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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 3, 2018

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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO DELIVERS REMARKS AT THE RWDSU
NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Thank you, thank you everyone. It is a joy to be with you, I'm so sorry that I am not with you in person. All the flights got cancelled from New York yesterday. I really wanted to be in Atlanta with you. But brothers, and sisters I can feel your spirit even through Skype. And I want to say Stuart, thank you, I've got to tell everyone that Stuart means so much to my city and means so much to people all over this country, because he is fighting for working men, and women. It's as simple as that. He is a fighter, and he understands we can't accept the status quo when working men and women are always left behind. That's what we've seen for too many decades in this country. So the fights that he talked about for a living wage, and paid sick leave, and car wash workers rights. Those were fights to even off the score to make sure that working people are doing that are do. Stuart you have been an outstanding, assertive strong leader, thank you. Everyone, lets give Stuart a round of applause.

[Applause]

Even though it's via Skype, allow me to properly introduce myself. My name is Bill de Blasio, and I am from the biggest union town in America.

[Applause]

Let me tell you about this union town. It's not just that we have a strong labor movement we've had for decades, its that we are improving the reality of working people in so many ways. We passed paid sick leave legislation that reached half a million more people who didn't have it. We did a living wage executive order to bring up wages. We fought in our state for a higher minimum wage and paid family leave. We got those done.

When you look at the things that actually effect peoples everyday life we showed that in New York City you could actually do it and it makes a difference. One of my passions has been helping working parents. We now have pre-K for every child. It's universal and absolutely for free. That saves working families, \$10,000 to \$15,000 per year, per child. We're about to do the same exact thing over the next few years for three year olds. Give them an early childhood

education for free, and lift the economic burden from their parents. We're going to do a lot more like that –

[Applause]

We're going to do a lot more to actually help working people to live a decent life. The American dream that we all were brought up on that has slipped away for so many people. We're reasserting that dream; we're making it come true again in the biggest city in the country. And here's the important point, we're proving that as you lift up the lives of working people you actually things better for the entire society.

Here's something I say everyday – I am proud to stand guard with the RWDSU and so many other unions when they're organizing. Because every additional worker who gets organized, every additional family that has the benefits of being in a union – that is a step forward for our entire society, that's what organizing is about. And I think it's so important to see when the government steps in and helps people get decent wages and benefits. Fights for the rights of labor, increases the number of people in the unions. And creates the kind of society where you can actually live that American dream. So here is what it adds up to in New York City. We've done all those things. And I assure you plenty of people in the business community have said that the sky would fall, if you raise wages, if you raise benefits and get more people in unions, the sky would fall. And guess what, we have more jobs today in New York City than we've ever had at any point in our entire history. We have the strongest economy we have ever had. We are part of the most prosperous metropolitan area not just in the United States of America but in the entire world. And it is also the most unionized part of this country. Doesn't that tell you something brothers and sisters?

[Applause]

I want you guys to know something, and Stuart was right. RWDSU has been so helpful in moving all of these key initiatives front and center in making sure we can make these changes. And I want to thank Stuart and everyone at RWDSU for your support. I've got four more years ahead and here's what I've said we have to do in this city. We have to make it the fairest big city in America. It's a real, simple concept. People need to know their lives are fair, they need to know that the game is not rigged against them whether its decent wages and benefits or having good schools for their kids or having the right relationship between police and our neighborhoods. There's so many ways to think about fairness. But you know it when you experience it. And when you feel your community is fairer, when you feel your society is fairer, it gives you a sense of bind; it gives you a sense of hope. This is what working people deserve all over this country. And that's what we're all going to be fighting for, this year especially, this extraordinary year in 2018.

And I have to tell you I have tremendous optimism about what's going to be happening this year all over this country. And this convention is an important part of it. Because your union knows how to get things done. You know how to make real change in peoples lives. And you're going to be front and center in the year when so much is going to happen.

Let me tell you that the notion of we need to fight for, that basic fairness I mentioned recognizes that's not going to happen if the government is focused on the one percent. And that's what we're seeing.

Look, President Trump and his cabinet of millionaires and billionaires have been given the biggest tax cut in American history to the wealthy and the corporations. Let's be real clear about that. The biggest tax cut ever to the wealthy and the corporations. We need to keep talking about that, we need to help working people understand that in the long run they're going to get screwed by this passed bill. In the long run it's just increasing the power of the one percent. And this is a chance to actually change the entire discussion of this country. That's what 2018 is going to be about. We have a chance to go to Washington too and brothers and sisters I ask you to help in this. We have a chance to actually get our federal to do what it should have done a long time ago and invest in people, invest in our country, invest in our roads and our bridges and our mass transit, and our infrastructure so we can actually have an economy that works for people. That's going to be the fight ahead in Washington D.C. This union can be there and can be counted. Because you know what you cannot afford – President Trump is already talking about a plan that's simply another privatization scheme. That's simply an opportunity for big companies and big financial services companies to make out like bandits and we can't let that happen. Are you ready to go out and fight in Washington to make that there is not another give away to the wealthy and the corporations?

[Applause]

[Inaudible] spirit and energy and the passion, I expected from RWDSU convention. Because as I said you guys know how to fight and you guys know how to win.

Look, I want to remind you. If you want to realize that the full personal impact of what's happening right now, what's happening in Washington inevitability points in one direction because there are huge tax cuts for the wealthy and the corporations, because the deficit is being exploded by it. Guess what they're coming for, brother and sisters?

They're coming for your social security, they're coming for your Medicare, they're coming for your Medicaid. We need to explain this to people all over the country starting from members of this union and everyone in your communities. Because when people understand this is a version of a highway robbery, they're about to experience. Once again we have reverse Robin Hood. The Trump administration wants to take from the poor and give to the rich, take from the working men and women and give it to the one percent. Well, people in this country are not going to stand for it. And that's why this year in 2018 it is so important. This is the year of truth. This is the year when things are going to be decided; this is the year when we actually have to figure out where we're going as a people, as a country. And the RWDSU and the entire labor movement is going play a crucial role. And you know what, they can try and stop you in the Supreme Court. They can try to undercut your rights; they can try to gut the NRB. That does not stop your union from being a force for change and from organizing more and more workers to stand up for their rights. You can do that.

[Applause]

Now, some people would say, somebody would say that's easy to say for New York City. Some people would say you know what there's a lot of places in this country where its hard to organize, its hard to fight for working people. Well those people have never talked to the members of RWDSU, because you have done extraordinary work in every kind of state. One thing I love about your union, it doesn't matter to you whether it's a blue state or a red state, whether it's a city or rural area you go [inaudible] for workers. And you understand that working people want to be organized to protect their rights. You do that and you do it fearlessly and I want it to be an example. Not just for the whole labor movement but to people everywhere who try to fight for change, fight for decency, fight for working people. If someone wants to get inspired, if someone wants to get energized go talk to RWDSU.

[Applause]

Now, brothers and sisters I've done a little bit of homework. So I just want to give a shout out maybe to some of the members there who've been a part of these noble struggles. But when people tell you, you can't organize in a red state or you can't organize in the south, tell that to the workers at the Nestle Logistics and Shipping Center in McDonough, Georgia.

[Applause]

When people tell you it can't be done, the odds are too great. Tell them to talk to the workers at Auto Neo, Auto Motive in Aiken, South Carolina.

[Applause]

And just to prove to you, that even in the biggest union town in America, your union is innovative in glazing new trails and getting more workers organized. Talk to the workers at Zara, at H&M who unanimously believe in RWDSU.

[Applause]

So brothers, and sisters just a few more things I got to tell you. Again, you're going to hear a lot of people talking about what's going on in this country, talking about the last election, talking about the things we see coming out of the administration. And they may get depressed, they may get let down and feel that things cant get changed. Our mission is to put a lie to that. To remind people that change has happened in the toughest situations before. Folks have stood up against all of the odds and have prevailed. History teaches us this fact over, and over again. Right now, right now our brothers and sisters in West Virginia are standing up for their rights and they have the whole nation watching.

[Applause]

And they're going to win that battle in West Virginia no matter how hard it is. They're going to win that battle. And remember when people said the Affordable Care Act was a goner. There was no way to saver that when Trump got elected. The people all over this country stood up to

make sure that millions of Americans wouldn't their health care and they saved the Affordable Care Act.

[Applause]

Now remember when women all over this country at the dawn of the Trump administration feared that their rights would be denied and taken away. Guess what women all over this country did along with their male allies? The biggest protest in the history of the United State of America, January 21, 2017.

[Applause]

And we go into this year, this extraordinary year – I don't know if you heard about this but there is going to be some elections happening in the United States of America. And its going to be a chance for real change. So here is what I say to all of the members of this union, think about how much good can be done this year. And if you need a little extra inspiration beyond the amazing things this union has done. Let's just look at what happened a few months ago, lets look at what happened in a place that people said could not change. The Republican Party and Donald Trump had the audacity to nominate an anti-labor, anti-working man and woman, child molester in the State of Alabama.

[Laughter]

Doug Jones is now the Senator of Alabama.

[Applause]

[Inaudible] what was the first union, what was the first union to endorse Doug Jones for U.S. Senate? I believe it was the RWDSU.

[Applause]

So let me conclude with this. You know, I talk about history because it should inspire us, it should help us to do this good work. I admire you so much, I really do. I admire this union; I admire all of the organizing. I think it's an example that people can follow all over. You've proven it over and over again. I admire your spirit; I admire the love that you bring to your work, your love to your fellow man and woman. It makes a huge, huge difference.

I just want to remind you that the people who paved the way for us. The people made our work, our mission possible today. They faced much longer odds than we do. You know, a hundred years ago the labor movement it was fought at every turn by the government. Unfortunately too often by police departments and private security were forced to attack working men and women just for defending their rights. It used to be really, really hard in this country to organize anything without a full length of the government coming down to stop you and the whole business community as well. But somehow brothers and sisters, people persevered. Somehow people believed there could actually be a full union movement that would change working peoples lives

once and for all. And guess what? Those visionaries, those soldiers for justice they won that battle. They created a whole new reality. The things we depend on today were fought for against all odds and they passed on that legacy to us. The folks who fought in the battles of civil rights movement, the folks who at every step along the way refused to accept the broken status quo. It was never easy. A lot of people suffered for standing up for what was right. But they [inaudible] to us a better nation in the process and they gave us a lot more hope and possibly. We've received the baton now; we in our time have to make the bigger changes.

This year is not like any other year. This is the year of profound potential. This is a year when we get to write the history. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise. This is your year, your chance to create the kind of nation, the kind of society that actually honors working people. Brothers and sisters, I say this with absolute and total confidence. What's going to happen next is up to you and we couldn't be in better hands than the men and women of the RWDSU, thank you.

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