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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO RELEASES THE EXECUTIVE BUDGET FOR
FISCAL YEAR 2022**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Well, good afternoon, everybody. We are here this afternoon, a special moment. Obviously, we're announcing the City budget, but I want to talk about a first – a few things first. And one of them is just an amazing, wonderful, positive experience I had this week in Brooklyn at the Brooklyn Children's Museum, celebration of Holi. We had just a remarkable, joyous occasion, people from the community all together to celebrate. It was really one of those moments where you could sort of feel New York City's come back and feel how powerful this year is going to be, and a wonderful holiday to celebrate together. So, just wanted to share. It's the Hindu festival of rebirth and renewal, and just couldn't have been a more powerful symbol of everything we're doing together. So, really thank you to everyone at the Brooklyn Children's Museum and everyone who gathered together for the ceremony. Something very, very special.

Now I want to give you an update before we go to budget. Let's talk about what we talk about every day. Our vaccination effort continues to move forward. As of today, 6,174,393 doses administrated – administered, excuse me. And for comparison purposes, that is more than the entire population of the State of Missouri. So, the numbers keep growing. We announced that now all the City-run sites, Department of Health sites, Health + Hospitals sites are all walk-up. You can make appointments or walk-up, obviously. No more geographic restrictions. Folks should come over and take advantage of this opportunity. And there's sites all over the city, including where I was on Friday, the amazing site at the Museum of Natural History. I urge everyone, go get your shot under the whale, if you haven't gotten one already. And a reminder when people do that, they get four free admissions to the museum as part of the wonderful offer the museum has made to encourage vaccination. Anyone who has not yet gotten vaccinated, go to nyc.gov/vaccinefinder, or call 877-VAX-4NYC. And you will hear the indicators in just a moment, and they will be further evidence that vaccination makes all the difference and is the reason we are seeing better and better health numbers for this city. And we're seeing COVID go lower and lower because so many people are getting vaccinated. We want to keep that going.

Now, a reminder today – today is a very good day for our schools as well. 51,000 kids who opted in, returning to classrooms today. So, another sign of New York City's recovery, that our schools are coming back as we speak. So, congratulations to all the kids coming back to school for the first time in a while today and to their families. And looking forward to the summer where we have something brand new – Summer Rising available to all children, all children in New York City. Applications going live today. And that again will be an amazing summer opportunity with academic support, with cultural activities, with recreation, you name it. It will be part of it. You can go to schools.nyc.gov/summer to sign up. And this is the first time ever we've been providing this kind of comprehensive summer approach available to all. I want to say to parents out there, if you weren't sure what you're going to do for your child this summer, you weren't

sure how you'd find the right situation, this is there for everyone. So, one less element of stress out of your life. If you need a great option, Summer Rising is that option for your child.

Let's talk about our indicators, as promised. And these are just amazing. I will always say we got a long way to go and we will not reduce our vigilance and we're going to keep working hard as New Yorkers, but really just take a moment to look at these numbers and feel proud because you, the people of New York City, you did this. So, number one, daily number of people admitted to New York City hospitals for suspected COVID-19, today's report 106 patients. That – I cannot remember a number that low in quite a while. 106 patients, confirmed positivity, 40.57 percent. So, that is really getting well below our threshold. Now, let's talk about hospitalization rate. We keep moving down towards the threshold there too, 2.33 per 100,000. We want to get that below two and we're moving fast in that direction. New reported cases on a seven-day average – today's report, 1,587 cases. Look at that just constant downward motion. That's beautiful. Let's keep doing that. And number three, percentage of people testing positive citywide for COVID-19 – today's report, another great number, seven-day rolling average 3.56 percent. I just love these downward lines. Let's keep that one going. Again, well below threshold now so that's fantastic. Let me give you some Spanish and it's – I'm going to kind of flip order here and just give a quick Spanish summary in advance of telling you about the budget. Just to make sure I get this done upfront. So, this is about our budget, and the theme of our budget of course is recovery.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

Okay, now we are going to turn to the recovery budget, and I'm going to go through this quickly before we turn to our friends in the media, but there's a lot of good news to cover here today. So, let's begin. The theme, of course, a Recovery for All of Us. This is what we're focused on. And recovery that reaches every neighborhood, every New Yorker. Not just brings us back, brings us back better, fairer, stronger. What do we have here? We have a radical investment in working families. We've never seen anything like this in generations in this city, focusing on working people, on families, on kids in ways that we just haven't even imagined in so many years. We're getting to do things in this budget some of us have dreamed of, but we're never sure we'd get to do. And this is a budget that will be felt down to the grassroots. Let's talk about the key elements that make this so special.

First of all, the focus on equity for young people in our schools, Fair Student Funding, 100 percent, and a host of other equity investments that changed the approach for education finally allowed us to create the kind of school system we've wanted to all along that could serve every child just as well in every part of the city. Summer school, we used to think of summer school, totally redefined with Summer Rising, an entirely different approach that's for everyone, every child. Every parent knows their child has that great option for the summer. Something we're borrowing from the great inspiration from 90 years ago, the New Deal, a jobs program that also makes everything cleaner and more beautiful, modeled on the civilian – the Civilian Conservation Corps, we're creating the City Cleanup Corps. And a focus on safety, a focus on stopping violence with community investments, investments in young people, investments in community-based solutions to violence. These are some of the key themes you'll see.

Now – hold on, let's go to this, the new investments that are brand new in this budget. Some of the things we're talking about here, obviously, we've previewed before. Here are brand new investments that are being unveiled today for the first time. First of all, we've talked before about

starting a civilian response to the mental health crisis and piloting that in three police precincts in the city. We're now convinced that this approach is going to work citywide. So, for mental health crisis calls, we're going to take that civilian approach and use it in all precincts in the city in the course of the upcoming fiscal year. 3-K for All, we've already said that 3-K for All will be in every district, every one of our 32 school districts by this September 2021. Now we're announcing it will be fully universal by September 2023. Every single three-year-old will have a seat for free in all of New York City by September 2023. So, for the children born in 2020, that very, very tough year we all went through together, when they are three years old in 2023, every single one of them will be guaranteed free, safe, high-quality, early childhood education, 3-K for All. We're going to also make sure that early child education reaches special-ed kids. And we've had a lot of concern about this. We want to answer that concern, let people know special-ed kids will be included from this point on, as we build out 3-K and pre-K. And something so important for the future of this city, more green space, more wonderful options for people outdoors, the Manhattan Greenway, something that has not been available to people for decades and decades. The ability to go all around Manhattan on foot or on a bike on a greenway, we're going to finish a lot of outstanding projects, including projects in East Harlem, Harlem, Inwood, east side of Manhattan, and create a full greenway.

Okay. Now, how are we able to do all this? Well, let's give credit where credit is due. President Biden, Senator Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, what the federal stimulus has done for us is unbelievable. Almost \$6 billion in direct local aid that will be used now through 2024, \$7 billion almost in federal education aid, also will be used by 2024. It's important to recognize the stimulus funding will spread out over multiple years. Also, important money was returned to us in the State budget, cuts were averted in the State budget. That's fantastic. The one piece that is ongoing and recurring, which we're so happy about is what the Legislature did with the Campaign for Fiscal Equity. \$1.1 billion. That will be the ultimate dollar figure it will ramp up to. \$1.1 billion a year will be guaranteed to us on top of our other education funding to finally bring us equity. So, really unprecedented things happened that will allow us to do such a good news budget and such an equity focused recovery budget.

Now to be able to achieve recovery, it's all been about reaching people, vaccinating people, taking that stimulus money, using it to a positive effect, bringing back the life of the city, bringing back our economy. We're seeing it happen. Over the last month we saw a hundred thousand jobs come back. We now have the latest estimate from OMB that another 400,000 jobs – we feel very, very good about this number – 400,000 jobs will come back in the course of 2021. That will get us up to 4.5 million total jobs, a really strong figure for this city. We see the pieces coming together, vaccination, stimulus, all the other pieces coming together for a strong economic rebound for New York City. Vaccination, of course, has made all the difference. Over six million doses, as I said earlier, it's been a major expense, a \$700 million campaign. It's absolutely been worth it. And we're going to continue to deepen it, more and more grassroots sites. We're going to reach people with more and more creative approaches like you saw at the Museum of Natural History and so many other new approaches we'll be bringing to bear, going back strong with our homebound program. All of this is going to be crucial to our recovery.

Now, the recovery that we're building here, it's so much about reaching our young people. They've been through so much in this crisis. We need to reach them, and we need to reach them in an equitable fashion. We need to address the inequalities that pervaded the lives of our young people for so long and pervaded education. We finally have the chance to do it. Profound

investments, both in academic needs of our kids and the mental health needs of our kids. Great deepening of early childhood education focusing on digital education, individualized instruction to build on top of what happens in schools, a lot we're going to be able to do for the first time here. Fair Student Funding, \$600 million to guarantee that every single school gets 100 percent fair student funding, absolute, profound, most basic game-changer. Early childhood – I've said from the very beginning of this administration, nothing works better than early child education. Nothing ensures a child's future more. We were able to do that for all four year olds and get every at that same starting line of immense opportunity and potential. Now in the next couple of years, we'll be able to finally achieve that for all three year olds. So, every single family will have education for their three-year-old for free. We're also putting immense resources into bringing back school strong. We've got a lot of work to do to help our kids come back strong, catch up. We're going to make the investments we need so we can have an absolutely outstanding school year starting in September, with all our kids back.

Now we know when our kids come back, we have a lot to do to support them. So, we're making additional investments in social-emotional learning and restorative justice. We're expanding the number of community schools. That's a proven approach. It's worked in this city. We're going to now expand that greatly, and we're going to do something that really was a horrible example of inequality, make sure that schools, regardless of which ZIP code they're in, regardless of the economics of their neighborhood, all have strong, robust athletic programs for their kids. It's one of the things that inspires kids and gives schools a lot of spirit and pride. So, the Public School Athletic League will be expanded to create equity all over the city. Special education, we know our special needs kids suffered particularly in this crisis. There's a lot of specific catching up to do. We're investing substantial resources for a lot more time, a lot more services for these kids. A lot of these services have to be done in person. So, the pandemic made it impossible or really hindered how much we needed to get done. We're going to be doubling down now with additional services for special-ed kids. As I said, we're also going to be expanding special-ed, early child education. It's an area we needed to do more in. We'll finally get to do it now. Summer Rising, a really amazing new approach, up to 190,000 students is what we're projecting. We're ready to serve every child who wants to take advantage of this unprecedented opportunity. Again, you've never seen anything like this in a universal way in this city, and we're going to continue to build upon the success we've had with Summer Youth Employment as well, adding 5,000 more opportunities for kids in Summer Youth Employment through CUNY. That means 75,000 kids will benefit from Summer Youth Employment this summer – largest number we've ever had in the executive budget, and a time that really will make a difference for kids to have these opportunities.

Okay. We want to keep building our public health capacity in this city. We want to do it to reach people. We want to do it based on the lessons we've learned from the pandemic. We want to do it because we know that's what keeps us healthy and safe and is part of building our approach as the public health capital of the world, which I think is going to be a bigger and bigger part of who we are in the future as a city, as a place of fairness and equality. Also, more and more of our economy is going to circle around public health, life sciences, etcetera. First of all, we continue our investments in guaranteed health care, the NYC Care initiative, we announced a few years ago, this is crucial to our future. We found during the pandemic, the vast difference between those who had health care on a regular basis and their vulnerability versus the vulnerability of folks who didn't have health care, how much more folks who did not have regular health care were endangered by COVID. We've learned the lesson again. We want to get fundamental health

care to as many New Yorkers as possible. We can do that through NYC Care. We're doubling down on that approach.

The Public Health Corps – this will build out of our very, very successful Test and Trace Corps. As COVID recedes, we're going to take a lot of the people who've been involved in Test and Trace, a lot of the lessons we learned, convert to a permanent ongoing public health outreach effort through the Public Health Corps. And New Family Home Visits, for those of you who have good memories, we announced this last year at State of the City, 2020, the very beginning of 2020, but then could not implement it because of the challenges of COVID. Now we can. So, New Family Home Visits, reaching families before they give birth, preparing them, supporting them, mental health services, a range of services related to what new parents need, and then sticking with them as they learn how to support their kids. We're going to focus this on the areas of greatest need. We're going to start this by the end of this year.

Now, it's a recovery budget and we know to really recover as a city, we're going to focus on mental health. This has been one of the most obvious, painful realities of the COVID crisis. Mental health issues are clearer than ever to New Yorkers and to people all over America that we're finally having, for sad, tough reasons, we're having the conversation we should have had a long time ago about mental health and recognizing how central it is. We're going to be doing more and more to address mental health issues in New York City. One of the things we need to do is to expand the approach to crisis calls. If a family is in crisis, and it's not a situation involving violence, we are going to send civilians to address those calls. We have increasingly been using trained civilians prepared for exactly this kind of situation. This will be expanded in the next fiscal year to all police precincts in New York City. And on top of that, separately, 25 new mobile treatment teams to address the most severe public – excuse me, mental health situations. Where there's a severe need, these teams are highly trained. They can be dispatched quickly. There'll be another crucial piece of the mental health strategy. To also address mental health, we need to get to the grassroots. So, variety of initiatives to support grassroots organizations, neighborhood organizations, community-based organizations that work with the whole community, but a lot of them have not had mental health capacity. Now we're going to change that. The Thrive neighborhood support networks, Communities Thrive, these are efforts to train community-based organizations, train peer counselors, provide more extensive tele-mental health like teletherapy. The whole idea is to make sure that any community organization has mental health capacity built into it.

Now our seniors, our seniors went through so much in 2020, we want to be there for them going forward and whole new ways. So, one of the things we learned in 2020 is that there are many challenges that come with nursing homes. Our goal is to do everything we can to help seniors who don't necessarily need to be in a nursing home, to stay at home, live in their own community. Thus, the Community Care Plan focuses on providing those types of support. And we also recognize for years, there were a lot of neighborhoods that didn't have senior centers and didn't have senior centers that match the community itself and the culture of that community. We're now going to be supporting the creation of 25 more senior centers, culturally appropriate to areas of the city that have been underrepresented, while simultaneously investing more in the existing senior centers so they can provide a broader range of service.

Our community-based organizations, our nonprofit organizations, are the backbone of this city in so many ways, especially during this crisis. We're investing to provide them the basic

infrastructure they need, what's called the indirect rate, giving them the basic support that they need to keep going. This is an investment that will allow them to keep providing help to New Yorkers, no matter what comes ahead. We're also focusing on food support. This has been an area that City Council has been so focused on. We worked with them repeatedly to ensure there was always enough support there for New Yorkers in need. And we're now increasing those food support services. Bottom line has always been in this city, we will not let any New Yorker go hungry. These new investments will help to ensure that.

Small business to bring back New York City, we have to bring back small business. So, we're now creating a hundred million dollars in direct grants to small businesses, with a particular focus on small businesses that have not benefited from previous grant programs. There was obviously some really great support from the federal government and now from the State government as well. But a number of small businesses have not received that support, particularly in communities of color. This new grant program is going to focus on them, loan programs as well, legal assistance, anything and everything we can do to help small businesses get back on their feet and be strong as we come out of COVID.

And coming out of COVID means bringing back our whole economy, including tourism. So, a major new effort to support getting tourism back. I strongly believe that starting this summer, you're going to see a huge amount of domestic tourism coming to New York City. A lot of people visiting who have been waiting to come here for a long time. I think that increasingly as we go into next year, will be international tourism as well. This effort by NYC and Company is focused on building that tourism back up really intensely over the next few years.

Now a city ready for recovery, we want it to be a clean city, a green city – City Cleanup Corps., 10,000 New Yorkers are going to beautify the city, clean it up, clean away the graffiti, clean up the litter. This is going to be crucial to our comeback. You're going to be seeing them start their work in the next few months. I think it's going to make a big impact. And green initiatives, bringing back organics collection, something we're very excited to be able to do. Litter basket collection is going back to pre-pandemic levels. These are all going to help us as the city comes back.

We also recognized in the context of crisis, we learned some very, very powerful lessons. And we learned there were new and better ways to do things to keep this a city that really works. We understand more than ever the power of Vision Zero, and we're doubling down on speed cameras around our schools. That's worked. That's kept children and families safe. We're going to be doing a lot more of that. We also learned new ways of approaching our streetscape, Open Streets, Open Restaurants, huge successes. Here, we put the resources in place to keep those programs moving forward, to allow that beautiful re-imagining of our streets and to make sure that all communities can participate. The resources are there along with resources for bike boulevards and new bike lanes and pedestrian promenades on the Brooklyn Bridge and the Queensboro Bridge.

Now let's go to public safety. The thing that we always focus on in every community all the time, but particularly important to our recovery, ensuring that this is a city safe for everyone. Three core principles – investing in our communities in every way, particularly in our young people, the investments in our schools, the investment in summer initiatives, Summer Youth. The investments we're going to make far beyond young people to larger communities, affordable

housing and the things they'll bring back jobs. Those investments are crucial to safety as well. Police reform – ongoing effort. You saw a huge amount of movement in March, working together with the City Council, very, very extensive police reform efforts. Those will continue as the year goes on. And the efforts to stop gun violence. The community-based efforts, Cure Violence, Crisis Management System, the Advance Peace model, Operations Cease Fire, a variety of approaches that are stemming from the community. And of course, the work of the NYPD, working closely with communities, the focused efforts to increase gun arrests. And then work with all other elements of the criminal justice system, court system, prosecutors to prosecute gun offenses.

We're going to constantly focus on the kind of oversight we need, the important role of the Civilian Complaint Review Board. We're expanding the CCRB's power. We're expanding its capacity. We're expanding its personnel, so it can play that role more strongly. And one of the issues we've dealt with currently, one of the things that is so troubling in the city, we've seen a rash of horrible hate crimes, largely focused on the Asian American community. We want to do more at the grassroots to fight these hate crimes in addition to the policing efforts to fight them. So, we're investing in community-based organizations to do community patrols, to train people how to address and stop hate crimes, to educate communities and involve everyone in the solution.

Now, this summer is crucial. When we talk about our recovery, when we talk about public safety, so much of it hinges on the summer, which is why we prevented the safe – excuse me, why we presented the Safe Summer NYC initiative. So again, grassroots solutions to gun violence are so important. Cure Violence, we've doubled the Cure Violence workforce, Crisis Management system workforce. For this summer, we've added new sites, new precincts, we've added additional youth employment options to these elements as well. Doubling of that workforce for this summer, tripling for the following summer. The Advance Peace model, which is extremely promising, connecting at-risk youth to mentors, more late-night recreation programs, Saturday Night Lights, and the Joint Force To End Gun Violence, that's the Ceasefire approach and other approaches that involve multiple agencies, the whole criminal justice system, working with community members. So, these are all elements of a safe summer,

The total budget, this budget, and we've all gone through such a challenging rollercoaster ride in the last few years. We were in great shape as a city in so many ways at the beginning of 2020. We went through the worst crisis in a century. Now because of the stimulus, because of support we're finally getting, we're able to make a huge comeback. So, our recovery budget, the grand total is \$98.6 billion for Fiscal Year 22. It is a stimulus focused budget, stimulus driven budget that allows us to invest in working people in the city, in ways we've never been able to achieve before. So, this is a good news budget if ever there was one.

Now let's talk about the revenue that's going to start to result from all these investments from the economic turnaround. OMB is always very smart and cautious about its revenue estimates. So, we have initial estimates that are cautious, but we expect, and we hope to see a lot more over time. So, we do – we will see increased revenue in this fiscal year, more starting in the next fiscal year as the impact of all this recovery spending is felt. Also, a continued focus on savings. A lot of work was done particularly in the last year, to find efficiencies, to find savings. We had to reduce the number of personnel at City agencies. We had to stop a number of initiatives and some of them just could not even be done because of COVID. We have taken those lessons and

are going to continue to be smart and careful about spending as we go forward to protect the city for the long term, continuing to look for efficiencies as we go ahead.

Let's talk about the people who work for the City, who we depended on, who were so heroic in this crisis. Right now, our City workforce numbers, and this is excluding some of the non-mayoral agencies, numbers 313,000 plus. That is much lower than it was at our high point a few years ago. We will be bringing back several thousand more people into positions because of things like 3K For All, the new family home visits, City Cleanup Corps. Although that last one is a temporary program. So, we'll be adding up some additional personnel to help us achieve our goals. But we'll be keeping in place a hiring policy that limits new hiring. It had been a three to one ratio, where to make a new hire there had to be three positions that were foregone, it's now will be a two to one policy going forward. We'll continue to grow in the right way while keeping limits in place.

So, reserves – always crucial to protecting the future of New York City. Before this administration began, the city had gone through a lot with the recession. So, reserves were fairly low when I took office, \$1.8 billion. When we got to the preliminary budget this year, they were at the level of \$2.8 billion. We are now adding more reserves back. We had to use reserves to get through the worst of COVID, we're now adding reserves back. A total of \$1.8 billion more being added. \$200 million to the general reserve, \$1.6 billion to the retiree health benefit trust. So, combined with the rainy-day fund, which is a newer element in our reserve portfolio, we now total \$4.59 billion in reserves for Fiscal 22. A strong amount now, as we look to better times ahead.

Let's talk for just a moment about the Capital budget. We have an overall figure of \$133 billion for the ten-year Capital plan. This is very much focused on making the kinds of investments that will encourage recovery. Obviously addressing the aging infrastructure of the city and with tremendous hope and belief, that a major, major infrastructure package will be coming out of Washington in the months ahead that will support a number of these initiatives as well. But we're going to finish out through the spending that's in this plan, the entire Your Home NYC plan. The affordable housing plan we started back in 2014, which will reach 700,000 plus New Yorkers, create or preserve 300,000 affordable apartments. That plan is fully on track in this budget. We're making Vision Zero investments. We're making investments to fight climate change and provide resiliency. And we're continuing a strong commitment to repaving roads and keeping this city moving.

Now, one of the things I mentioned is the promenade in Manhattan. The fact that we're going to be doing something unprecedented all around Manhattan, to have the greenway then finally completed. If you look at this image on the screen, you can see all those points along the way, Lower East Side, East Side, East Harlem, Central Harlem, Inwood, where they're still uncompleted elements of the Manhattan Greenway. This plan will finish all those projects by the end of this decade. And it's really important to recognize, this in addition to people who walk along this area and picnic and all the things that happen along it, this is the most traveled bikeway in America. And when completed this whole amazing opportunity to go all around Manhattan will provide more open space, more than a thousand acres of open space, more than in all of Central Park. So, this is a great investment in the future of the city. And it's something I think will be deeply used by future generations. We're really proud of this.

Now, also, as I've said, the future in New York City, so much of our future will be around health care and will be around life sciences. We're going to be the public health capital of the world. We have an extraordinary opportunity in life sciences to tap into billions, many billions of dollars of both government and private sector investment that will be flowing into biotech. We have an opportunity to capture more and more of that. So, we're expanding life sciences capacity, not only on the East Side of Manhattan, but in the Bronx, in Brooklyn, on the West Side of Manhattan as well. Major investments to increase the space for life sciences, for biotech and building out our Pandemic Response Institute. We as a city, have the ability to do things nowhere else in the world can do. And we need to actually fully grasp that advantage and maximize our opportunity by becoming the public health capital of the world.

So that is the Fiscal 22 budget. It is a budget that takes the concept of a recovery for all of us and brings it to life with the right investments. This is what will both allow for a strong recovery. It's the same approach to put us on a strong fiscal footing for the future, because this recovery, it will also bring back so much of the revenue we need for the future as well. Now let's go ahead and look at the years ahead on the out-year chart. Hold on one second. Keep going, there we go. So, one before, I'm sorry. Thank you. So, as you see in the years ahead, yes, there are out-year, out-year challenges to address, but they are manageable. And particularly because we fundamentally believe that the investments we make in recovery now are going to bring back the city economy very strongly, bring in a huge amount of revenue. That's before we even talk about the new federal initiatives, like the infrastructure plan that we fully expect to see. But we're convinced this is a recovery investment budget that puts us in a strong standing for those future years as well.

Okay. With that, we're going to turn to our colleagues in the media. And as always, please let me know the name and outlet of each journalist.

Moderator: Hi guys. Happy Budget Day. We'll now begin our Q and A.

Mayor: You have to say that happier Avery. Try again.

Moderator: Happy Budget Day!

Mayor: See much better, much better.

Moderator: Trying my best guys. With us today is Budget Director Jiha, First Deputy Mayor Fuleihan, and Senior Advisor. Dr. Jay Varma. With that, we'll go to Dave, who's hopefully more enthusiastic than I am, from WABC.

Question: Hi, Mayor. Can you hear me?

Mayor: I can, Dave. How are you doing?

Question: Okay. I'm doing well. Hey, I have a budget question, but I did want to, just before I forget, ask you about the Supreme Court decision from this morning to go ahead – and it's a New York case, and if the plaintiffs are successful in a more conservative Supreme Court, we could see a lot more people carrying concealed handguns in New York City. Your thought about that decision to at least hear the case this fall?

Mayor: Dave, I really fear a step in the wrong direction. I mean, we are here fighting gun violence. We need to turn the corner in 2021 by working with communities to really turn things around. And what do we have in the middle of that? The Supreme Court's going to consider making it easier for people to walk around with a gun? I mean, that's just backwards and dangerous. So, I heard that news and my heart sank. I mean, we have come so far to try and keep guns out of the hands of New Yorkers, particularly young people. And the Supreme Court – it looks like they're working overtime to put guns right back in those hands. That really, really worries me. Go ahead, Dave.

Question: On my budget question, I don't know if you have used the term or heard of the term, but the New York Times referred to it is revenge spending, that we've all been locked up so much and not much to spend money on for the past 13 months, that people are going out and spending a lot of money if they're lucky enough to have it, on some really expensive items. And I asked that because I'm looking at the new investments and some of these things, instead of saving the money and making the rainy-day fund even larger than \$4.5 billion, did you think of that? Or was there maybe a little bit of this has been such a hellish year that you really wanted to spend on these new investments?

Mayor: This is about recovery, Dave. We are spending to bring this city back strong right now. 2021 is the pivotal year. Recovery can't wait. We're making the investments now to get this city into strong shape. That is going to pay off in the years ahead. We're going to get to four-and-a-half million jobs by the end of this year, and then keep going. We're going to surpass our previous record for jobs in the city. I don't have any doubt in my mind. We're going to be bringing in a lot more revenue in the process. So, these are investments that are going to get us to a much stronger place. That's what we're doing here.

Moderator: Next, we have Emma from the New York Times.

Question: Hi, Mayor. My first question is about the budget. Can you talk more about the jobs figure, is that 400,000 more jobs added by the end of this year? Is that overly optimistic? And what types of jobs are these?

Mayor: Emma, it is 400,000 more between right now and the end of 2021. It's realistic because you see extraordinary movement in the economy. I mean, you're seeing it around the country, but you're especially seeing it here. Jobs are very visibly coming back. The stimulus is having the right effect. The whole idea was, put money in people's hands and they go out and spend it, that's happening. And I am absolutely convinced the actions we're going to take here in this budget are going to supercharge that recovery because when you, you know, bring back schools, do the things to make the city safe, make the city clean, this is what encourages jobs to come back. We're talking about, you know, definitely more coming back in the hospitality industry, for sure. We're seeing some real strength there – a long way to go, but some real movement happening there for sure. We'll get you a breakout, but the service industry, for sure is going to be another area. Over time, I am also convinced you're going to see growth in the tech sector and in the life sciences sector. But I think in the short term, it's the kind of job growth because people are coming out again. You can see activity on the streets, people spending their money. That's going to make a big difference. Go ahead, Emma.

Question: Thank you. And then a non-budget question, should Councilman Deutsch resign after pleading guilty to tax fraud?

Mayor: Absolutely. It's just really troubling. People have to have faith in their public officials. He lied for his own advantage. He cannot continue to play a role as an elected official. It just doesn't work

Moderator: Next, we have Marcia from WCBS.

Question: Good morning or good afternoon, Mr. Mayor. I'd like to talk to you about the surge in gun violence especially over this weekend. You know, for the past year you've been talking about the need for community groups to get involved. You announced a plan last week to deal with the increase in gun violence. And yet it doesn't seem to be working because over this past weekend there were 28 incidents of gun violence involving 30, 31 victims. Do you think you need to change your tactic? And because of this, police experts are saying you need more cops and there's no new cops in your budget. Your response?

Mayor: Marcia, we have 35,000 officers. And what we're seeing is more gun arrest than we've seen in 25 years. We finally have the court system coming back. We've just gotten that news in the last few days. Court system will be back strong in the month of May. That's what we've been needing. We have gun prosecutions ready to go that are going to take a lot of the worst actors out of the equation. So, you know, it's been really tough in the middle of a pandemic and a perfect storm. It's been really tough, not having a criminal justice system working, but now that's all changing. So, we absolutely have what we need to turn this around. And we're building a lot more cooperation with the community, which is crucial to the bigger solution we need. So, you're going to see all of this play out in the coming weeks. Go ahead, Marcia.

Question: But Mr. Mayor, you've been talking about an increase in gun violence at the same time that people in the city [inaudible] an increasing gun arrests while at the same time, people in the city are seeing an increase in gun violence. So how – what makes you think that the increase in arrests mean anything when there are more guns and more incidents and more blood?

Mayor: Because the folks who are the best at public safety in the nation, the leaders in the NYPD, continue to identify the problem as a very small number of people that do violence to others in their communities. And we're now going to be able to get those folks out of circulation because these arrests are going to lead to prosecutions. And for those who are guilty, are going to lead to prison time. We have not had a court system functioning. We're now going to have it, and there's a tremendous coordination happening right this moment between courts, prosecutors, NYPD to finally be able to move things forward and get the small number of really bad actors out of circulation. That's going to change everything.

Moderator: Next, we'll go to Joe from Politico. And as a programming note, we're joined by our Health Commissioner, Dr. Chokshi.

Question: Hi, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: Hi, Joe. How are you doing?

Question: Not too bad. I just wanted to follow up on a previous question about sort of how you're leaving the fiscal house for the next mayor. I'm just curious why – what's the thinking behind, it seems like kind of a risk to assume that all the investments you're making today are going to close these budget gaps when you could have put a little bit more money to just closing them right now. And just one example would be labor contracts, which are all going to come up. They're going to start to come up next year for renewal. Are you leaving any money for that in particular?

Mayor: Joe, look, I think we've got to understand what it takes to fuel recovery, and that recovery equals revenue. It's as simple as that. Right now, we have to bring back the city this year. It is not optional. You know, you can't say, 'Oh, you know, we're going to just take our time in 2021 and then hope for a bigger recovery later.' This is the recovery moment. And if we do everything we're capable of doing it's also going to attract jobs, businesses, tourism, you name it, starting right now. And so, that's why the heavy emphasis here on focusing all our energies and investments on recovery. All of that leads to more and more revenue going forward and sustainable revenue. So, I'm convinced this is the right balance. We were able to substantially increase reserves. So, that situation is much stronger and bluntly much, much stronger than it was for many years in this town. So, I feel good about that, and I think we'll be able to accommodate future needs. Go ahead, Joe.

Question: And then, you know, last year when we went through the budget process and I know you had initially sought out borrowing, and you shifted some labor costs from last fiscal year into Fiscal 2022. And I think the savings plan – there were a lot of like debt refinancing and sort of one-time things rather than recurrent cuts. We didn't do layoffs, obviously. It seemed like the strategy was to hold out as long as possible while federal aid was still on the table. So, I'm just wondering now that we have the stimulus money, could you talk a little bit about why you did the things you did last year, and do you feel like it paid off?

Mayor: Yeah, I do. And, Joe, it's an important question. What I felt strongly was we had to keep people going. We had to keep families going. We had to keep people employed. We had to keep this city in the game. And if we could get through the worst of COVID, we could have a really fast turnaround in 2021. And I see that playing out right now. So, I feel good about the choices we made in 2020 to get us to this point. We did tighten our belt in a variety of ways. A lot of initiatives, a lot of programs were cut back or canceled. Obviously, we reduced headcount quite a bit and we're being cautious. We're keeping headcount restrictions in place. We're bringing some back, but you know, with still some real restrictions. We're bringing back reserves, as I said, in a major way. So, we are trying to balance the elements of being smart for the future, with what we have to do now. But I like where we are notwithstanding the pain, we've been through. I like our field position right now because we believe – I mean, OMB they're tough in their analysis – we believe we can add 400,000 more jobs this year and really make this city come alive. And these are the investments to do it. So, I think it's the right game plan for what we need in 2021.

Moderator: Next is Courtney from NY1.

Mayor: Courtney, can you hear us? Well, no, we can't hear you well. Try again, your voice is coming in kind of garbled. Try it again.

Moderator: Courtney, we're going to come back to you.

Mayor: We'll come right back to you, Courtney.

Moderator: Next is Katie from the Wall Street Journal.

Question: Good afternoon, Mayor de Blasio. Can you hear me?

Mayor: Yes, Katie. How are you doing today?

Question: I'm doing great. I hope I'm excited enough for you. My voice sounds excited enough for you [inaudible] –

Mayor: You are so much more excited than some of the others I commend you.

Question: Well, you know, I got – I have nothing, but I guess sympathy [inaudible] this job day in, day out. So, for your team there. My question is about the property taxes. I know back in January, I think it was a \$2.5 billion decline estimated for next year. I don't know if you or the Commissioner wants to speak a little bit about how that is doing, if they've readjusted that, or if that's still, you know, knowing how much of the City's revenue, tax revenue comes from real estate, how big of a problem that remains?

Mayor: Let me frame it. I'll turn to our Budget Director, Jacques Jiha and we have special guest First Deputy Mayor Dean Fuleihan who might have a comment as well. Katie, I think what we're seeing is, overall, we are hopeful about revenue, but it will take time to manifest. This is a case of, you got to make the investments to be able to reap the impact later on of more economic activity, more jobs, more revenue. But I think it's fair to say there's differences in each type of revenue. What we would see, for example, with property tax versus income tax versus sales tax versus corporate tax, different realities for each and OMB is historically cautious in its estimates, which has served us really well because we don't get nasty surprises because they are careful. So, Jacques, if you give a sense of, sort of, what's weaker, what's stronger in the revenue picture in the short term that'd be real helpful.

Director Jacques Jiha, Office of Management and Budget: Yes. Like the Mayor said we projected in the preliminary budget that they would have – that there would be like a two-and-a-half billion dollar drop from the forecast in terms of property tax revenues. And our forecast remains more or less the same, in line with what we had in the preliminary budget. But what we're seeing is, like the Mayor said, is a major improvement in corporate taxes and personal income taxes. These are the main drivers for – that we projected, we are projecting for next year.

Mayor: Thank you. Go ahead, Katie.

Question: Great. And I want to get your take on a little bit of breaking news. The census numbers just came out a few minutes ago and New York State will lose one congressional seat under the new census, I guess, allocation. We don't know where that will be coming from, but I just – it's due to population loss, but I just wanted to get your take, if it comes from New York City, what it could mean for the city or the state.

Mayor: Look, Katie, it is so important. I'm very hopeful it will not come from New York City because we really threw in the kitchen sink to have a strong census performance and to actually represent the truth of how many people are here. And it – you know, I really want to tip my cap to everyone involved in the census effort. In the middle of a pandemic, they managed to reach the same response rate in 2020 that happened ten years earlier in 2010. I mean, that's really extraordinary. So, hopefully since that happened, New York City will be judged more accurately. And if there is to be a loss of a seat, it won't be here. It will be someplace else. But look, the bottom line is going forward we've got to have a better approach because even with all the effort we put in, it's still – here and around the country – still doesn't capture the fullness of everyone who's here. And you know there were immense efforts during the Trump administration to try to warp the process and that's a danger going forward that that might happen again. So, I think we got to rethink the census process for the future.

Moderator: We're going to go back and try Courtney.

Question: Hey, can you hear me?

Mayor: Hey – loud and clear, Courtney? How are you doing?

Question: Oh, wonderful. I got very worried, because budget day is obviously my favorite day.

Mayor: You look forward to it all year.

[Laughter]

Question: Okay. Well, I kind of want to continue along the line of questioning that you've already got, which is how you're leaving the City's fiscal health to the next mayor. I mean, most – it's not most of this budget, but 14 percent – and you're talking about \$14 billion, about – is one-shot, is federal stimulus. So, under that circumstance, you're out there spending it – 3-K, all of these programs that you listed before. So, what does that mean for the next mayor? And would you say that you're leaving the city in a good fiscal situation for the next mayor?

Mayor: Well, yeah. I mean, first of all, Courtney, look at the amount of reserves I'm leaving for the next mayor versus what I received from Mayor Bloomberg. Now, I do understand he went through some very tough fiscal times, but we've obviously, working very closely with the City Council – and I give Speaker Johnson a lot of credit and the City Council, they were always focused on increasing reserves. The City's in much stronger position on reserves than it was the last time there was a mayoral transition. We are being really careful about finding additional savings and we'll continue to. We're being careful about headcount. But I'll tell you, these investments are about bringing the city back and they just can't wait. I mean, when you think about what kids and families went through in 2020, I'm going to invest now to bring them back, to give kids the chance to catch up on their education, to have their emotional needs addressed, to bring back the schools strong that has so much to do with the future of the city. If our school system is strong, our city is strong. The investments are going to help jobs come back. I mean, you know, sometimes you have to spend money to make money. This is a case where we have to take full advantage of this recovery moment, we have to double down now, and that's going to give the next mayor and the next administration the best chance to move the City forward. So, there's just – there's nothing we should be hesitating on. This is an absolutely crucial moment.

Go ahead, Courtney.

Question: And then, specifically about the NYPD – obviously, that was such a big focus of last year's budget and the \$1 billion cut. What is the NYPD's budget this year projected in your executive budget versus last year? Obviously, there are some candidates on the trail, including your former counsel, Maya Wiley, talking about cutting the NYPD again, if she were elected, by a billion dollars.

Mayor: Courtney, it is essentially flat. The only area where there's a change is on the civilian side where, because of the reform efforts and the reform package agreed to with the City Council, there were a couple of specific areas of spending in terms of community outreach and efforts to create more dialogue between the NYPD and community. Those efforts were funded per the agreement with the Council that added a small amount to the overall budget, I believe it's \$16 million. But, otherwise, the budget is essentially consistent with where we were a year ago and the number of officers remains static at about 35,000.

Moderator: We have time for two more. First, we're going to go to Reema from Chalkbeat.

Question: Hi, Mr. Mayor. How are you doing?

Mayor: Good, Reema. How have you been?

Question: Good. Good. So, I wanted to start by asking you about this \$500 million package for the intense academic recovery. Can you – so, can you just talk a little bit more about what it means to the – I think in the presentation it says established baselines with assessment data, and just, you know, what sort of tutoring the package would pay for. So, just looking for some more details about exactly what we're talking about here.

Mayor: Yeah. Reema, we're going to be laying out more of the details in the next couple of weeks. But I think the best way to think about this is we want to ensure that every school is in the best possible position to do the assessments and then follow through. It's the first time we're doing this kind of universal academic assessment. We're going to follow through on that with, certainly, in many cases, more tutoring. When it comes to literacy, for example, we expect to be able to more than just a lot of the times what we've done in the past, which is training teachers more in literacy. We expect more direct work, including one-on-one work with kids in the area of literacy. There's a lot of pieces we can put into play with digital learning, that now we really have learned more of how to do that since we went through the pandemic. So, we will be filling in a lot more details, but I think the notion here is we have to have an extraordinary year. We have to help kids come back rapidly. It's going to take a lot more direct work with kids. It's going to take bringing more personnel in to do that. That's what that type of spending is going to allow us to do. Go ahead, Reema.

Question: Okay. And then, I have just a broader question for you on the federal relief. You're probably aware, in the State budget, it requires cities to get public feedback on how you're going to be spending the federal relief. I think, specifically, it might just be the money from the American Rescue Plan – act. So, I wanted to know, you know, what is the City's plan for doing that? And, specifically, getting the public's feedback on this, given that, you know, City Hall has

already announced several proposals that you talked about, but I don't think you've specifically asked the public for feedback on that.

Mayor: Well, Reema, we've had a lot of different feedback mechanisms – and we'll delineate more detail in the coming days – but we've had a lot of different feedback mechanisms throughout this whole crisis. You, obviously, focus rightfully on education and there's been constant efforts to get feedback from all stakeholders in education. We've done a lot through our police reform effort. I mean, just – in one way, what makes it easy for us to adapt to that kind of a mandate is that we're doing it all the time anyway. But we're going to follow the law carefully by laying out the broad plan. You know, that that gets us started. But we will be seeking the feedback in a formal way to make sure we've heard what people are thinking and to conform with that element of the stimulus.

Moderator: For our last question, we'll go to Henry from Bloomberg.

Question: Hello, Mr. Mayor. Can you hear me?

Mayor: Yes, indeed, Henry. How are you doing?

Question: I'm doing well. Thank you. And you?

Mayor: It's a good day for a good-news budget.

Question: You're having several very happy days, Mr. Mayor. It's very nice for us in the press to see.

Mayor: Thank you. It's a good feeling.

Question: I've got some questions about the budget. I understand the need to invest in people bouncing back, businesses bouncing back, etcetera, but the pandemic also told us that we could really get whacked by circumstances beyond our control. And although you've got some reserves in this budget, there's very little in the way of savings, in the way of efficiencies. You achieved the reduction in the head count, now you're going to hire similar – I mean, couldn't this time be used for planning a different kind of budget in which you continue to reduce head count and you reduce – you find savings to pay for some of these programs and you actually reserve more than the \$1.8 billion increase that you're suggesting?

Mayor: Look, Henry, first of all, I judge reserves – and, you know, I spent eight years in the Council and then four years as Public Advocate and we never had reserves like these that we have in this budget. So, I just want to give you perspective there. These are really healthy reserve levels, because we've restored the money we've restored. And reserve levels, I think, would steady us in good stead no matter what was thrown at us. But the real issue to me is, I see what people have been through. And if you talk to New Yorkers about, you know, everything they were hit with in 2020, there's a lot we've got to do to address what they need. We cannot just say – if you want the city to succeed in the future, you can't just say, oh, have everyone come back to school and just accept that there was a lot of learning loss, and a lot of trauma, and we're not going to do anything about it. No, we have to go the extra mile, help kids get back to where they were, and then some – address everything they've been through. We to help families through this crisis.

And we have to do the kinds of things that will bring back jobs. I've talked to so many people who think all the time about their investments and the kinds of things that they would be willing to invest in. I hear it all the time – what will cause people to want to build businesses here or create more jobs here? Strong schools, safety, clean environment, all the things that we're investing in. The Cleanup Corps. is going to help us reinvigorate our economy. The tourism investment – again, sometimes you have to spend money to make money. We need to come back strong. So, if OMB's estimates are right, and I believe they are, and these investments help us to get to 4.5 million jobs by the end of this year. I think that is actually the smart way to approach this moment and make it sustainable. Go ahead, Henry.

Question: Well, my question was really long-winded, so I don't think you really hit the answer to what I was looking for, and it's this – there are efficiencies to be had in this budget, whether it's consolidating trash pickup routes, whether it's consolidating each of the – all these pension funds into one administrative unit, instead of spending millions, tens of millions on fees to asset managers for each separate fund in the pension systems. There are places where unions that agree with the City, where the City could really assert itself and agencies could look at where they're spending money and cut maybe one percent of their spending on this or that. And I don't see in this budget that kind of trimming, monitoring – you've been handed a windfall, and you're leaving office, and the mayor who succeeds you, shouldn't he or she also have the ability to decide how the, some of this windfall should be spent in the years ahead?

Mayor: Yeah, they unquestionably can and they will. They're going to be able to have the opportunity to make a lot of choices, because we will hand them a strong economy and the revenue goes with it. But I think in terms of the questions you're raising – we're always looking for efficiencies and we've found it. You know, the fact that we are keeping hiring restrictions in place is important. The fact that we have restored such a large amount of reserves is important. But, really, when think about it, the things that we're building here are sustainable. They bring in lots of revenue, they make the City stronger, more competitive. What we're talking about – public health capital of the world and the investments in life sciences, that is going to pay off many times over in the years ahead for the next administration. The kinds of very specific improvements you're talking about, Henry, that never stops. We're always looking for ways to be more efficient with the pension system or in terms of debt service or in terms of each agency's operation – that never – that's been going on and that will continue to go on. Those things matter. But what really matters is building a strong, diverse economy that's sustainable, and making it a place that works for everyone, and ensuring you're going to have the revenue you need for the future. That's what this budget is about.

So, everyone, as we conclude – look, this is a good day, because we got some justice. We got some justice from Albany with the education funding, the Campaign for Fiscal Equity after 20 years. We got some justice from Washington with a stimulus that was actually about putting working people back on their feet. We're able today to announce a budget that will reach every corner of this city and help people through this pandemic and to better times. And what a good day to announce it, when we see the city getting healthier and healthier, and we're fighting back COVID, we're putting it back on its heels, because so many people are going out there and getting vaccinated. So, there's a lot of good here. There's always challenges ahead, but this is a budget that invests in working people and that's going to make all the difference.

Thank you, everyone.

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