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NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 22, 2020, 10:00 AM
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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Good morning, everybody. We have some really important topics today, and they're all about the safety of New Yorkers, the health of New Yorkers, the future of this city. And overwhelmingly these issues revolve around our federal government. Because right now there are so many ways in which we could use the help of the federal government, and we're not getting that help when we ask for it. And then there are other times where we're not asking for the federal government to stick its nose in and create problems for us, and that's where the federal government seems to be fixated. So we have a real problem here and a real imbalance that we need to talk about. And I am starting with something that people all over the country are distressed by, the President's deep, unwavering desire to send federal law enforcement officers into cities all over the country, where they are not requested, where they are not needed, where their presence will be counterproductive.

And we've seen the situation in Portland, Oregon. It is deeply troubling. What we see happening in Portland, Oregon is blatantly unconstitutional and it is divisive and it is dangerous. And you're starting to see an outcry from all over the country, of folks who believe in the rights of local areas to decide what's right for them, noting what a dangerous precedent it is for the President of the United States to be sending in federal officials to do work which they are not supposed to be doing. People from agencies who have entirely different responsibilities, who are being sent in to do crowd control, to not only monitor protests, but to interfere with protests. As the President said, very bluntly to quote unquote, dominate protests. That is dangerous, dangerous thinking. And it threatens the core values of this country. So what we see in Portland is that the federal presence is actually making the situation worse.

And we cannot allow that here in New York City, nor anywhere else in the country. I want to be very, very clear that we will not allow this to happen in our city. And this could only make things worse. And I've sent this letter today to the Attorney General and to the acting Homeland Security Secretary, making clear formally, that the presence of these federal officials, these federal officers is not welcome here in New York City and is not needed here. I'm joining also with dozens of other mayors from around the country in sending a joint letter to these officials as well, to make clear that none of our cities wants this intrusion.

And I want to be clear. It is not about keeping our city safe or any of these cities safe because it's actually making the situation worse and more chaotic and more violent. It is way too much about the politics of the moment. I believe, unfortunately, the President is using this as a photo op for his own political needs, not as an act of addressing complicated matters in our city. That by definition would require coordination and respect for local decision making. So we're New Yorkers, we don't take something like this lying down. We will not be intimidated. And if we see these federal officers on our streets, then we will see the Trump administration in court to stop it from happening. And here to talk to you about the legal issues and why it is so important for us to protect our constitutional rights and all Americans' constitutional rights, our Corporation Counsel, the City's top lawyer, Jim Johnson.

Corporation Counsel James Johnson: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. The President's threatened action in sending federal troops and federal enforcement officers to our cities is wrong. It would be wrong here. We are opposed to it, and it should be very clear, we do not consent and we will fight it in court. Not only is it wrong, we actually have proof that it's wrong. Where in Portland, what we saw was a bad idea, poorly executed. And even the Defense Secretary criticized what the enforcement officers in Portland had done. It's not uncommon for law enforcement and federal officials to cooperate. We've done it here in New York, many, many times, and it has worked well. But it works well because there was an agreement. And it works well because there's a coordinated plan. It works well because we worked to avoid chaos. And the President is inviting chaos to an already difficult situation. The constitution gives the State and the City quite clear responsibility for local law enforcement. New York City is the safest big city in the United States. We will continue to keep it that way. And we will challenge this in court. I've been in touch with my counterparts in other cities and we are prepared and preparing to attack this in a coordinated way.

Mayor: Thank you very much, Jim. It bears noting that Jim Johnson served at the federal level and understands when it's done the right way, that cooperation between the federal government and cities and when it's done the wrong way. And what we're seeing now is definitively the wrong way.

Now, when we talk about all the ways the federal government could be helping us, what's been so shocking throughout the coronavirus crisis is all the times we asked for help. Cities and states around the country, asked for help and could not get it. So the exact opposite reality, we wanted help. We needed help. It could only come from the federal government, but it did not come. We're talking about testing and that's been a reality throughout. Now, we're talking about the horrible problem with the labs being overloaded and the federal government is doing nothing to address that. We're also talking about the horrible crisis that cities and states are going through because we have fewer and fewer resources and more and more need, more and more people hungry, more and more people who need health care support, more and more people tragically losing their jobs without income. They need our help. We are running out of resources. So I have repeatedly asked the President and numerous federal officials for help with a stimulus that would support city and state governments. We still see no evidence of how and when that's going to happen. There are negotiations going on. That is a start, but we see no firm commitment for the President or the Senate Majority Leader to a stimulus that would actually help cities and states to provide basic services and restart our economies. That has to happen. And it has to happen quick. We also need support for everyday New Yorkers, everyday Americans, who are just plain, running out of money. They got those additional unemployment benefits. That is running out. It must be extended because families all over the city are simply going to have no money for food, for rent, for medicine, for anything, unless those benefits are extended. So we need a stimulus. We need it quickly. And we need it to include a very clear, strong extension of those unemployment benefits.

Now, another area where again, we would have wanted federal support and federal devotion to truth, but in too many cases we've seen federal interference is with our census. And it's time to really refocus on the census because this is going to determine so much about the future of New York City. The census will determine, with the official count of how many people are here, will determine what level of representation we get in the Congress, how much federal aid we get, you name it for mass transit, for education. For so many things we depend on, billions of dollars

hanging in the balance. And what have we seen throughout? Efforts by the Trump administration to complicate the census process, to make it harder for people to participate, to make it something that for many people became something they feared participating in, all of that to drive down the participation that would bring out the truth of how many people are in New York City and other cities and states around the country.

We are fighting back and we will not let these efforts to interfere and stop us. Now, remember, the Trump administration just now, is once again attempting to subvert a process that's been going on for generations, by trying to suggest that non-citizens could not be counted in this census. This makes no sense given everything we've seen in the history of the census. This is a specific effort once again, to inflame people and separate people and divide people. But it has no basis in history and the things that we have done historically, as a nation to count our people. We're fighting back. The best way is to fight back on the ground. So first of all, everyone out there, if you haven't filled out your census, please do so. It is simple. You go to my2020census.gov. It is ten questions. It takes about ten minutes. It is very clear, the positive impact you will have by doing this. What you will not see, thankfully, is questions about immigration status, income, criminal history, taxes. You will not even be asking your social security number. It is fast. It is easy, but so far, we're not seeing the numbers we need. So far only 53 percent of New Yorkers have responded. We need to get that number a lot higher. We're going to be doing a lot of outreach next week, a census week of action. So you'll be seeing a social media campaign and a lot of activity out in the streets. We have got to get these numbers up and anyone who wants to help during the census week of action, wants to help get your fellow New Yorkers to be counted. We need your help. And please sign up at nyc.gov/censusweek.

Okay. One more point before our daily indicators, and this is a good news story, and it's not coming from the federal government, sadly, but it is coming from the State government. I want to commend our State Senate. They did something very important yesterday, passing the online voter registration bill. This is such good news. Look, a lot of people are so deeply, deeply desiring to be involved in the democratic process, but they're also worried. Given the pandemic, they don't want to go out to a poll site. People want to be involved, but it's been so hard in this state for so many years. State Senate has done something profoundly important by allowing people in this legislation to register to vote online. It will bring so many more people into this process, including a lot of people who have felt shut out lately. Older folks who have not felt comfortable going out to poll sites or going out and getting registered in person. A lot of younger people who haven't registered as much previously. This will make it a lot easier. It's a positive message to immigrants to get involved in the process, new Americans, who we want to bring into our democratic process. So this is great news. I want to thank the lead sponsor Senator Zellnor Myrie of Brooklyn. Congratulations, Senator, and thank you to the State Senate. And please to the Assembly, you've done such good work for New York City and New York State. Please pass this legislation so we can get so many more people involved in the democratic process.

Okay. Now do our daily indicators. And again, I've said, you know, we've not seen the help we need from Washington. We got some good news from Albany, but the best news is always here in New York City. And it's because of you. So good day today on our daily indicators. Number one, daily number of people admitted to hospitals for suspected COVID-19, threshold is 200, today's report 66. Number two, daily number of people in Health + Hospitals ICUs, threshold 375 and today it is 300 patients. And number 3, percentage of the people testing positive citywide for COVID-19, threshold 15 percent, once again today, two percent, a very good number. And I thank everyone for all you are doing. Quickly in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

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

Moderator: Hi all, just a reminder that we have with us today, Police Commissioner Shea, Corporation Counsel Johnson, Commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs Mostofi, Director of New York City Census 2020 Menin, Senior Advisor Dr. Varma, and Special Counsel of Democracy NYC Laura Wood. With that, we'll start with Marcia from CBS.

Question: Mr. Mayor, for weeks and weeks, you have been defending the right of the people who have been occupying City Hall Park to have freedom of speech and to be there. Yet today, early in the morning, there was a pre-dawn raid to get rid of them. What changed your mind? What factors played into your decision to clear them out?

Mayor: Marcia, very good question. And it's something that I've been evaluating over the last few weeks, working with the Police Commissioner and his team. And what we saw change over the last few weeks was the gathering there got smaller and smaller, was less and less about protests, more and more became an area where homeless folks were gathering. I said repeatedly, we do always respect the right to protest, but we have to think about health and safety first and the health and safety issues were growing. So it was time to take action. That was a decision that we made yesterday.

Question: My follow up question is this, you know, I'm also wondering whether you were getting pressure, but also the question of the optics. There was a lot of graffiti down there. No efforts were made to remove it yet. There was the dichotomy really, when people tried to mar the Black Lives Matter murals and with paint, that was cleaned up right away. So did you feel pressure to show that there was equal justice and that you were going to try to get rid of graffiti on public buildings everywhere?

Mayor: There is equal justice and each situation though, is different. And this was a particularly complex situation down here. Look, I made very clear that graffiti on those public buildings in this area is being cleaned up right now as we speak. It's not acceptable, it will be gone. But it was a complicated situation down here. And one we had to handle smartly. A lot of careful examination of the facts, a lot of thought to make sure it was done the right way. And I think it was done the right way. I think the NYPD handled it properly. It's something we thought about carefully and decided this was the right time.

Moderator: Next we have Katie from the Wall Street Journal.

Question: Hey, good morning Mayor de Blasio. Coming off of Marcia's question, I'm curious – I know the concern from a lot of the people here was that this was an encampment for homeless people to stay in. It was a safe space for them. Did the Department of Homeless Services or HRA, where they were during the cleanup as well? To see if they could redirect services to the people living here?

Mayor: Yeah, Katie, it's a good question. And there's been regular efforts by Homeless Services to engage folks who are there. They've been out there again today. We want to make sure that as many people as possible will accept the shelter we have for them and hopefully turn their life

around and not go back to the streets. That's something we've worked on consistently during this situation. And we will. And I want that to be clear. The homeless outreach efforts have deepened in fact, during the pandemic. And we've found a very striking number of homeless folks, willing to come in and stay in the shelter as a result of this pandemic. So these folks too, will be afforded that same opportunity.

Question: My second question is about small businesses. I know that there was a lot of reporting around the businesses in Astoria over overcrowding. Other businesses have complained about the lack of guidance and the kind of confusing regulations from City and State agencies as well, about what they can do to set up. My question is, you know, obviously nobody wants businesses to break the rules. You don't want large gatherings. But when you see a large gathering on Steinway Street, and you also realize that there's only four streets in the entire borough of Queens that have Open Restaurants, does it make you think, you know, instead of just a punitive punishment of these restaurants, maybe there's an actual need or demand for both clearer guidance and regulation of businesses, and also more open space for people who are cramped up to hang out in?

Mayor: Yeah, look Katie, I think it's right to say every place we can keep adding responsibly and safely, we want to. We've been continually expanding the Open Streets program, combining it with the Open Restaurants program. More and more restaurants are joining the Open Restaurants program. I think it's over 9,000 now. It's been very few places where we had this bad a problem. Overwhelmingly we've seen compliance, overwhelmingly when people went to educate and remind people, folks, you know, really listened to it, followed the guidance. We had a particular problem in Steinway Street, which was worse than what we'd seen in other places. And we had to deal with it aggressively. And also send a message to others that they have to act responsibly. But remember, it's been very few businesses that have needed to be closed down. We'd like to keep it very few because we don't want to take away people's livelihoods. But we got to just send a message to everyone. Every business has to take responsibility. People have to take responsibility to keep each other safe. And yes, we will be looking for other places to expand the program, to give people more options. And we will definitely have enforcement out there where needed.

Moderator: Next we have Andrew from NBC.

Question: I'm going to start with my first question straight off of that one on Steinway. One of the restaurant employees yesterday asked why is it that in the early days of social distancing, whether it was your police department or the City in general, would ask individuals to comply. Whereas now the focus is on these businesses. Is there no thought to sanction some of the people who are participating in these large crowds? Some of the restaurants feel like they're being blamed for everything.

Mayor: Yeah. Look, Andrew, it's a fair question. But I would say this, we've had very few places where we saw a problem as bad as what we saw on Steinway Street. And I think that is indicative of something. It really is in part the standard of the restaurant or bar sets. We know this long before the pandemic. I mean, this is why we have a Nightlife Office to work with bars, to work with restaurants, to be out there in communities and say, Hey, everyone has responsibility here. Vast majority of these businesses are responsible and are good neighbors. Some have not been well before the pandemic and a few during the pandemic. They need to understand there'll be consequences. And it's a reminder everyone else to take their responsibility. But look, we did start out with more of a focus on individuals. We found it was a mixed bag, honestly. And you know, Andrew, we've never been through a pandemic or at least not in the last century, trying to figure out the tactics that work. But the individual approach had its real limitations. But now I think the right way forward is constant education, giving out those face masks, et cetera, where there's a business that continually does not follow instructions, they need to feel consequences. And yes, in some cases, individuals as well, but that would be only when absolutely necessary.

Moderator: Andrew, do you have a follow up?

Question: Yes, my second question has to do with schools. Some of the private schools have indicated to parents that they're planning to return five days a week, full time, full schedule. How concerned are you that this will exacerbate the gulf between the haves and the have nots? If it plays out that some of the wealthier schools in the city will be providing education that your own Department of Education will not be able to provide. And if you're concerned about that what will you do about it?

Mayor: Well, Andrew, you know, I'm always concerned about the tale of two cities. And I think, you know, clearly private schools represent privilege in many cases, but I also think there's a reality, just the math. The space that they have and the fewer number of students they have compared to our public schools. Our problem is a space problem, a math problem, too many schools that normally have too many kids to begin with in them, and then you need six feet of distance between kids. We can't possibly do five days a week in that condition. So, I am concerned, always, about disparities in this crisis, but I think this one is more particularly about just the realities of each type of school. And, look, what I need to make sure they do – and all types of schools do – is exactly what our public schools are going to do, which is to put health and safety first. And if they're going to go to five days, they have to make sure it's being done in a healthy manner. And we're certainly going to be closely monitoring that situation.

Moderator: Next we have Brigid from WNYC.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor. I have some questions on the clearing of the encampment this morning as well. My first question for you and for Commissioner Shea is, you know, was the choice to clear the plaza now prompted by concerns that federal agents might come in and do it for you?

Mayor: No, this is something that's been discussed over several weeks, really looking at how this gathering had gotten really small – I think it was about 50 people at the time it was cleared. Again, growing concerns about health and safety. This issue with the federal agents is a couple of days old, but the assumption that the moment would come when we needed to do something has been with us for many days. And we were waiting to really understand the facts and the specifics and came to the conclusion this was the right time. Go ahead.

Question: And then just for the follow-up, when you were Public Advocate and Mayor Bloomberg made the decision to clear Zuccotti Park in a similar, you know, late night fashion, your response to it was that you called it needlessly provocative and legally questionable. I'm wondering what was different about this decision?

Mayor: Well, I think it's a very different situation. The reality here is that again, this had become less and less about protests, more and more homeless individuals who are gathered there. People have asked in the last few days, your colleagues rightfully, you know, how I feel about the

broader question of homeless encampments. And I said, we don't allow them in New York City. And we don't, we haven't in my administration. They were allowed for many years. I think they're very, very unfair to everyone, including homeless people. So, as it became more of that and much less about protest, the health and safety issues came to the fore. I remember vividly Occupy Wall Street. That consistently was a political situation and a protest situation. It was not this at all. So, I just think they're apples and oranges.

Moderator: Next, we have Sydney from the Staten Island Advance.

Question: Hey, Mr. Mayor. Over the weekend, we did a story about a woman on Staten Island who constantly yells racial slurs and profanity at her neighbor who is a black cop and harasses other neighbors in the community. And basically, they went to the district attorney's office to try to find a resolution to the problem and they weren't able to do anything. I understand your Community Affairs Office was planning to step in and help. I'm wondering if you've seen the video and what your Community Affairs Unit is doing to address the situation. And maybe Commissioner Shea, since you're on the call, if you could respond. Is the NYPD aware of this incident?

Mayor: I appreciate you raising it, Sydney. I've not seen that video. I will do that today. I'm very concerned. And you're saying this is someone exhibiting this bias towards an off-duty police officer. Is that right?

Question: Yes.

Mayor: Yeah, no, that's obviously – any bias is unacceptable and bias towards a police officer, even more troubling. I'll look at the video. We certainly will take action. I don't have a report for you from what our Community Affairs folks have been doing, but Commissioner, you note, if you have anything, any update on this. Commissioner, can you hear us?

Police Commissioner Dermot Shea: Yeah. Can you hear me?

Mayor: Yeah, go ahead now. There you go.

Commissioner Shea: Yes. Sydney, I'd have to get back to you on that regarding specifics, but you know, any case of, whether it's language or bias or hate crimes, you know, we take very seriously. This particular incident, I am not familiar with. So, whether it rises to the level of a crime. When you mentioned Community Affairs involved, that tends to make me believe that it didn't rise to a level of a crime, but I can – we can certainly get back to you and whether Hate Crimes is involved in this, or if it's more of a neighbor meeting. But certainly, the language, you know, is something that concerns us all.

Mayor: Go ahead, Sydney.

Question: Thank you. That's all. I don't have any other questions.

Mayor: Thank you.

Moderator: Next, we have Erin from Politico.

Question: Hi, Mr. Mayor. My first question is in regards to the video of the homeless man who was punched by an officer. You said on Monday that you couldn't release the status of the investigation because of the involvement of the district attorney which was affecting your ability to be public about the status. We inquired with the DA's office and they said they have not made any request that you not release that information. So, in light of that, can you tell us the steps of the investigation? If not, why not?

Mayor: Yeah, no, I – there's several different situations that we're dealing with involving other elements of government, whether DA's or the Attorney General's Office. And I want to make sure I'm accurate in each case, Erin. And I'll let the Commissioner speak to it. But I do know the DA's office was reviewing that situation. And what the information I had at the time was that we had to hold back as a result of that. But, look, I saw that video. I was troubled by it. Again, I was troubled by everything I saw on that video on all sides. And we don't want to see that kind of thing happening in this city. And we've got to find a better way obviously. But in terms of what can be said, I'll turn to the Commissioner again, with the incident with the homeless individual in the subway. Commissioner, could you speak to what we can say about that at this point?

Commissioner Shea: Yep, thank you, Mr. Mayor. So, I looked at that video. I think the video is – this is an incident where an arrest was made after trying to eject somebody from a train. I think the video is in fact, an NYPD video that was used in the criminal court proceeding. And then that video was spliced and a portion of it was released. I watched the video in its entirety. It's about 30 minutes. And you have an individual that is asked to leave the train, does in fact leave the train voluntarily with no force, but then goes back to another car on the train. And then that's when you see the video stop. I mean, I would agree with the Mayor, it's troublesome, the video. I don't like what I see. Anytime an incident results in noncompliance or force being used and – it doesn't look good. I mean, there's no pretty way to say that. My analysis of the entirety of it, where it goes on for nearly 30 minutes, an officer's kicked, etcetera, I don't foresee any change in duty status, but any use of force, and this is an incident certainly falls within that, is reviewed. We look through an incident, what can we learn, is additional training necessary? You know, and that's part of the process that will go on with a case like this. But in terms of change of duty status, I don't foresee that.

Mayor: Go ahead, Erin.

Question: My other question is about the clearing of the encampment. We heard from the Mayor, but can we hear from the Police Commissioner, just in terms of, you know, what the operation entailed, were people arrested? And also, the Mayor – I believe you said yesterday, you were deferring to the NYPD on when to clear it. Now it seems like you've made the decision. Can we get who made the decision?

Mayor: Yeah, I'll just start and pass to the Commissioner. This is something we always do together. And we talked it through last night and made the final decision about 10:00pm last night. But go ahead, Commissioner.

Commissioner Shea: Yeah, and there was constant communication. And what I'm telling you is what I believe to be accurate at this point in time, you know the total number of people was, I would put it around 40 to 50 people when we initially went to the park. A lot of planning went

into it to make sure the safety of the officers and the safety of the people that were in that park – and the very good news is, I'm not aware of any injuries to anyone. So, that's paramount, I think in this case. We went in with attorneys, we went in with video – I think as the Mayor said earlier, this really started weeks ago in terms of outreach, outreach with different agencies trying to help people. But ultimately the decision was made that we were going to clear the park. When we went in earlier this morning, we did have attorneys. We gave verbal warnings. We allowed people to leave. We had egress for them to leave on their own.

A number of people did leave without incident. And that was fine. A number of individuals did not want to leave. The result was one arrest for attempted assault where a brick was thrown at an officer. Luckily that officer had a shield. It left a dent, I'm told, in the shield, but nobody was injured. And that person was quickly taken into custody. Another six individuals were taken into custody and the charges against them, my understanding is, absent warrants or things of that nature. They will be released on minor summonses. So, one arrest and probably six summonses. The team is still out there now, and with other agencies, just cleaning up that area. We did recover a number of bricks, sticks, brooms, some drug paraphernalia in some of the tents that were left. We gave people the opportunity to take their property. Again, this is on video. Some people chose to take that property or the property was just discarded. And we're working with Sanitation to clean up that area and get it back to normal for the people in the city.

Moderator: Last two. Next, we have Emily from NY1.

Question: Good morning, everyone. Commissioner Shea, may I ask you to speak just a little bit more about the decisions that went into the weighing of use of force when it came to dismantling of that Occupy City Hall encampment, just because police are being so closely scrutinized over overuse of force.

Commissioner Shea: Yeah. Well, I mean, obviously, any situation, we always start with one thing in mind, whether it's a domestic violence call, whether it's, you know, certainly a different situation like this or anything in between. We don't want to use force. I mean, that's where we start every situation from. That [inaudible] to a conversation about the escalation and other training that we receive. We certainly, though, prepare and we have to be aware of intelligence that we have and other things of that nature. So, I couldn't be happier really with how this one turned out. I mean really, you know, no injuries, no real use of force to speak. I mean, there was some tugging and back and forth that I reviewed on some of the video from last night, where people were trying to punch officers, but they had shields, they were protected. And ultimately it was – you know, I think I would categorize it as one for the win column, and you know, another step towards getting back to normalcy here in New York.

Mayor: Go ahead, Emily.

Question: And another one, please, for the Mayor. We, obviously, as a city altogether are working very hard to keep the coronavirus at bay. Aside from the delays in the diagnostic testing results, do you see other areas of concern where the infection rates could potentially creep up again in the city because of this or that offense or –

Mayor: No, it's a great, great question. So, what I'd say is first, we need the federal government to get the testing really shaped up. We just need a much more consistent approach to testing, particularly the lab capacity. Second, we need to keep tightening up the follow through on anyone who travels to New York City. So, I think we have a good plan. We have to keep deepening that plan in terms of the – that the State has laid out, which states to be following through on with folks coming from out of town. We're getting good cooperation from the Port Authority, for example. We just got to keep following up more and more, making sure we get every single person who comes in and reminding everyone it's their moral obligation and their legal obligation to observe that quarantine for everyone's benefit.

And then it is as we continue to expand our economy and restart, always keeping, you know, a health and safety first approach, looking for any problem areas, any particular places, if we see any focal point, acting on it quickly, and that could mean a single building for example. And that's how we've set things up with our Test and Trace Corps to be very aggressive if we see any evidence of a particular local focal point. I think it's doing all of those things and just constantly watching the data. And this is the unfortunate lesson, Emily, from some of the other states. They did not make the decisions based on the data. We're making every decision based on the data. And if we see upticks, start talking about them, and start adjusting people's approach, and if necessary, obviously, adding new restrictions, which we don't want to do, but we'd be ready to do if needed.

Moderator: The last one for today. We have Nina from ABC.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor, thank you for taking our call. We're first time callers. Very excited. I have two questions for you. One is, we've been trying to help restaurants that have been blocked in street dining because the DOT would not relocate bike racks in front of their establishments. Has there been any help? We've been particularly trying to help a century-old restaurant owned by a family in the Village that can't reopen, hasn't been able to for three weeks. Is there any help that you can provide for these establishments to move these or relocate these bike racks so they can join the street dining and survive?

Mayor: Yeah. Nina, thank you for the question. Welcome to our morning briefings. I know you've been doing work on the question of Gene's Restaurant, which is a real institution and has been around a hundred years, and we don't have that many restaurants that we can say that about. So, we want to help them. And what we will do is work with the restaurant to open up some more space there. The details of that particular location actually allow us to move around where those bike racks are in a way that will open up the space they need. So, I'll break some news for you and say, yes, we are going to help Gene stay alive and continue to be a great neighborhood institution. And, look, this is something we're going to do with the – as part of the Open Restaurant effort, which we've now extended all the way to October 31st. We want to make sure they can maximize the number of customers they have between now and October 31st to help them stick around, hopefully for another hundred years.

Question: [Inaudible] news, Mr. Mayor, thank you so much. I'm on my way there. And I'll be able to tell him, and I'm sure he will shed a tear because he has every time we've talked to him about the predicament he was in. My last question is about some nurses who have permits to park in no parking zones. These are for frontline workers that have been working with COVID patients. They can't take public transportation obviously. And they park on the street and then to their surprise, even with these permits a few weeks ago, they got thousands of dollars' worth of tickets that they didn't know about because they weren't able to park near, for example, Sloan Kettering, even though they have these lottery

given decals on their windshields. Will you be able to help them – because it's really weeks of their salary that they risked their lives – forgive these tickets?

Mayor: Yeah, I'm really – again, thank you. You're two-for-two today, as we prepare for baseball season. Thank you for raising that too, Nina and I always like to thank members of the media when you raise something that helps us do our job better or help people in need. So, thank you for raising both of these situations. Yeah, I don't want to see these nurses suffer who are doing so much for us. These are our health care heroes. If you can help connect them to our team here at City Hall, we'll trace back what happened here. I have every reason to believe that we can resolve this and not make them – not see them penalized for doing the extraordinary work they're doing. And, you know, it's a big, complicated city, but we got to remember our humanity first. These nurses were there for all of us in our toughest hour as a city, and we got to be good to them. So, thank you for looking out for them and get us that information, please.

So everyone, as we conclude, look, I just want to emphasize the times we're living in, I mean, this is going to be looked back on as one of the most challenging, one of the most complex times in our history, but there's also going to be a recognition that the people stood up, the people did the right thing to fight back the coronavirus, the people stood by each other, and the people fought for their rights in a democratic society. And, look, we have seen in the last two years, our democracy under threat, we've seen our democracy undermined in ways we could not have imagined, and people are feeling the pain of that. And when you look at a situation like Portland, Oregon right now, it scares you to see the President of the United States doing something that's just blatantly unconstitutional. But I always have faith in the people and people want to be involved and they want to make their voices heard. And I want to emphasize to everyone, if you want to make your voice heard, well, of course, register, vote, get involved, and it's going to be easier now, hopefully with the help of the Assembly. As early as today, you'll be able to do that online and that will be good for everyone. But also, the census.

Look, if you're frustrated about what's happening in Washington, or you don't feel like your voice is heard or you don't think our city is getting its fair share, there's something you can do about it, which is to fill out that census form. So many people for months have said to me, 'I want to do something I want to help, I want to create something or, you know, in some way, contribute to what's going on.' And there's been so many great examples of that from New Yorkers. Well, here's something everyone could do and it only takes ten minutes. Go online, fill out that census form. One person can do it for the whole household. So, please go to my2020census.gov, my2020census.gov. Take that ten minutes and help New York City's voice be heard, help all New Yorkers be counted. Thank you very much.

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