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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON CNN

John Berman: This morning, the number of coronavirus cases, hospitalizations, and deaths continue to decline in New York City. Mitigation efforts here are showing encouraging signs, but the numbers for the rest of the country, moving in a different direction. Joining me now is New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio. Mr. Mayor, thanks so much for being with us. Those charts, and I don't know if you can see them, show that the number of new cases in the New York area are declining, but if you remove the New York area, the rest of the country, the number of new cases are going up. So, when you see something like this, what's your message to the rest of the country?

Mayor Bill de Blasio: John, my message is be careful. This desire to restart and open up without necessarily referencing the actual facts of what's going on is dangerous. Look, the whole focus has to be on protecting the people of this country. That's more important than the almighty dollar. That's more important than anything. And right now, what I fear is there's a rush to reopen in some places at least, that's going to end up with people losing their lives, who didn't have to lose their lives, who could have been saved if there had been more care. What we learned the hard way here in New York over the last two months is this is a ferocious enemy. And the way you defeat it, the way you push it back, is with really tightening up the social distancing and the face coverings and the shelter in place – all the things that New Yorkers actually have done to a remarkable degree. And I got to tell you, John, not easy to do here and not what I would have expected New Yorkers to be able to take to so quickly, but they've done an amazing job. But my message to the rest of the country is learn from how much effort, how much discipline it took to finally bring these numbers down, and follow the same path until you're sure that it's being beaten back. Or else if this thing boomerangs you're putting off any kind of restart or recovery a hell of a lot longer.

Berman: Are you worried they're going to ruin all your efforts for you?

Mayor: I worry for everyone, John. It's not just about the people I represent here in New York City. I think we're all interconnected in this country. So, if one part of the country starts to see a surge, it's inevitably going to affect everyone else.

Berman: You have said that you are going to release your plans for summer in New York City soon. Do you care to preview them here this morning on New Day? I know you said your ultimate goal is to be ready for a larger opening in September when kids go back to school, you hope.

Mayor: Yeah, John, I think September is the thing that I feel particularly strongly about. I want kids back to school on time. I want to see our school system open in a safe and healthy manner. In the time between now and then, look, our goal is to restart as quickly as possible, but there's a couple of key questions here – making sure the facts support it and we're still not there yet to even begin to loosen up the restrictions. Then we have to watch out for that boomerang effect. We cannot ignore evidence of any kind of resurgence or again, we'll just pay for it for a long, long time. It'll be a longer delay and restart. And then there's also the crucial question, how are we going to even afford to restart our city if right now we are literally out of money, \$7.4 billion in the hole because we've lost so much revenue, it's only going to get worse. How are we going to pay for all the basic services we need? All the people have been the heroes of this crisis, police, fire, EMT, paramedic, health care workers, educators? There's no money. So, how are we going to restart our city, provide services, and actually recover without that? That's where the federal stimulus is the key and boy are we getting mixed messages, John, especially from the president. Last night, he started talking about, well, he was more interested in giving rich people a break on the capital gains tax than helping New York and other cities and states back on their feet. I couldn't believe what I was hearing and so we have no guarantees that the federal government is going to help us. It's the only place we can turn for help and right now that's a pretty murky situation.

Berman: You're talking about what would be a fourth stimulus plan, direct federal funding to states and cities. And to that, as you said, the president has sent mixed messages, but one of the things he said is, 'I don't think Republicans want to be in a position where they bail out states that are or have been mismanaged over a long period of time'.

Mayor: Yeah, John it's astounding that he even introduces the question of red states and blue states. He's saying it out loud. He is politicizing a pandemic, not being patriotic, not talking about all Americans and how to bring us all back together. We're all connected. This is the largest city in the country. We help lead the national economy for everyone. We send a huge amount of money to Washington, much more than we get back and this is a city that has been succeeding. We've had record low unemployment before this crisis. We've had the – we're the safest big city in America, crime levels down to where they were in the 1950s, a thriving economy. We've been succeeding here. A lot of cities have been succeeding in helping the American economy and now the president's turning his back because of partisan affiliation. Who does that, John? What kind of president, in the middle of a crisis says, well, 'I'm going to help you, but I'm not going to help you because of what's on your voter registration card'. No, what we need here is a stimulus that puts us all back on our feet so we can succeed together. If it doesn't happen, I guarantee you there's no recovery. And I hate saying that, but John it's the truth. If there is not a strong fourth stimulus for cities and states, there will not be a national economic recovery period.

Berman: Well, what do you need? How much do you need and when, and what happens if it doesn't come because there's no action in Washington this week on it?

Mayor: John, right now what I'm staring down the barrel of, and cities and states all over the country, people are either acting on furloughs and layoffs or preparing for furloughs and layoffs of the exact people who have been the heroes in this crisis, who we should be celebrating and

supporting – the first responders, the health care workers, the educators. How are we going to support these people who we need if we don't have any money? I've lost \$7.4 billion already and my economy can't come back until I get that stimulus and get back to normal and provide those basic services. It's a real catch-22. No stimulus, no recovery, no revenue. It only gets worse. So, to me, what the federal government needs to do is make cities and states whole. We didn't ask for the coronavirus. We've been dealing with it often alone, bluntly, without the federal help, like the testing. But once it happened to us, we had no choice but to confront it. And then when we have no more money, what are we going to do? The only place that prints money, the only place that could provide the help to get us out of this mess is the federal government.

Berman: What happens –

Mayor: And if they don't we're on our own and there's no recovery.

Berman: What happens when you say this to the president or can't you just play the New York card? Say, hey, you're from New York, right, don't you want to help out your city? What happens when you present that argument?

Mayor: I have, John. I've presented it to him in private conversations. I've said it publicly. I don't know what happened to him, how he forgot where he comes from because at times he has expressed sympathy to me and publicly for what's happened to the people of New York and other cities, the heroism of the first responders and the health care workers and then he goes silent when it comes to actually helping them out. Absolutely silent except to talk now about how he can maybe get into this bill, a relief program for rich people. When he starts talking about the capital gains tax, that's him wanting to help his rich buddies, not helping firefighters or EMT or paramedics or health care workers. You can't make it up, John, but the bottom line is if the president is silent, then he's helping Mitch McConnell and the Senate to ignore their responsibility. If the president said today, we need a force stimulus, we need to give those cities and states the ability to get back on their feet, just like he did – he gave \$58 billion to the airline industry. He was in favor of that bailout. How about helping cities and states move forward? If he said out loud, we need to do that, the Senate would fall in line instantly.

Berman: Mayor Bill de Blasio, we appreciate your time this morning. Thanks for being with us.

Mayor: Thank you, John.

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