are areas of concern as we move forward. And I'll highlight some of those when I go through this brief presentation.

To start with January crime: murder, we've recorded 20 murders this January, that's down from 24 last year. It's a 16.6 percent reduction. Of the 20, 19 occurred in January or were recorded in January and of those 19, 13 of the 19 were by firearm. So we still see the prevalence of fire arms in New York City. Bronx recorded eight of those 19. And there will be more on the Bronx later. Rape, 113 rapes for January versus 107. That's an increase of six, which is 5.6 percent. Bronx was plus eight on the rapes. Overall on the rapes, one third roughly domestic. What we see traditionally is 8 percent give or take. A percentage point is generally strange of rapes, that's the small number. And the vast majority are friend/acquaintance. And that holds true this period.

What did jump out this period, and I'll point out. Again, we're in January so it's a bit of an aberration for the rest of the year. But 12 percent of the rapes recorded this January we're over five years since the occurrence date. And that's a very high number, 12 percent were over five years old since when they occurred. What do we see as the year goes on, and the months flatten out. We'll see what generally see about 20 percent of the rapes occur in a prior year. So when we see 12 percent over five years old. That jumps out.

Robbery down 9.2 percent, felonies assault down 8.8 percent, burglary nearly down 12 percent, grand larceny down 5.5 percent, and stolen vehicles down nearly seven percent. That brings the total as the Mayor alluded to 7.6 percent index crime reduction to start the year, continuing the trend. And it's a reduction of 1,612 crimes.

The shooting incidents; 58 versus 58. The year before that, 2016 was 59. So the last two years 58 and 59 and when you go back four years it jumps to 90. So that's when we saw the great reduction last three years holding flat in January. Transit crime, to start the year a good start below ground in New York City, down 9.5 percent. But I alluded to some trouble spots if you will, as there always is when we look across a big city with numerous crime types – transit crime down 9.5 percent. But two boroughs are seeing increases, Manhattan and Brooklyn. And when you look at Manhattan specifically with transit crime. We're seeing a significant jump in robberies, 19 versus 9 to start the year. When you look at housing crime, down 2.5 percent.

So a lot of positive index crime violence and overall crime, and I'll just finish up and spend a minute with what we're seeing with the Bronx because really it's a tale of two sides here.

Overall, Bronx index crime to start the year is doing well, down nearly 13 percent in traditional index crime. But when you look at the violence especially in the Bronx we have a spike going on that's being addressed through casework. Month of January, 45 percent of New York City shootings occurred in one borough, the Bronx. What do we normally see; we normally see the range 25-30 percent of the city shootings for a year occur in the Bronx. When we see 45 percent, something is going on. As I sit here today it's actually up to 47 percent of the city's shootings in one borough. And even with that, I'll point out again, flat to begin the year. And as we sit here today we're actually down in shootings to start the year. So once we get the Bronx headed in the right direction we're going to have some phenomenal numbers to report.

The Bronx's numbers through the end of January is 26 versus 19, they're up seven shootings. The top three commands in the city for shootings this year thus far are all in the Bronx, 40th Precinct, 43rd Precinct and the 48th Precinct. Month of January in the Bronx, murders we recorded eight, that's up first four. And just finishing up on the shootings that we're seeing the Bronx – 23 percent of them on housing that's slightly up. Generally we see 20-21 percent of the city's shootings on housing, which is too high. What have seen in the individual when you drill down on the shootings that we've seen in the Bronx, we've had an individual on parole shot. We've had two individuals on probation that then are arrested for current shootings in the Bronx in January. We've had an individual on probation for robbery, then getting shot at, then at another incident after that getting arrested with a new firearm while on probation for recent robbery charges in the Bronx. We have even seen an individual in the Bronx in January, prior arrests for stabbing, prior arrests for gun – combined put in program and now arrested with an

additional gun. So this is some of the hurdles if you will that our officers and detectives are fighting every day. I think this outlines what we're up against. I tend to look at the glass here half full.

When we get this right are going to see phenomenal gains further, pushing these violence numbers down. This is where precision policing meets other parts of the criminal justice system and as these examples show its not always pretty. When you look year to date as we sit here today on the fifth – through the fifth I should say. What do we see? We see homicides now down seven, year to date. And we see shootings as of midnight down two in New York City. To go with that nearly eight percent drop in index crime. When we look at arrests that are being affected in the City of New York as a whole, we continue to work on the precision angle to compliment the neighborhood policing. And arrests are down this year thus far 8.9 percent. Down close to 3,000 arrests citywide just in the first month of the year – 2688 is the number. And with that, where do we see the biggest drop in arrests – misdemeanor arrests. We're actually flat in index crime arrests, despite being down about eight percent. So that's driving our clearance rates up which is a win all the way around. That's it.

Commissioner O'Neill: Okay, thanks. Bob Boyce has two cases he wants to talk about.

Chief of Detectives Bob Boyce, NYPD: Sure, good morning everybody, I just continued the dialogue from Chief Shea. We're looking for public's assistance in locating two individuals both in the Bronx, both wanted for homicide. I have their pictures up here. This particular individual is Amere Bryant. We are seeking him in the homicide of the Shaquana Button that happened on January 15 at about 11:30 in the evening. Both were at a grocery store at 149th Street in the Bronx. One individual bumped into another. A dispute ensued. We believe Amere Bryant left that location, went got a gun, came back. And Shaquana Button was still in the grocery store. It was a cold evening that night, at which point he waited for her outside and shot her one time in the back of the head killing her. We know he frequents the Saint Mary's Houses, which is just on 149th Street. He's got six prior arrests, nothing of this statue as far as violence goes. Nonetheless we've been seeking him since that night. We identified him almost immediately. So Amere Bryant, if anyone has any information, please call the police, the tips number.

The second individual please. This individual is Carl X. Goes by the nickname Babs, Baboo, or Babos. He on the night of 16th, the next night, he shot an individual known as Melon Babis. This was over an argument. This was a Tuesday night, it was an argument on Saturday where they had fisticuffs, where Mr. Badis prevailed. Then Mr. X came back and shot him in the Sedgwick Houses, on – near University Avenue I should say. So we're looking for him now. He's got eight prior arrests. We've been seeking him for the last two weeks. If the public knows where he is please contact the tips number immediately. If you see him 9-1-1, thank you.

Commissioner O'Neill: Bob, that's it?

Chief Boyce: That's it.

Commissioner O'Neill: Crime related or police related – or actually on crime stats first.

Question: So, clarification, transit crime down 9.5 percent but you said robberies in transit are up in Manhattan and Brooklyn?

Chief Shea: Transit down 9.5 percent, all crimes index crimes citywide. Two of the boroughs are up in crime, Brooklyn and Manhattan.

Mayor: For transit only –

Chief Shea: For transit only, and when you look at Manhattan transit crime they are spiking for the month of January actually it's through the first four days now of February in robbery specifically. Transit robberies in Manhattan, 19 versus 9.

Question: So with that said, Commissioner. Does the NYPD still support Manhattan's DA's policy to not prosecute turnstile offenders? Isn't the thought that those who commit a robbery would not pay for the subway?

Commissioner O'Neill: So we're still working with Cy's office where there is a distance, there is a gap between what his office considers a public safety threat and who we consider a public safety threat. So we're still working on this. It's important to control access to the subway. That's how we keep people safe, that's how we have just – Vinnie or Eddie under seven crimes a day in a system used by six million people. So we have – there are couple of cases DEP's over the weekend. I'll just give you one example. This person had 52 total arrests, 30 were transit related, two robbery arrests. One in transit, one grand larceny in transit, and he's also a transit recidivist and that arrest was DEP'd. That is not helping to keep the people in this city safe.

Mayor: I want to also speak to this, the way you characterize it, we are not in full agreement the DA. We respect him, we think the underlying vision he is bringing to it has some merit, obviously we want to be constantly finding ways to improve interaction between police and community reduce arrest when we can, but people have to pay to get on the subways. And fare evasion is not acceptable. And we cannot create a situation where people think it is acceptable.

By the way we have seen countless cases where we found people who committed other crimes. We're not going to allow constant recidivism when it comes to fare evasion. By the way, a lot of people who commit fare evasion and the police encounter have a lot of money on them. So it's not, for those who say, oh it's an economic reality, I think I have a lot of validity on the question of income inequality and how we fight it, but you never heard me say, you know, open up the gates of the subway for free. That's chaos. We are not going to accept that. So we have a lot of work we have to do to see if we can get on the same page with the DA.

Question: Commissioner, just to follow up on that, when you say you are working closely with the DA's Office, are there any other details that you can say, that you can provide about what your –

Commissioner O'Neill: Yeah, yeah, there's a couple different standards that the Manhattan DA's Office use to consider who is a public safety threat, and Cy's office is basing it on convictions. And it's just – we had 33,000 enforcement actions against fare evaders in the

subway in Manhattan last year. Keep in mind, 25 of them - 25,000 of them got TAB summonses, Transit Adjudication Bureau of Summonses, 8,000 were arrested.

Is there a way that we can reduce that number? Yes there is. I think it is important that we do that, but we have to do it thoughtfully. I want to see more Transit cops – Transit police, Transit Bureau police officers on the subway, so if we can keep them out on patrol, that's fine, but we really have to be thoughtful about how we do that.

Tony?

Question: [Inaudible] you mentioned the 20 percent of the rape complaints, I think in January, were from prior years, if I had your figure right, is this a carryover we see from previous years when rapes were –

Chief Shea: Tony, let me clarify, when we look on a past year traditionally what we see is roughly 20 percent occur in prior years. This particular January, 12 percent of the rapes recorded were over five years old. That was - that was a significant increase in my eyes. As the year goes on, and actually when you look at January it's much more than 20 percent occurring in another year because another year because another year could be three days old, four days old, so we'll need for that to play out a little.

But I think to answer your question, it's somewhat – it appears to be somewhat of a carryover from what we've seen the last three to four months, where we've seen a slight increase, and any increase is troubling, but a slight increase in the recorded rapes and difficult to put a stamp on it and say it's definitely because of what is in the news but that is certainly a possibility. 12 percent over five years old, it really jumps out.

Commissioner O'Neill: Grace?

Question: Mayor, at the top you said, we're talking about crime numbers, levels we haven't seen since the '50's, and this is not as good as it gets, we're going to go further. I'm wondering if there is any concern from you or from the police department that by promising to drive down crime even further that you may be putting undue pressure on the department to try to make the numbers work in such a way that we keep seeing those crime levels go down?

Mayor: First of all, in my humble opinion, a championship team does not mind having more pressure on them. This is a team that has set record after record. We're going to keep going. When a year or two ago, if I had said to you I was projecting the numbers for 2017, you could have said, oh my God, that's putting pressure on people. No, it was fantastic that first Commissioner Bratton and then Commissioner O'Neill said we could go further, they knew it as professionals, they proved it. They still know it.

If these guys ever one day come to me and say, hey, you know, we don't if there is much more we can get done, we'll be open about that. But right now we think we can go further, I'm very encouraged by the month of January. You're going to have fluctuations month by month, I'm never going to be surprised by that, but no, there is more we can do.

Neighborhood policing is still being implemented and still reaching new parts of the City. The effect of building more trust between police and community is going to grow, meaning you are going to have more dialogue, more information flowing to our officers, more ability of our officers to stop crimes before they happen, or catch criminals more effectively. I think there is a lot more we can do.

We are not, I think one inference your question might be we are going to focus too much on numbers, no we got away from the mistakes of the past, you know, trying to grade people based on – grade officers based on how many stops they made. That was madness. We are not doing that anymore. We, you know, this commissioner has done a fantastic job of helping the entire force to understand that we value the way they interact with communities, the way they get information, the way they work to take the skills they've learned and apply them as professionals, that's what people are being graded on now. So no, I don't think it creates undue pressure, I think it's simply a reflection of the fact that the leadership believes that we can go further and I do too.

Commissioner O'Neill: Just keep in mind that these numbers continue to go down with fewer enforcement actions, less arrests, less summonses, obviously less stops, so – you know, 292 murders is not 2,245 murders, it's obviously a lot less, but we have that moral obligation to keep driving crime down. So I can't – I've been a New Yorker all my life – I can't sit here and say, yeah Dad, we are done. That can never be, and we have to continue to push crime down, and I think with – once we get neighborhood policing implemented in all 76 precincts, I think that will help us. And with Bob's people and the Detective Bureau continuing to go after gangs and crews, I think without a doubt we will be able to push crime down. And that's what New Yorkers expect.

Mayor: That's right.

Commissioner O'Neill: Rich?

Question: Can we go back to fare evasion for a second again? So the MTA Chairman wrote a letter, apparently, to the DA's complaining about the, you know, revenue loss involved in this as well. Is that a consideration?

And also do you think the message from the DA could be seen by fare evaders as a green light for going ahead and jumping the turnstile and –

Mayor: Yes.

Question: What would you say to that?

Mayor: That's a problem. Again, I respect the DA greatly, and I think his underlying interest in reducing the arrests that might be unnecessary, as the commissioner said, can we drive arrests further in some cases? Yes. And do we want to? Of course. But there is a double edged sword

here, and that's something that the commissioner and I have to talk to the DA about. It can send the wrong message.

By the way, I believe in fairness and I've said I want to focus on making this the fairest big city in America. It's not fair to everyone else who is paying their fare. It's not fair to the average straphanger if some people think they can waltz on in without paying. It's just not acceptable.

So we got to figure out the balance here. We all believe in changing the relationship between police and community for the better. But that is not the same as saying, hey you can just ride the subway for free. I reject that out of hand.

Question: Commissioner you mentioned before about getting more police officers into the subways, and as a resident of this City, I do see a lot more police officers myself in the subways. However, and people have come up to me and talked to me about this, they say you know what, years ago, I guess not that long ago, I would see too, I would see police officers walking through the cars on the subways. I don't see that as much anymore when they would walk through the cars. Is there any reason for that?

Commissioner O'Neill: So what year were you seeing that? Was that 1983, because you probably saw me.

[Laughter]

There is, and we have a new Chief of the Transit Bureau, Chief Ed Delatorre, and he understands I want to see more police officers on the trains, walking through the cars, putting people at ease, I think it's important. It's important to see people on the platforms also, but I think, especially late at night, it's important to see police officers on the trains. So you'll see more. Rocco?

Question: Commissioner, can you explain what fare evasion, what steps that the police take in determining whether they get a TAB summons, a C-summons, or if they are actually arrested?

Commissioner O'Neill: Sure, Ed Delatorre, you want to walk through that? Or Vinny Coogan?

Chief of the Transit Bureau, Edward Delatorre: Alright, so first any fare evaders approached based on a penal law of the crime of fare evasion, or theft of service actually, once we approach the person and take them into custody, we then take a look at their background, their history. Up until now, if they were recidivist, meaning that they've had numerous – numerous TAB summonses over a certain period of time, then we would – we would've put them online.

The other thing we look at is warrants, if they have a warrant, then automatically they go online, and we go forward with the arrest. If they are other issues, if we deem them to be a threat to the system, they have prior robberies or prior crimes within the transit system, we will also continue forward with the arrest online as a misdemeanor.

So we start with the approach, misdemeanor crime, and as we go through the person's background, then it may be downgraded to where we simply give them TAB. And as the

Commissioner said, last year 75 percent of all the people we approached who were committing that crime were actually downgraded to TAB summonses.

Question: [Inaudible] a shorter period, a longer period of time, in determining whether they are recidivists or not?

Chief Delatorre: Vinny what's the criteria on the recidivism?

Assistant Chief of the Transit Bureau, Vincent Coogan: The train's recidivists [inaudible] the transit recidivist criteria?

Chief Delatorre: Yes, yes.

Assistant Chief Coogan: It's any prior felony or misdemeanor within a transit system in the past two years, any prior sex crimes –

Commissioner O'Neill: Hey Vinny why don't you get up next to the mic?

Assistant Chief Coogan: Like Chief Delatorre said, 75 percent of people received TABs' summonses, that's a civil summons, it's not a criminal court summons. The transit recidivist criteria is any prior felony or misdemeanor arrest in the transit system within the past two years, any prior sex crime arrest within the transit system, three or more violation arrest in a transit system in the past five years, three or more TAB summons within the past two years, or if the person who is taken into custody is on parole or probation.

Commissioner O'Neill: David?

Question: The NYPD and other City agencies have been looking at the supervised injection facilities and what, you know, what it might take to have the City sort of implement this. I'm wondering what the police department's perspective is in terms of what that – the effect on crime might be having facilities like this?

Mayor: Let me just jump in for a second, I want to make clear, I've spoken to this in recent days, said there is a study already underway, as you think you know, that study, working through the details of that study, Department of Health, we are obviously having dialogue, PD and Department of Health. When I say soon, usually is a sign that soon we are going to have more to say on that, but I just want to emphasize there is still a lot of internal discussion and looking at data before we give a clearer picture of how we move forward.

Commissioner O'Neill: So I think last press conference we had, I said, we didn't have a position yet, but I will tell you that I had a conversation with the chief of the Vancouver Police Department and they had a supervised injection site up there for quite a while. At first he was not feeling good about doing that and then he sees how many lives have been saved, because I think what he said to me, no one has died in a supervised injection facility in the time they had it open in Vancouver.

So there are some issues, there are some quality of life issues around the site, but he's addressing that. So my mind is open, you know, this is – we're talking about the sanctity of life here. Keeping people alive, but we also have real concerns about quality of life and crime issues around that site. So at some point we will make a determination.

Question: Mayor de Blasio, can you speak to [inaudible] the flu –

Mayor: Yeah, I am going to come to that in a moment, so let's do the police issues and then I'll happily come to that.

Commissioner O'Neill: In the back row.

Question: Commissioner, just wondering if there's going to be stricter enforcement when it comes to the mobs of bicyclists that are taking over city streets based on the situation this weekend in Chelsea. Cars were damaged, a man was punched in the face, one of the officer –

Commissioner O'Neill: Okay, I'm going to let Chief of Patrol Rodney Harrison speak about that. Rodney.

Chief of Patrol Rodney Harrison, NYPD: So, good morning everybody. On February 3rd, if everybody doesn't remember down about 3:40 pm in the vicinity of 23rd between 6th and 7th we had about 30 to 40 bicyclists driving around recklessly. They did damage one vehicle as well as assaulted another individual that I guess confronted them and got out of his vehicle. So, we're going to take a closer look at the enforcement of some of the bike laws that we have in place.

We're going to be working with the NCOs to do some outreach to make sure we speak the youth about some of the concerns that are going on as well as work with Legal and Intel and Aviation and some of the other ancillary units that we have that can kind of put a better plan in place going into the future especially during the warmer months.

Question: Chief Boyce, there was a homicide out of the 1-0-7 February 2nd and there have been suggestion and talk that it might be an MS-13 related [inaudible]. Do you have any clarity on this?

Chief Boyce: Well, right now Tony we're fighting to identify what the motive is and it apparently is gang related. And I say that because we have evidence that links to another crime that was a different gang at this point. I don't want to name that gang because we're still in the investigation.

Do we think it might still be MS-13? Yes, we do. It might be but we don't know and what we're hampered by – this male was killed, he left his house in New Jersey about 11:30 am in the afternoon. He then texted his father at 1730 – 5:30 pm at night and said basically, "I'm going to be home late." And then he was – we believe he was shot to death at 6:30 pm in the evening.

So we have video of him walking with two males in Queens in the 1-0-7 Precinct. Pretty suburban area, houses all over, no commercial. And then he walks in and one slows and then the

other one shoots him one time in the head and then shoots him twice when he's down. The earmarks are there of a gang – of a gang homicide. Right now we're trying to figure out exactly why.

Now, we're hampered by the fact that we didn't know who he was for the first two days. We finally – at the [inaudible] at the morgue we took his fingerprints and we had [inaudible] to the FBI that he was an Salvadoran male, 20 years old, and we started working back from there.

We went to the Salvadoran consulate and they identified where he lived. And his name is Oscar Antonio Blanco-Hernandez, a 20-year-old male. He lives in New Jersey with his father.

So, we went to his dad's house. We spoke to his dad. He explained what happened and we were able to get to some telephones, where he's going through social media. That's being analyzed right now.

So, we're a long way from determining which gang it was at this point but again the earmarks of it, there's no question. So, we'll go forward. We've contacted the FBI, Nassau, and Suffolk County. And we have strong working relationships with them as well as task forces and we've devoted a lot of our resources to finding out exactly what happened.

We have some video. It's not probative at this point but it's leading us in a certain direction that's what we need to know. So, about four days – four full days into, Tony. So we got a long way to go.

Question: Commissioner, the DOI put out a use-of-force report this morning just a little bit critical of the NYPD [inaudible] –

Commissioner O'Neill: Yeah, I think – obviously we had a chance to look at it. Chief Matt Pontillo can talk about it a little bit. He'll give you a little context. But just keep in mind that our use of force is 1.3 percent of all of our arrests and if you look at our firearms discharges in 2017, speaking just about adversarial discharges, was 23. The year before was 37. And for the month of January actually year-to-date we have one firearms discharge as opposed to five last year. So this is something that we take very seriously. And with the IG's report, of course, we'll look at it, we'll respond to it. But Matt do you have anything to add?

Mayor: Let me just jump in before the Chief. I just want to amplify the point the Commissioner made – 23 for 2017. I want to remind everyone we have 36,000 officers. We have over 8.5 million people. There are 365 days in a year. Only 23 times did an NYPD officer in 2017 discharge a firearm in the line of duty. That's extraordinary restraint. And I want that put in perspective.

We obviously are always going to work to do better and to make sure everything's handled properly but I just want people to reflect on what progress has been made on that front and also how much personal strength it takes and extraordinary focus it takes for our officers to use their weapons so infrequently. That is a result of great training and that's the result of real professionalism in the police force.

Assistant Chief Matthew Pontillo, NYPD: Good morning, everyone. So, we're still going through the IG's report and you know it will take us time to review it and we will respond in due course in detail. However I will just point out a couple of things. So you may recall that in 2016, the department published a revised use-of-force policy that was much more comprehensive than what we had in the past and along with that went a new reporting mechanism to properly identify and record uses of force so that we can analyze it and report on it going forward.

The IG's report looked at a subset of force incidents related to arrests beginning in late 2016 when the new procedure and the reporting mechanism was still in its infancy. They found somewhere around a 60-65 percent compliance with the report when it came to use-of-force during arrests and properly recording it.

Going forward, we see that our compliance is much improved and even the IG notes that we have over 90 percent compliance with their most recent sampling.

They look at a very, very limited set of data beginning back in last February in the similar way that we use Comp-Stat to analyze and address crime, we developed a similar process for our use-of-force reporting. And beginning in February, we've been holding regular meetings where we hold borough and bureau executives accountable, analyzing the use-of-force as well as the investigations into those uses of force.

So, that's reviewed on a monthly basis. Since we've implemented that process, we've seen a dramatic improvement in both the quality of the investigations and the accuracy of the reporting. So whereas the IG notes when this program was brand new and there was still a huge learning curve, the compliance was around 65 percent. More recently they reported seeing a 90 percent compliance and now over the last few months, we're seeing an excess of 90 percent and in many cases 100 percent utilizing many, many more metrics than the IGU. So they looked at a subset of arrests.

We're looking at a variety of arrests as well as other indicators of force including using body camera video. So, we randomly sample body camera video looking for incidents that involve force and we also look at our force reports for – that occurred in commands where we do have body camera videos, body cameras deployed and then review the video and compare the video to the report to ensure that the investigation was done properly.

So, we have a whole host of metrics and we're seeing in upwards of 90 percent compliance across the board in most those and, like I said, up near 100 percent with many of them.

Question: Are any of you able to speak to the rate of crime this year on Staten Island? And is Staten Island still the safest borough in New York City?

Commissioner O'Neill: The crime rate on Staten Island?

Question: Yeah.

Commissioner O'Neill: I'm going to have to get you those figures unless – Dermot.

Chief Shea: I can give them to you afterwards.

Unknown: Any other police questions?

Question: I have a follow-up question on use-of-force. How does the department define use-of-force?

Commissioner O'Neill: There's different levels and we can give you an explanation of what they are.

Mayor: Last call on police. Okay, I know some of colleagues have to go do other some things. I'm going to do a topper on the flu situation before going to off-topic questions.

[...]

Okay. Let me speak about the flu situation. And I want to say I want to speak as both Mayor and as a parent. It's heartbreaking that parents have lost young children to the flu. My heart goes out to those families but I also want to say we've got to protect our children now going forward. This is an epidemic that we have not seen in many years. Parents need to really be watching out for any of these symptoms and I want to remind all New Yorkers what the symptoms of the flu are.

It includes fever, chills, aches, sore throat, cough. A reminder that flu can lead to pneumonia and it's very – major ramifications of getting the flu. It's not just a bad disease unto itself. It can lead to other things.

The particularly vulnerable parts of our community – young children, seniors, and those who underlying health conditions. So, I particularly want to talk about our kids. When our kids contract the flu, it's very, very dangerous and I want all parents and everyone to be aware. If you think a child is coming down with the flu, it's crucial to get them care right away. Do not wait because we seen the strain this year is absolutely deadly and has to be dealt with right away.

I want to urge everyone, again, take this seriously. Right away, if you haven't gotten the flu shot – it still helps to get the flu shot. It's not something that people should put off. It still helps in this flu season. And going forward I would urge everyone to get that shot each year in the beginning of the flu season.

If you want to get a flu shot, you can call 3-1-1 on information on where to get it for free through our Health + Hospitals and clinics. If you feel ill, contact a doctor immediately. Do not go to work. Do not go to school. Do not take the risk of making it worse and spreading it. Contact a doctor. Get help.

I want to note in addition to the folks I mentioned, young children, seniors, those with underlying health conditions – pregnant women also are particularly at risk. If you're pregnant and you get those symptoms, contact a doctor immediately.

Parents, I also want to remind you, if your child has a respiratory issue like asthma, it's particularly important to get care right away. Antiviral medicines can shorten any illness if a child with asthma or other respiratory conditions contracts the flu. Those medicines have to get to that child very quickly.

If symptoms are worsening quickly, do not hesitate. Go immediately to an emergency room or call 9-1-1 for help. This disease can move very quickly so if you see worsening symptoms particularly in a child with an existing health condition, act quickly.

A warning sign of a worsening condition is more difficulty breathing. So if a child has trouble breathing or is breathing very fast, that's a sign of distress. You want to act on that right away.

Just a few words in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

Alright, that's just a quick update on the flu. Let me see if there's any questions about that. I think I covered it but just in case there's anything else. Then we'll go on to other topics.

Question: Mayor de Blasio can you provide any insight or share anything about what you know about the two children in New York City who have died?

Mayor: I don't have the details yet on those children and their family. Again, my heart goes out to those families. It's the worst possible thing that could happen to a family. Right now my focus is making sure it does not happen to another family.

Question: Mr. Mayor, have you had a flu shot?

Mayor: I did. Every member of my family, although the teenagers – they're not teenagers anymore, they're 20 and 23 – they were a little slow on the uptake but after the two or three hundred reminders, they did get their flu shots. So, not everyone's gotten it.

Question: Is there any consideration, in light of this flu season, of making flu shots available at schools to students? I'm wondering if that's anything that you've thought about or think the City should be doing?

Mayor: It's a great question. I have not heard that presented as an idea. I think it's a very interesting idea. I mean obviously look, flu shots today are more widely available than I can ever remember. You know the City makes a major campaign to make them available through all of our public health facilities which are all over the city, and you see more and more pharmacies make them available, many for free.

So, it's actually not that hard to find a place to do it if you want to get the flu shot. But I think the point about the schools is a good one. Let me talk to our folks at the Department of Health and come back on that.

Question: So the flu's dangerous – particularly dangerous for various vulnerable groups. Should flu shots be mandatory?

Mayor: Also a great question and I want to turn to our Health Commissioner Dr. Bassett and get some advice, and Deputy Mayor Palacio before I answer that. I think it's a very legitimate question given what we're seeing. I mean this year has really thrown everyone for a loop but the one thing we know is having the flu shot helps. Let me come back to you on that one as well or I'll get my medical degree in the meantime.

Question: Just quickly on those two children. I know you don't have a lot of details but do you know if they had the flu shot?

Mayor: I do not know and I want to make sure we always give you accurate information so I'll have my folks get back to you. Anything else flu-related?

Question: I'm wondering whether you're seeing any unusual number of absences among City employees or whether anybody's been checking on that.

Mayor: I haven't heard that yet. Nothing certainly bad enough to come up on my screen. We know this flu season is worse than what we've seen in a long time but I don't know how it's manifesting in terms of City employees. I would note folks who are most vulnerable, children, seniors, generally would not be the categories that involved City employees. But we can also check on that.

Okay, let me take other topics.

Question: Mayor, the News had a story last week about a teacher in the South Bronx who in teaching a lesson on slavery asked several African-American students to lie on the ground [inaudible] stepping on one of their backs. I was hoping you could sort of give us a reaction to the fact that this happened and also there's some parents who will be protesting today and seeking some cultural sensitivity training in schools. This isn't the first time we've seen this kind of issue with this kind of lesson –

Mayor: Yeah, I got it. It's not acceptable, it's not even close. I don't know any teacher in their right mind who would do something like that and if they had the impulse, they should have gone, and talked it through with more senior members of the school who I'm sure would have dissuaded them. We're doing a full investigation of that. That makes no sense. It's unfair to the kids. It's insensitive.

We already do a number of things to promote understanding of the many cultures and faiths that make up this city in terms of how we prepare our teachers who teach the most diverse group of students in the nation.

We are going to look to expand that preparation. We have so much constant training going on, professional development that we have an easy venue to do that in. We're going to take a good page from the NYPD book in terms of some of the good work they're doing on implicit bias.

But I will say this has not been a widespread problem in terms of any type of incident like that, thank God but we will keep deepening our implicit-type training and ways of helping our teachers to think about these issues better.

Question: It sounds like on congestion pricing at least last night on NY-1 that you seem more open to it as long as such a lockbox, as you called it, is created. Would you endorse the congestion pricing plan if there was a guarantee that the money raised from it went to subways and buses only in New York City?

Mayor: To borrow from an old American phrase I don't take any wooden nickels. So we are not taken anything hypothetical at this point. I've said very openly, this plan from the Governor's commission is a step in the right direction and I see elements of it that I definitely like a lot more than anything I've seen previously. That's great, that's a good thing. The devil is in the details. There's a lot more to do.

But the lock box is absolutely essential. Let me define for you what a real lock box looks like. It means that that money can only be used for New York City subways and buses and that's legally binding.

Now think about this for a minute Grace, the crisis that has gripped the city in terms of the problems with our subways, energized everyone to put forward solutions. I put forward the millionaires tax which I still believe is the best solution. The Governor's commission put forward congestion pricing. Well the good news here is that people are putting solutions on the table and I firmly believe 2018 has to be the year of solution, cannot let this wait. But listen, the crisis that focused everyone on this was the subway crisis. If that's what energizes action then it is a further indicator of why all of the resources gained have to go to our subways and I would add our buses. We are the center of the city economy – I mean the subways and buses are the center city economy and the state economy.

Why is it crucial to talk about lock box? Because too many times in the past money has migrated elsewhere including \$456 million that was meant for the MTA – and everyone sees with their own eyes was MTA earmarked funds that somehow ended up going to something else. That's intolerable, so if we are going to consider something like congestion pricing, we need absolute guarantees. Not sort of guarantees, we need absolute guarantees and that if the State violated those guarantees or the MTA violated those guarantees there could be legal action taken to immediately put that money back into the subways and buses.

Question: It sounded like you talked about that idea when you met with Governor Cuomo yesterday –

Mayor: Yes.

Question: What did he say, how was that received is he –

Mayor: When I speak to the Governor or anyone – you'll remember my meeting after the election with President Trump, I don't care what drives other people's views. You can ask him. I think he understood my position that if the Governor wants my support on this issue put a lock box on the table, make it very clear that this money can only go to subways and buses.

And look there's other issues too. There's fairness issues I've raised about hardship situations, people with disabilities, low income folks who need to go to doctor appointments in Manhattan, there's lots of issues that can be worked through. But we cannot even have a real discussion of this plan that will, from my point of view, truly benefit the eight and a half million people I serve without having a guarantee of a lock box. Rich.

Question: Mr. Mayor, the President used the word traitor in regards to some democrats who did not applaud some of his lines at the –

Mayor: Yes, Rich this is an easy point. You know your history. You know when Stalin gave speeches they used to, the different communists used to look to see if people were applauding long enough and hard enough. I mean this is ludicrous that a president of the United States would actually say out loud that someone who did not applaud for him at the State of the Union was committing an act of treason.

This is just – we've gone through the looking glass now. How many states of the unions have we all watched where the democrats sat and the republicans stood or vice versa? When President Obama gave speeches for eight years and the democrats would cheer and some republicans not only didn't clap for him, they cat called at him. But we didn't call them traitors. We didn't say that was an act of treachery to their nation. It was partisan – you know you could say it's not something we ideally want to see. But come on, so that's just desperation. I don't know why this guy says things like this because it just alienates a huge swath of the American people who do not see that as anything like an act of treason. Please.

Question: I have a question about the Build It Back Program, we spoke to some folks out on the Rockaways that are very critical of the program. They say they are very grateful for the work that that program is doing, they feel that some of the people that are involved in making this program happen are in such a rush to get families into new homes that they are making critical mistakes. We spoke to one family whose home was demolished before they approved the new construction plan so now that family has no option to rebuild on their own because their home is gone. So I'm just wondering what your response is to that?

Mayor: Well on that case which I don't know individually but what I think you just said is before they approve the new construction plan – but obviously we are building them a new home if there is a new construction plan. And presumably that is on the same site, you have to – if a home is no longer useable you have to demolish it.

Look, I'm sensitive to the fact that the Build it Back concept begun under the previous administration, I've said was the wrong idea. My self-criticism is if we could do it over again we

would have actually stopped it immediately and came up with a whole different model. We thought the only practical way to proceed was to keep going with the model that was in place. We will never make that mistake again. There will not be a Build it Back – god forbid there is a crisis like this in the future, there will not be a Build it Back Program, there will be something very different.

That being said, it's literally in the final months, except for a few exceptional cases, it is in the final months now, we are going to close it down once and for all. The bottom line is, I said – I took this on myself, I said we were going to finish this thing. I heard such a human cry to finish that we were going to give people a set deadlines, that we were offering some choice but not endless choice. This is a free home that is being built for people. And we got to get this done. So if mistakes were made in individual cases, we want to do everything we can to fix it. Amy Peterson has done a fantastic job working with homeowners and communities. But at a certain point it just has to end. And we are in the final stage now. Going to come over here in a minute, let me just finish up over here.

Question: Thank you. Mayor de Blasio you were formerly in the Council. Do you have any reaction to Deputy Mayor Glenn's comments impugning members' intelligence?

Mayor: Yes, it was a real mistake and really unfair to the councilmembers. And I'm glad she has apologized quickly. That was necessary. I've a lot of respect for the Deputy Mayor but I was a councilmember. And you know, I might disagree with any given councilmember on any given day but I would never say something like that about the whole body. I think it was a real mistake. Come over here.

Question: Mayor, early this morning AccuWeather inadvertently sent out a tsunami warning and a lot of people got on their cellphones and worried what happened –

Mayor: It's better than a warning of a nuclear attack.

[Inaudible]

Thank you AccuWeather for not going that far.

Question: What are your concerns in light of what happened in Hawaii, especially since New Yorkers got this message?

Mayor: Well forgive me because I have not been briefed on the specifics, maybe the Commissioner knows – AccuWeather, you don't mean to say a government agency?

Question: As I understand it, the National Weather Service was doing a test and then AccuWeather was a third party that pushed it.

Mayor: Okay so I can't speak for AccuWeather which I assume is a, part of a specific media outlet. So media outlets, we don't regulate them here in the City of New York as appealing as that notion may be we don't regulate them. And I –

[Laughter]

I would be a just ruler however. So every private media outlet needs to take very, very seriously their responsibility to the public. I think they do generally speaking on things like this they are very careful about it. The National Weather Service is our partner but I have not heard anything about the National Weather Service mishandling the situation so I need to get more details before I could comment. Marcia.

Question: Mayor, yesterday in Albany you kissed a number of female members of the Assembly and Senate – I wonder if you think that's appropriate greeting for an executive at a business meeting?

Mayor: I think certainly for the last, 30 or so years that I have been involved in professional and public life, 30 plus years – that has been a norm and it's been a respectful norm. I think if it is done respectfully and people are comfortable, it's perfectly appropriate. I think if it's done disrespectfully or makes someone uncomfortable it shouldn't happen.

Question: [inaudible] Nicole Malliotakis wasn't uncomfortable?

Mayor: No. We have a cordial relationship despite having been opponents. I said the day after the election, she and I had a very civil, respectful conversation to her credit, as she said yesterday, she offered to help on some of the big issues facing this city. And that's certainly been the relationship I had with her long before she ran for mayor as well, that we would great each other in that fashion so I see nothing there that is out of the ordinary.

Question: Mayor, I think you said we should stop talking about the federal investigations that ended last year but next week there is going to be a public hearing on the contract the city is entering into with Karmer Levin to pay for legal representation of you during those matters. That contract is said to run through the middle of this year. Can you explain why this legal representation is ongoing into this year when the –

Mayor: You would have to talk to Law Department, I'm not familiar with those details.

Question: You're not getting any counseling at this point?

Mayor: Again I'm not familiar with the details and you would have to talk to the Law Department.

Question: [inaudible] you getting representation.

Mayor: I'm not familiar with the details of how the contracts are handled and I'm not going into my own legal situation, let's let the Law Department speak to it.

Question: Mayor de Blasio last week your office announced \$200 million for the boilers and heating upgrades for 20 NYCHA buildings. Today City Council is going to a hearing – a hearing is undergoing rather to discuss the chronic failures within NYCHA right now.

Can you speak to that and some of the feedback that we have received from NYCHA residents that it's still five years – it's a major investment they don't discount that, but it's a major investment and there have been so many broken promises by NYCHA, they have a see it when I believe it type of mentality. So if you could speak to both of the –

Mayor: Yes, look, I respect that concern meaning if I were a public housing resident I would be pretty damn skeptical too. But I would also say we have got to be honest about the history for – you know you can track the beginning of federal disinvestment to the election of 1980 when Ronald Reagan came in. Up until then for decades the federal government had actually invested consistently in public housing. After Reagan's election, that support, that commitment has started to wain and it has gotten worse and worse – got worse after 1994 when Newt Gingrich became Speaker of the House for example.

So public housing, I want to remind people, public housing was created on the assumption of federal support. It was not created as a local program. It was created with federal funding and the assumption of consistency that the funding would grow with inflation over time, continue to grow. That stopped. The buildings were left, the people were left, the money started to dry up.

The State of New York did not fill that gap, which is a real cautionary tale. I urge all of you when you wonder why I am such, if I can use the phrase advisedly, a hard ass about our surpluses and protecting our reserves it's because we have got lots of object lessons. Did the State of New York say hey let's fill that gap left but the federal disinvestment in public housing? No and it is never going to. So then you could say what did they City of New York do? Go look at what my predecessors did, particularly the previous 20 years before my administration – not anywhere near enough.

Since we came in, we gave you the numbers at the preliminary budget hearing. We have either spent or committed to \$2.1 billion capital money to fix the physical problems at NYCHA, \$1.6 billion in expense funding – nothing even close to that ever happened in the past. And we will keep doing that so long as the money is there.

So I would say to any public housing resident – your cynicism, your skepticism is well earned. But please do note the changes that have happened over the last four years and Queens Bridge Houses is a great example. The single largest public housing development in North America, the reduction in violence was breath taking. The amount of time they went without a shooting, without a murder was stunning compared to the past – great work by the NYPD and NYCHA. They got wifi access for the first time. They got their roofs fixed. There's a lot that is changing. The heat issue, I just want to remind people, first of all we put the \$200 million on the table, we asked the State to match it. With all due respect to the State of New York, I have not seen the \$100 million from three years ago. That money has still not all arrived from the State budget. I have not seen the \$200 million from last year's State budget determined on April 1st last year.

That's supposed to be for heating and elevators. I haven't seen that money. We've done everything we were supposed to do. So getting help from the State of New York is a kind of fuzzy concept. So we got only ourselves and we keep investing. But I'll tell you on the heat, we're going to get it done but it is not just drive on up with a new boiler that you got from, you know – you know you went online, you see 1-800-BOILER and they send you a boiler and you plug it in. No. Each boiler is custom made for the specifics of each development and then you have to in many cases go up through every floor and replace all the piping, pull out a bunch of stuff, put it in. It's not simple. It's not fast. When it's done those buildings will have very reliable heat. Please.

Question: What – last thing just to follow up. What do you expect to come out of the hearing today with the City Council regarding this issue?

Mayor: I hope, you know, some light will be shed on the fact that there's a huge level of investment and a lot of – a lot of improvement that's been made and a lot of improvement that we have to make. We have to constantly do better and I think having a new General Manager is going to help. Vito Mustaciolo is pretty legendary for what he's achieved at HPD. I think he's going to make a big difference. So our job is just to show the Council we're going to keep doing more.

Question: I'd like to ask you a question about the man who killed himself outside City Hall yesterday and it relates to the [inaudible] economy and the [inaudible] growth of for-hire vehicles in the city which this man said actually caused him to kill himself. He was in such despair, he was in such financial strains, deeply in debt because there are 100,000 competitors in the city on the streets and there's also a congestion pricing proposal that would place a surcharge on that [inaudible]. A few years ago you moved to regulate the growth of this industry and you were stopped by a political movement. And I'm just wondering whether you have any inclination to regulate the number of cars for-hire on the streets of New York both to save these people's livelihoods and to reduce the amount of traffic.

Mayor: I appreciate that question because it gets to a lot of big issues we're facing. Let's talk about this poor man. My heart goes out to him and his family. Look, let's face it, for someone to commit suicide means there's an underlying mental health challenge. Economic distress is real but a lot of people have faced economic distress and don't turn to suicide. Something else was going on there and to me it means that this man needed help and he didn't get and I wish he had and we need to figure out constantly how to get help to people who need it.

I want to remind people, the reason we keep promoting that phone number – 8-8-8-NYC-Well – anyone can get help for someone else. If you see someone talking about suicide or doing anything that seems like it might be on a pathway to self-harm, call that number for them. Get information on how to help them and try and get them help or get them to call that number.

But the underlying question is very important. I did try to regulate that sector. There was a lot of opposition unquestionably. We've got to figure out a way forward and I think one of the things that came out of that whole debate is we've got to figure out a set of standards that applies to all elements of the for-hire vehicle industry equally and simultaneously. That's probably the best

pathway to reform. But we do have to think about what number of cars is right and have we reached a point where it's too many? I think it's a very valid question – obviously interacts with the congestion pricing question too.

There's another piece of this which I think you point to which is – it's technological change which is often very dislocating for people in general and causes a lot of distress. We see this all over the world right now. A few years back we never would have anticipated the growth of Uber, for example, and the displacement of jobs that came with it.

There's a much bigger threat looming which is autonomous vehicles which has the potential of displacing literally millions of jobs in this country, and you don't see policymakers getting ahead of it and coming up with solutions and this is what worries me about it.

I think people are really distressed. I think you saw it in the 2016 election. They're really distressed about the pace of technological change and the lack of answers. So we all need to do more work on that front and it's certainly something I'm going to be focused on in the second term. Last one.

Question: [Inaudible] go back to the NYCHA hearing. I guess it came out that some of the information that was given to the Council from NYCHA in preparing for this hearing that more than 320,000 NYCHA residents have been affected by heat or hot water outages this year, that's out of around 400,000, so about 80 percent. I mean that indicate it's more than the 20 boilers or 20 developments where you're looking to make upgrades. I'm just curious how you tackle that and whether you would find that number acceptable from a private landlord.

Mayor: Look, I understand the question but I would urge you to think a little more deeply about that question. Private sector, profit motive has an entirely different orientation and typically has a lot more resources to work with as opposed to the public sector that's here to serve people in this case working people, low-income people in this city. We're going to serve them come hell or high water. We're going to serve them whether it's easy or not, whether the federal government sends us money or not. We're going to do the best we can with what we got. It's a very different reality than what the private sector faces. It's a very different reality than buildings that were built for upper middle class people for example or well-off people.

So, I reject that notion that we should make that comparison. The issue that should be raised in my view is with the resources we have and the tools we have, how are we doing? I would say the folks who work at NYCHA have on a consistent basis – the everyday people who work there, the folks who work on heating, you know, give them some credit. They have kept these boilers going and in many cases long beyond their official useful lifespan.

And the typical outage is resolved the same day so that 80 percent number deeply troubles me but I also want to be honest and clear, most people, thank God, did not experience a long outage and they were addressed. Our job is to consistently address the problem. If I had you know the extra \$20 billion or so that would be needed right now to fix everything at NYCHA, I would put it right on the table. I don't have it and it ain't coming from anywhere else.

So, we're going to fix everything we can in turn – the 20 developments are the ones with the worst problems just like we focused on the 15 developments with the biggest safety problems and these gentlemen and their colleagues in this department did an amazing job reducing crime. We're going at the 20 developments with the worst heating problems. We're going to fix those problems and we're going to keep going. But we cannot be compared to private sector housing, it's just not real. Our job is to do better with what we got.

Question: [Inaudible] people who live in public housing deserve to have the same standard of living as people who live in private housing?

Mayor: People in public housing deserve the very best living standard we can give them with the money we have. If you say, do I want to see a society which everyone has as much equality in their housing, in their income as possible? Yes. That's my worldview. But do I think we, in the public sector, can achieve everything that a private sector can achieve with much greater resources than the private sector? No, I don't have that illusion. Our job is to constantly do better with what we have. Final one.

Question: Just wanted to clarify that the federal disinvest on NYCHA – is that just on the capital side because I see still contribute 90 percent of its operational expenses. So, are you just referring to the –

Mayor: We can get you – as we say in the budget process a technical briefing on the nuances of the funding formula and it's not that you know whatever we need they just keep sending more. I mean there's obviously a constrained formula and you can see that we've had to do a lot of cutbacks on the expense side.

You remember that when we came in the NYCHA expense budget was near bankruptcy and the operating budget, you know, was near bankruptcy and we made a lot of cuts. There's a lot of attrition in the workforce. The whole Next Generation NYCHA plan was part of that.

And again I ask everyone if you're covering NYCHA, please read the Next Generation NYCHA plan and see how much had to be done. So, I don't want you to have the impression that the federal government's just sitting there with a blank check just asking what number should we fill in. There are constraining formulas.

But what didn't happen, we know this for a fact, is long ago starting in 1980 when the issue should have been how do we keep upgrading, how do we keep making improvements so we stay ahead of these heating problems and other problems, how does the federal government which bluntly can print money continue to provide the support so public housing can really be decent for people? Long ago they decided not to provide that additional support, not to adjust for inflation, not to adjust for the age of the buildings. It's like every other infrastructure matter. If a building is 50 years old or 60 years old, it needs more help and that never happened.

Thank you.

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