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**TRANSCRIPT FROM SUNDAY, JANUARY 22, 2023: MAYOR ERIC ADAMS
RALLIES FOR FEDERAL SUPPORT TO HELP SERVE ASYLUM SEEKERS**

Pastor Gilford Monroe, Faith Advisor, Office of the Mayor: Okay, so we are ready to begin, and I want to say good afternoon to everyone. My name is Pastor Gil Monroe. I serve as the faith advisor to New York City Mayor Eric Adams. We are going to begin with a moment of prayer and silence today. Of course, over the weekend, some of us was praying in our houses of worship over the night in California. We know that 10 people were shot and killed who were celebrating the Lunar New Year. Today is not about the who, but the what. Not just who did it, but what and the why.

As we look at our country today and as we are here today to talk about migrants, I think that all of us recognize that what all of us want is a place to call home, number two, an opportunity to work, and number three, a place to be able to pray to the god that we know. I think that represented today are faith leaders from across our city. We want to take a moment of silence, and then we'll have a word of prayer. Could we have a moment of silence, please?

Now we'll have a word of prayer by Grace Choi, who is representing the Coalition of AAPI Churches.

Grace Choi: Thank you, Pastor Monroe. Please join me in prayer. Father, we thank you for bringing us together in prayer today. Our hearts and bodies ache and lament the deaths of 10 brothers and sisters who died on Lunar New Year's Eve. We pray for your supernatural peace and comforting arms over the community of Monterey Park, California, the mass shooting victims, and the Asian American and Pacific Islander community across the country and here in New York City. Help us to overcome evil with love.

We pray for protection over Monterey Park, your joy and blessings this new year over all families celebrating Lunar New Year today and throughout this week, and to give wisdom to the local and national elected officials and police officers. Give us your grace, your peace, and your love. In Jesus's mighty and powerful name, I pray. Amen.

All: Amen.

Pastor Gil Monroe: Amen. Thank you so much, and represented here again is faith leaders who join in prayer and solidarity. As you look at the front dais, you can see that again. All our prayers are with them and also with us here in New York City. We are going to move into our press conference, and we'll have Commissioner Manuel Castro, who will be leading this portion. Thank you all again.

Commissioner Mnauel Castro, Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs: Thank you so much, Pastor Monroe, and to our faith leaders who are joining us here today. Welcome, everyone. I am Manuel Castro. I'm the commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs. As the commissioner of the immigrant affairs office for the City of New York, I am in awe of the tireless and historic efforts of our city employees and our community partners, many of whom are here today, to provide immediate and ongoing assistance and support to our newest New Yorkers, to more than 40,000 asylum seekers who arrived in New York City in just the last eight months. We have welcomed thousands of asylum seekers with humanity, restoring their dignity and showing them the respect they deserve. For that, I am incredibly proud of being a New Yorker.

From the moment the first buses arrived at the Port Authority Bus Terminal, our team at MOIA, and with our sister agencies and community organizations, quickly mobilized to meet the most immediate needs of asylum seekers — families, children, individuals — arriving on buses, most of whom did not know why they were brought to New York City. But our response did not stop there. We also launched a multiagency effort to address this unprecedented crisis, allocating historic funding to support asylum seekers, to manage casework at our new navigation center for asylum seekers and satellites across the five boroughs, and invested in our already historic investment in our legal immigration services for asylum seekers. We understood that the gravity of this crisis required an all-hands-on-deck response, and that's exactly what we did. It is important and critical that we say this today, that our state and our federal government do their share of the responsibility in addressing this human crisis. New York City cannot take this responsibility alone. We need their support and resources to ensure that we can continue to provide this service. Once again, I want to thank all the city employees, all our partners, for their dedication and hard work in supporting asylum seekers. Their efforts have been nothing short of heroic.

This time last week, I was with Mayor Eric Adams at our southern border, bearing witness to the human crisis that we are experiencing today in the United States, thousands of asylum seekers crossing the border, seeking refuge in our country. I will never forget a moment when, speaking with asylum seekers in the streets of El Paso, Mayor Eric Adams expressed to them that he will be going to Washington D.C. to fight for their opportunity at the American Dream.

At that same time, we met with city officials and agreed with them that this crisis should not be taken on solely by localities, cities like El Paso and New York City, and that our national strategy should not be to just put people on buses to New York City, and that together we will work to ensure the federal government does what's right. As someone who crossed the U.S.-Mexico border myself with my mother, grew up in New York City undocumented, and now is

serving as the commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs. I cannot tell you how incredibly proud I am to be a New Yorker and to serve in the City of New York in this moment.

With that, I want to welcome some of our community partners who have been working with us to share their experiences and their testimony and why it is important to come together as New Yorkers in this moment of crisis and be with our brothers and sisters who are seeking refuge in our country and in our city. First up, I'd like to welcome the executive director of La Colmena, Yesenia Mata, to share some words.

Yesenia Mata, La Colmena: My name is Yesenia Mata, executive director of La Colmena, an immigrant and worker rights center on Staten Island. I am also 31 Bravo Military Police in the United States Army Reserve. I just completed my weekend drill and rushed here to be part of this critical gathering, so we can stand united as the city gathers to ensure that asylum seekers are supported, and that all New York City residents are supported.

Staten Island wants to thank Mayor Eric Adams, Commissioner Castro, the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, and all city agencies and staff, volunteers and community-based organizations for being on the front lines from the beginning. I am thankful to our incredible city, because New York City showed humanity when we needed it the most. La Colmena was at the Port Authority welcoming asylum seekers with food, and we are now at the navigation center providing legal orientation to hundreds of asylum seekers weekly.

On Staten Island, we are ensuring that asylum seekers know their rights as workers, including providing construction site training classes and E.S.L. classes. We are training more than a hundred asylum seekers weekly, and many of them are finding creative ways to work and contribute to the city. They are now painters, delivery workers, math tutors, construction workers, babysitters, and translators. They tell me that they are happy when they get to say in English, "I am finished. Can you pay me now?" Staten Island, Brooklyn, Bronx, Queens, Manhattan, are all doing their part to support asylum seekers, all while supporting all of our New York City residents.

La Colmena is trying to keep up with its services because we won't accept any worker to be exploited, but La Colmena still has a wait list of more than 400 asylum seekers waiting for our services, and the list keeps growing. This is why we are here today, so the state and the federal government can hear from us. Staten Island cannot do this alone. New York City cannot do this alone. Thank you.

Commissioner Castro: Thank you, Yesenia. Up next, please welcome Dr. Ramon Tallaj from SOMOS Community Care.

Dr. Ramon Tallaj, SOMOS Community Care: Good afternoon. I myself am an immigrant, like the many thousands of people, doctors who are in the community and their patients. We've been in the front line helping the mayor and the city. This is why today we must tell our federal government, the state government, we need to work together. We are immigrants. This is a country of immigrants. You are an immigrant at some point. This is the time now to help those people who just came. They're no different than the other ones. We will make the country bigger

and better. This is the time to tense our hands. It doesn't matter the faith that we are. We are all here today because we understand that's a right that every human life has, to have a time to eat, work, and then dignity. This is the United States of America. Thank you.

Commissioner Castro: Thank you, doctor. I have to say that SOMOS Community Care has been incredibly active, from the moment buses began to arrive at Port Authority to our Respite Center at Randall's Island. SOMOS Community Care doctors have been there, ready to respond to any medical emergencies that asylum seekers have been experiencing as they arrive. Now I'd like to welcome a great friend and immigrant advocate, Jo-Ann Yoo, the Executive Director of the Asian American Federation.

Jo-Ann Yoo, Asian American Federation: Good afternoon, everybody. Thank you to Commissioner Castro — I call him Manny because we're old friends — for inviting me. I'm really happy and privileged to be here. It's a little difficult to start a press conference on a day like today, when yet again, my community's impacted and the calls are coming in. As Manny said, my name is Jo-Ann Yoo, and I'm the executive director of the Asian American Federation. My organization's work is to uplift the Asian American community. As many of you know, Asian Americans are almost 18 percent of this city's population. Overwhelmingly, Asian New Yorkers are immigrants, with two out of three of us being foreign born. When we discuss immigration and immigrants, that's our community.

I am also here as an immigrant, who stepped off the plane over 50 years ago. When I watch the news and see the little ones and their eyes filled with anxiety, it's really hard for me not to recall my own anxiety and uncertainty as a kid. It's really heartbreaking. I talk to my friends who are leading nonprofits, who are working with these, the children of the asylum seekers, and I can't tell you the stories that I'm hearing. I hope you take the time to listen to some of these stories, because this is an a crisis of epic proportion. I'm sorry.

As the federation executive director, a New Yorker and immigrant bearing witness to this tragedy, I'm going to stand with City Hall, with our leaders, City Council, with my friends, to ask for the support that we need. I am beyond proud of my city and how we have responded, and I am certainly even more angry at the governors who continue to play with vulnerable lives from the southern borders. This is not funny and this is disgusting, and it is cruelty at its best. We are starting the long climb out of Covid when so many New Yorkers are jobless, homeless and vulnerable, and our social service services organizations are supporting our neighbors with the little funds that they have.

Our city's resources are already straining because of Covid, and we need the federal government to step up and give our city the resources that we need to help the migrants and the asylum seekers as they make their way here. We need our president, our congressional leaders, to hurry and release the funds for our city to meet this crisis with adequate resources. New York City has been, is now, and will always be a welcoming place for newcomers. Now as we face this unprecedented crisis, we need our federal leaders to do their share by giving us the resources we need to ensure that our city remains a welcoming place for all New Yorkers. I know in my community, our resources are straining because we are dealing with the pandemic of Covid and with Asian hate. And now, as we're seeing this crisis unfold, our hearts go out to all of our

brothers and sisters working in the front lines and we will certainly do our share. New Yorkers, please look out for each other because we are the ones who keep ourselves safe. Thank you.

Commissioner Castro: Thank you so much, Jo-Ann, and thank you for being here with us today. I know it's an incredibly difficult day for our Chinese and Asian communities, and so this means a tremendous amount to us. And up next, please welcome Umair Ahmed from the Janazah Community Center.

Umair Ahmed, Janazah Community Center: As-salamu alaykum, may the peace of God and the blessings of God be upon us all. After 9/11, along with all of America, we as a Muslim community have suffered a lot by being targeted and discriminated against. But thanks to God, we have come a long way. And as we continue to unite and build our communities, and to overcome the obstacles that we have faced, we are highly thankful to the mayor's office and to the state government for all that they have done with us and for us. And we are thankful for the representation that we are having now, which we have not received before.

I, as a representative for Muslim Community Services, Muslim Community Center, Muslims Giving Back, and Genesee Community Services will show you that we are exhausting all of our avenues and our efforts as we continue to build facilities, centers and programs that will benefit the migrants and, overall, the Muslim community.

What we are humbly requesting now is the support of the federal government to help and assist us on that level. We are doing what we can. We are exhausting our efforts, but we need the federal government's support. We're all here and come here, leaving our lands and our homes in search of a better life, a better quality of life, and a better future for us and our coming generations. We're here to build and live the American dream and for that we need all the support that we can get. God bless us all, God bless New York City and God bless America. Thank you.

Commissioner Castro: Thank you, Umair. And now I'd like to welcome up Reverend Terry Troia of Project Hospitality.

Reverend Terry Troia, Project Hospitality: I thought I just came to hold the jackets. Good afternoon. My name is Terry Troia and I stand here as a Staten Islander who comes from an immigrant family, with an asylee family who joins us today, who is part of our church. As someone who works as a volunteer at El Centro del Inmigrante and the Staten Island Immigrants Council, both of whom are with us today with a large contingent from Staten Island, we are grateful that God has given us the opportunity to do righteous work, just work, and work of love that comes right out of the Jewish scriptures with the commandment to care for the widow, the orphan, and the foreigner among us.

We are so grateful that God has placed that command in our hearts and allowed us to live it out, not only as a church, as a body of immigrant workers and leaders, but as an entire city. And we invite the federal government and the state government and all peoples of goodwill to join us on this journey of love and welcome. As we expected to be loved and welcomed when we came here and our forefathers and mothers came here, so too, do we extend that love to others. We

pray, we hope, we plead, and we demand that all of our government levels join us in the gift of this righteous work of welcoming the newcomers among us. Amen.

Commissioner Castro: Thank you, Reverend Troia. And before I welcome up Commissioner Mermelstein of the Mayor's Office of International Affairs, I want to acknowledge several of our community partners here today. You have heard of Jo-Ann Yoo of the Asian American Federation; Darwin Maradiaga, the executive director of Family Vision; also here with us, Beatriz Diaz Taveras, executive director of Catholic Charities; Lorena Kourousias, the executive director of Mixteca; Lymaris Albors and Alfred Matthews of Acacia Network; Haydee Zambrana of the Latin American Women in Action; Ray Rivera, Latino Pastor Action Network; Doctor Inderjeet Singh of United Sikhs; Herold Dasque of Haitian Americans United for Progress; Mr. Williams from Haitian American Alliance of New York; Varvara Chinenova from the New York Immigration Coalition; and Soniya Ali from the Muslim Cultural Center; Salah Gamaly from the Freedom Bakeries; Marwa Janini of the Arab American Association; Yamina Kezdari from the Muslims Giving Back; Lesly Williams of the Haitian American Alliance of New York; Ian Newton of New Immigrant Community Empowerment; and so many other others who are here to stand with us in one voice to say that New York continues to be a welcoming city for immigrants. But we must have the support of the federal and state government. And in one voice, we stand here in support of the efforts from our city government. And up next, I'd like to welcome Commissioner Edward Mermelstein from the Office of International Affairs.

Commissioner Mermelstein, Mayor's Office of International Affairs : Thank you, Commissioner Castro. I would like to acknowledge the consuls general of Mexico, Senegal, Nigeria, Peru, India, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Dominican Republic, who are all with us today and here to support this very important cause. As a refugee from Ukraine — and as a side note, today, Ukraine is celebrating its National Day of Unity. My family came to New York City in 1976 with a few hundred dollars and four pieces of luggage. This crisis is very personal for me. The large influx of migrants has had a significant impact on New York City and has put a strain on the city's resources as it struggles to provide housing, healthcare, and other services. Our city has been working closely with various organizations and government agencies to address the crisis and provide assistance to those in need.

Our agency has reached out across the globe for assistance in best practices as how to best serve the migrants and asylees coming to our city. Working with community leaders and counselors, we have facilitated discussions as to the services being provided by our administration. Despite these challenges, New York City remains a welcoming and diverse community, and we will continue to support and assist migrants as they navigate the asylum process and settle into their new lives. We want to remind the public that migrants are individuals seeking a better life, fleeing from violence and persecution, and we must treat them with dignity and respect. I am a product of the greatest city and the greatest country on this earth. I can assure you that when we invest in those who have no one to help, we are investing in ourselves and in our city. Finally, I want to thank Mayor Adams and our entire administration for having the vision of compassion, endless energy, and dedication to this very important cause. Thank you.

Commissioner Castro: Thank you so much, Commissioner Mermelstein. And up next I'd like to introduce Marita Landaveri, ambassador and consul general of Peru.

Marita Landaveri, Consul General of Peru: Thank you, Manny. Thank you all. I have to say that this is a wonderful group of people representing communities of the world. New York is the center of the world for many, we consider it as that. The community, the Peruvian community in my case, as consul general, is very grateful for the City of New York, the state of New York, the United States of America, for receiving its people any way they come. I mean, we are always being received the way it should.

But unfortunately, even if we're so grateful for everything that our communities receive, even me living here for more than four years now and having lived here 40 years ago also, for five years, we need the support. We continue in need of support for the new people coming. There are all kinds of people. There are tiny ones, like this little guy here. There are older people, there are mothers, fathers, young people. They all come in search of this special place, the United States, and the City of New York in this case. We need the help of everybody, we need the help of our own communities. Many of our consulates general are represented here, and our communities do help, but we still need the help of all of them, all of you please, all the other countries. It doesn't matter what country you come from, we should always help those in need, and I thank everybody for that. Thank you.

Commissioner Castro: Thank you, ambassador. And now I'd like to welcome up consul general of Mexico. Is he here? I'm not sure if he's here. But I'd like to welcome up consul general of Senegal, Elhadji Ndao. Thank you.

Elhadji Ndao, Consul General of Senegal: Thank you, commissioner. Thank you. Good evening. I've heard inspiring words here that reflect New York and the values that we've seen this administration stand by. It's a difficult crisis that our communities have been going through and we are grateful to have seen the city as an administration, but also New Yorkers, as people stand by these newcomers and offer help and offer compassion and offer love and offer ways for them to live in dignity. It is important that I recognize Mr. (inaudible) here who, as a New Yorker, not as a Senegalese, has offered his community center to host many who have come to New York and who have looked for shelter. I'm sure many New Yorkers, as those who preceded me here have mentioned, many have offered what they had to help. But when the city came in, the determination that we've seen in this administration has been such a relief to our communities. We can only be grateful.

I want to say here that the office of Commissioner Mermelstein has been very, very collaborative with us to make sure that we understand what the process is, what they are looking to offer. And in our turn, we, of course, would relay that to our communities to make sure that they are relieved in the way that the city is providing the help and the services.

So on behalf of my government, and I'm sure I can speak on behalf of many consulates general because we can only be satisfied with what the city has done, what the administration under Mayor Adams has done, what New Yorkers, as neighbors to our constituents, to our nationals, have done. We can only be grateful for that hand that is stretched out to reach and say welcome, to reach out and say, "You are part of us," to reach out and say, "You are human beings and you can be, of course, hosted here." Thank you.

Commissioner Castro: Thank you, consul general. I have to say we organized this press conference in a very short amount of time, maybe 48 hours or less, and the turnout is just very moving and incredible. And I think we're all here today because this issue really matters for, not just the asylum seekers and the immigrant communities, but for all of New York. And so I'm very moved to see so many incredible partners and leaders here today. I recognize so many of you that I've seen on the ground at the various locations where we're serving asylum seekers, and it's just very moving to me and I'm sure for many of our team members to have your support here today. One of the organizations that was so critical in supporting asylum seekers, very early on providing shoes, clothing, many of the asylum seekers were arriving with sandals, were arriving with barely any items of clothing, and they showed up and demonstrated what New York was all about. And that was Masbia, and I'd like to invite Alexander, Alex, to join us to share a few words with us today. Thank you, Alex.

Alexander Rapaport, Masbia: Good afternoon and thank you to commissioner, MOIA, and for all of you for inviting me. I'll just say, as an American third-generation immigrant, we're all immigrants here. Immigrants are a blessing. It's important that the people in government know that the citizens, the people who are here want to share more. We are a not-for-profit charity. We were able to go out just by people voting with their dollars saying, "We want to help. We want to do more for immigrants." It's in our tradition, it's what America became great for and we want more of that. Immigrants are a blessing and we want to share more and we want our government to be invested in sharing and doing more. Nothing more to say. We want to do more. We want to invite more. We want to share more.

Commissioner Castro: Thank you so much, Alex, and to your entire team for your dedicated work in support of immigrant communities. Now I'd like to invite Assemblymember Al Taylor to share a few words with us.

New York Assembly Member Al Taylor: Thank you, commissioner. We also have Assemblymember Eddie Gibbs. I thought he was behind me. In my neighborhood, they call that faking jacks 'cause he had me believing he was behind me, but it's okay. Certainly as an Assembly person, but more importantly, as a pastor of Infinity Mennonite Church of Harlem, there is scripture that reminds us of how we are supposed to treat each other. "What you've done unto the least of ..." My colleague, Assemblywoman Jenifer, "What you've done unto the least of them, you've done unto me." As I was standing there not anticipating that I would speak, I just wanted to... This is America. Just look left and right of you. This is America.

Audience: Yes, indeed.

New York Assembly Member Al Taylor: Everyone you could just about imagine or heal, this is what America looks like.

Audience: Yes.

Assembly Member Taylor: This is what democracy looks like.

Audience: Yes.

Assembly Member Taylor: This is what this country was built on.

Audience: Yes.

Assembly Member Taylor: Some folks want to walk that back, but I just want to remind America of its promises. Oh, I lost my point. I apologize. I don't do this too well. It says, "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free." Is that not who we are talking about today? This is what America says it's about. Now I just want to go on to the last statement that was at the bottom of that document that sits over in the river and it's the liberty lady and it says, "There is room in America in brotherhood for all who will support our institutions in all our development." Isn't this what we are talking about?

Audience: Yes, indeed.

Assembly Member Taylor: Dr. King said, "America has failed and the check, it was insufficient." America again is deficient, insufficient funds, if you would, when it comes to talking about people in this nation. Look, look at the beautiful faces that are here. This is what we're talking about. So as a legislator, I will fight to make sure we're bringing more dollars on a federal level. It's a no-brainer. We should not have to be here. We should be serving somewhere instead of acting like we're begging for something.

Audience: That's right.

Assembly Member Taylor: So I am proud to stand with you, Mayor Adams, continue the great work. We know if it was easy, everybody would do it. I would encourage my brothers and sisters to go back where you're coming from and remind folks if you've given, if you have not given enough, until it starts to really trouble you, you've not given enough. But if you're given out of access, keep it. But if you've given out of the love of your heart and the right thing to do, let's get it done. God bless you.

Audience: Yes. Amen.

Commissioner Castro: Thank you so much, assemblymember. Before I invite a great friend up to share a few words, I'd like to acknowledge that here with us today, we have many of the asylum seekers that have arrived over the past eight months with us, many of whom are volunteering and supporting community organizations that are also welcoming asylum seekers here today. Many of them are up here with us today, so thank you. Gracias, Paul. So it is important to emphasize that not only our asylum seekers are arriving to our city, but they're already giving back in contributing to this great city. It's a great testament what the immigration story of New Yorkers is like. I'd like to share a few words in Spanish. (Speaks in Spanish.)

Audience: Yes.

Commissioner Castro: Gracias. Gracias. So with that, I'd like to invite a great friend and ally and supporter of my office and of the work that we do in city government in support of immigrant communities, Assemblywoman Jenifer Rajkumar, who was previously, before joining the State Assembly, the New York State director of the Office of Immigrant Affairs, and someone who knows a great deal about the American dream and about the immigrant experience. Thank you, assemblymember.

New York Assembly Member Jenifer Rajkumar: Good afternoon. I'm Jenifer Rajkumar, a New York State assemblywoman. For so many months, our mayor has been taking care of vulnerable immigrants coming to our city. He's provided care to over 40,000 asylum seekers fleeing to our city for a better life. Thousands more asylum seekers are currently in the care of this administration. Under his leadership, New York City has welcomed more migrants than any other local government in the United States. This issue is so important to me. My own parents came to New York City with just \$300 and a suitcase. My mom was born in a mud hut in India. Against all odds, I, the daughter of these immigrants, stand here today as the first South Asian woman ever elected to a New York State office. I have dedicated — I've dedicated my life to making sure all families have a shot at the American Dream, the same shot my family had. I became a civil rights lawyer to uplift immigrant workers. I later directed immigration for the state of New York.

I built a first in the nation \$31 million program to ensure all immigrants in our state have access to legal counsel so that no immigrant is alone and vulnerable, unable to speak English without legal representation. Now as state assemblywoman, my office, deep in South Queens is the community's office dedicated to helping hardworking immigrants navigate American institutions, our educational system, our courtrooms, our government. Because to me, being American means having the same shot to achieve the American dream that my family had. If you are on American soil, you deserve to be treated with a certain dignity and respect because those are American values. That is why today I'm so proud to stand here with this administration and with our great mayor, Eric Adams. He's working to make sure all immigrant families and all New Yorkers have a chance at the American dream. He has given our city and our nation a model for good leadership on immigration. That is so important to families like mine and immigrant communities that I represent. Our mayor took the lead and went to El Paso to see for himself what's happening at the border.

He came up with a six-step plan to tackle immigration, and the plan is focused, straightforward and common sense. He says, "Expedite work permits for asylum seekers so they can stand on their own two feet and do the jobs that we need to strengthen the economy for everyone." He says, "The federal government should have one central office overseeing, coordinating, and organizing the migrant response." He says, "The federal government should have an organized presence at the border evaluating asylum claims. The federal government can distribute the migrants in an organized way to different cities all across our country so that we can sustain and absorb the migrants in a way that is responsible and doesn't harm services for anyone." The mayor says, "We need more funding from the federal government to actually implement this common sense strategy. For those who enter legally, we should provide them with a pathway to citizenship."

I fully support the mayor's plan along with all of the leaders here today, because at the heart of the mayor's plan is a vision for how America can welcome and make room for asylum seekers, while at the same time maintaining a strong economy and strong services for all that are already here. About the mayor's plan, I will say that it's rare these days for a leader to make a plan that is so hands-on, straightforward and that cuts through the noise to the heart of the issue to find the real solution. His plan is what model governance looks like. It's what well-run government looks like. That's why the daughter of immigrants who dedicated her life to this issue and all these leading immigration advocates and distinguished elected officials are standing here today with this administration. At this moment, the mayor is quite literally the national leader on immigration in America.

To us New Yorkers, that is no surprise. This mayor has been a friend to immigrant families like mine in every corner of this city for a long time, even before I knew him. He believes in us. He understands our immigrant communities. He connects with us. He speaks in the language that we can understand. All New Yorkers have seen him with immigrant communities in South Queens, in the Bronx, in Washington Heights, breaking bread with us, speaking our language. Anyone in New York City knows his deep familiarity with immigrant communities, the energy he brings to every Bangladeshi, Nepali, Indian, Dominican, Albanian, West Indian Community Center. The flag raisings over our city he has done for nearly every ethnic group. Immigrant communities trust him. It's a trust he has earned, and that is why you see so many immigrant leaders in our city standing with us today. So today I say to all city officials, all elected officials, all community leaders, all across New York, please join with all of us and with the mayor to solve this humanitarian crisis.

For so many months, the mayor and his administration have been housing, taking care of the health and welfare of over 40,000 migrants, and also leading the advocacy, asking the federal government to handle the crisis with the appropriate funding and coordination. I'm so pleased that our esteemed city comptroller and our esteemed New York City public advocate have followed the mayor's lead and started to ask the federal government to act. We welcome them to do more with us and to join with us to empower our immigrant communities and our city. The comptroller's job is to monitor the city's finances and indeed, resource allocation and fiscal monitoring must be a central part of the migrant response and advocates for the public. That public includes immigrant New Yorkers like my family and everyone standing here today.

So I am so heartened to see that they are joining the cause of our immigrant communities as well as so many other elected officials and city officials standing here with us today. We need to be united and have all hands on deck at this moment of humanitarian crisis when so many desperate families are seeking refuge. The mayor's plan makes enough room in our nation for the influx of legal immigrants and approved asylum seekers, while also providing a pathway for a strong economy and services for all Americans. We can have it all if we have the right plan, and the mayor's plan is that plan. New Yorkers are intelligent.

Immigrant New Yorkers like the communities in my South Queens district are very smart. They know a real plan and a real solution. They know who is leading and who is not. They know who

is fighting for them and who is not. Our immigrant communities are looking for leadership. They are not looking for politics and division, and they can tell the difference.

Audience: Yes.

Assembly Member Rajkumar: So let's all come together. We all became elected officials to make a difference in the lives of real people. We need to take real action for real people because real lives are at stake. This is beyond politics.

Audience: Yes.

Assembly Member Rajkumar: At this moment in time, we hold the dreams of real immigrant families like my family in our hands. We have to take that with the seriousness it deserves and come together. The mayor and I and all the immigrant leaders and elected officials standing here today will do whatever it takes to get things done for immigrant families. That is our purpose. We all know that as New York leaders, we lead the country. How we conduct ourselves in this moment of humanitarian crisis is going to be remembered. We share a collective destiny and must unite as leaders.

There was another New York State Assembly member, not me, but a man named Teddy Roosevelt and he famously said in his man in the arena speech, "It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust, and sweat and blood who strives valiantly, who loses himself in a worthy cause." The mayor is that man in the arena tackling this immigration issue right now. So let us all join him in that arena and be the men and women fighting genuinely for our city. Together as New Yorkers, we can lead the national response, so that all of the huddle masses yearning to breathe free, have a place in America. Thank you so much.

Commissioner Castro: Thank you so much, assemblymember for your friendship and your support. And before I welcome the mayor of the City of New York, I'd like to please ask for a round of applause for this amazing coalition of organizations and community supporters who are here today. And now I would like to welcome the mayor of the City of New York, Mayor Eric Adams.

Mayor Eric Adams: Powerful comments come from our assemblywoman as she gave her life movement. And if you were to describe her story, you'll find a difficult moment to say which immigrant community you were describing because if you look under the fingernail of every immigrant community in this country, you'll see the dirt and grime of climbing up the mountain one hand at a time to participate in the American Dream. And that is the reality. And that is who is on this step and stands behind me.

I am not a new friend. I am an old friend. And no matter how we make an attempt to rewrite the relationship I have with the immigrant community, they are going to stand up and say, "Write the real story. This has been a mayor, a senator, a borough president, a police officer that has stood by us for generations." And we are faced with a humanitarian crisis that was created by man's

hands. It will undermine not only our city, but it will undermine our country. And if we do not effectively respond to this crisis at the level that it deserves, we're going to take the pursuit of the American dream and turn it into a nightmare for those who want to participate in the greatness of this country.

That is why we have spent the last few months of giving out a clarion call that the migrants deserve better. Not only the migrants who are coming from Venezuela, from Haiti, from other countries, but even our brothers and sisters who have come from the continent of Africa that have been living outside of mosques and having to survive with inhumane treatment every day. This is a national problem and it needs a national response and we are not going to sit back and deny that.

I cannot thank the local NGOs, the houses of worship, everyday New Yorkers who have stood up, and stepped up and responded to this crisis. And I joined Assemblywoman Rajkumar in thanking those elected officials who signed on to a letter today and uniformly stated, "It is time for us to join the call that this mayor has been saying for months." I call all on us to look towards our national leaders to come with real comprehensive immigration reform. That's the answer to this problem. But there's a blazing fire that's taking place right now. You cannot go to a house that is burning and say, the result is about teaching fire prevention. You need to put out the fire right now. So with the fire prevention plan, we got to address the fire right now. The six points we laid out are clear and simple. One person must be dedicated to coordinate the entire process, including a real comprehensive decompression strategy so this national problem could be absorbed by the entire country. This is not a New York City, Chicago, El Paso, Washington, Houston issue. This is a national issue and it should be treated as such. That is the purpose of coming together.

We know this task before us. We are going to fulfill our moral, legal obligation. We're going to partner with the different groups and different walks of life. The faces of the people here are real New Yorkers, coming from different walks of life. This region, New York State receives the largest number of immigrants and migrants throughout the entire country. We were there when the Ukrainian war took place to allocate resources for those who seek refuge here. We were there during the Haitian crisis to be there and even during the hurricane, going to Haiti to be there with the people. We are constantly there. That's who we are as New Yorkers. And when we go to our national government and say, "We need help," that is not turning away our brothers and sister human beings that is saying that we must stand up to who we say we are as a country. There is a reason that the Statue of Liberty sits in our harbor because we say, "Welcome those who come here," but we deserve their support from our national government in the process.

This is a leadership moment for all of us, not only a leadership moment for those who are elected, it's a leadership moment for those who are running nonprofits. It's a leadership moment for those who are CEOs of corporations. It's a leadership moment for those who live on a block where there's a shelter. Are you going into that shelter and healthy? This is a leadership moment for those who see their brothers and sisters who are migrant, who don't have a coat, or a jacket or a pair of socks to see are you going to do the same for them? This is a leadership moment for all of us. This is a human moment. It's a leadership moment, if you are a pastor, a Rabbi, Imam, if you're a Sikh leader, it's time for us to step up to this moment.

I'm willing to do so, and the people who are here are willing to do so and they have done that. It doesn't matter if it's Masbia from the Hasidic community who have provided thousands of foods. Doesn't matter if it's some of our houses of worship who have produced thousands of articles of clothing. The volunteers who are at our H.E.R.R.C.s who are helping with healthcare, the principals who have opened their schools to almost 11,000 children. We're seeing the best of our city because we all are immigrants. Doesn't matter if it was the Mayflower, or it was the Greyhound, or it was in the belly of a slave ship, we came from somewhere and we all identified with those who are pursuing the American Dream.

And every time that dream is shattered, as it was earlier today, with 10 members of our A.A.P.I. community and another number were injured during hatred violence, we rise up and say, "There's no place here." I'm proud of this moment for those who are standing with us today and what we have done as New Yorkers. I know it's challenging, I know it's difficult for us, but this is the moment that's going to judge us in history and as we've always done, we're going to reach the moment that's expected of us. I want to thank our congressional delegation, Senator Schumer and the entire New York delegation for seeking \$8 million from F.E.M.A. in the over \$800 million we were able to secure in the build that is going to see some of the additional funding.

But there's more that's needed. There's much more that's needed and we're going to continue to press forward to make sure we accomplish that. But together we will achieve this. This is a full, all hands on deck moment. Government, private, our religious institutions, every citizen must be part of this opportunity. And so, I want to end by stating all you who are here from different walks of life, thank you for what you have done. My council generals, my religious leaders, my nonprofits, my immigrant coalitions, or my everyday New Yorkers who stated they want to be a part of this moment so history can be kind to us all. We take a moment to answer a few questions before we roll up our sleeves and get to work.

Question: Hi, Mr. Mayor. I have a question about the Brooklyn Terminal: you have to open the relief center there because the federal government either turned down or didn't respond to requests to use federal land to house migrants and which federal locations have you asked about?

Mayor Adams: We are still looking for spaces. There are several spaces and we don't want to disclose all the spaces, but we are in conversations with the federal government to utilize federally controlled spaces in the New York State area that we continue to build out. We don't know what's going to happen if the Supreme Court temporary ruling changes. We could potentially see twice the number of migrant and asylum seekers that are going to enter our country and we must be prepared. I have to be prepared of what's going on now and what could happen in the future and it has always been part of our plan to look at those locations that are under city and state control. The cruise terminal is under state control. The Port Authority, we are coordinating with them and we are going to use this space. It is going to be a well heated space. There's some calls that there will be tents inside, that is just not true. It's going to be a heated, well run space. We have been successful in doing so thus far and we going to continue that success.

Question: Good afternoon, mayor. When you were in D.C. last week, did you meet directly with anybody from the federal government to discuss these issues in your request? What's your discussions been like with them?

Mayor Adams: Yes. We met with a member of the White House in a closed door meeting with other mayors because other mayors are impacted; Brownsville, Texas is impacted, El Paso is impacted, Houston is impacted, Denver is impacted. And we engage in a conversation with them. I believe that they understand the full reality that we are facing and it is going to take a coordination by the federal government. The White House must have someone that is solely responsible for coordinating all of the cities that are involved directly and even those cities that are not the involved. So we can have a deep compression strategy and we're going to continue those talks with them.

Question: What has the volume of migrants been like in the last few days or the last week? What is the pace of arrivals like (inaudible)?

Mayor Adams: Even with the temporary order in place at the border, we are still seeing large numbers that are coming not only through buses but through airports and other means. And one week alone we receive over 3,000 asylum seekers and in one day, over 800. And so we don't have the luxury of attempting to try to pontificate on this crisis. We have to be able to pivot, shift, and address the needs. Now notice, here in this city, what I saw in El Paso where a large number of people were sleeping on the streets, some families sleeping inside of the airport, my delegation would tell you what you're seeing here is not like what's happening other places. You do not see families sleeping on the streets. Everyone who wanted a place to sleep, they have been accommodated and we are going to continue to do that, but it is an awesome strain on the infrastructure of this city and we're going to continue to do our moral and legal obligation in the process. Thank you all.

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