



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 7, 2016

CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

**RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO SIGNS PAID PARENTAL LEAVE PERSONNEL
ORDER FOR NYC WORKERS**

First Lady Chirlane McCray: Hello, everyone.

Audience: Hello.

First Lady McCray: What a joyous moment – are you ready to make some history?

[Cheers]

This is such a big day, and not only for the parents and children. This is a big day for everyone who cares about the future of New York, because strong parental leave policies help build strong families, and strong families are the foundation of our city. To be a new parents can be one of life's most joyous experiences. You're not just bringing home a baby, you're bringing home a lifetime of love, laughter, and learning. But to be a parent is also the hardest job in the world, right? Can I get an amen?

[Laughter]

Right? For starters, it's 24/7 – every few minutes brings a new puzzle to figure out. Why isn't she hungry? Where did I put the baby wipes? And when – when will I find the right time to take a shower?

[Laughter]

So, the last thing new parents should have to worry about is their financial and professional security. Those first few weeks should be about spending as much time as possible with the child, and finding the rhythm of parenting. This is so, so important – when infants form a strong bond with their parent, or parents, it has a long-term positive effect on their physical and mental health. Paid parental leave is also valuable for parents who may have challenges, following the birth of their child – challenges like maternal depression, feeling out of balance as hormones readjust, or just plain old exhaustion. And parental leave is especially needed in a place like New York City, where everyone works so hard, and many of us are so far away from family members and their care taking support.

Unknown: [inaudible]

First Lady McCray: I think I got an amen back there.

[Laughter]

Enacting paid parental leave isn't just the right thing to do, it is one of the best investments we can make for the future of our city. With the signing of this personnel order, 20,000 New Yorkers can focus on what counts if

they decide to become parents. And I want us to look at this as a great beginning, because paid parental leave should not be a luxury. No matter where you work, no matter how much money you make, your baby, your child needs you. You have the right to care for your child, and your child has the right to be cared for.

And now, it is my pleasure to introduce my partner in all things. The man who helped me find the baby wipes, and my parenting rhythm – Mayor Bill de Blasio.

[Applause]

Mayor Bill de Blasio: I remember. Those were the days – we learned our way together, didn't we, Chirlane?

First Lady McCray: Yes we did.

Mayor: There are handbooks, but they don't tell you everything. We had to figure out a lot on our own.

First Lady McCray: That is right.

Mayor: I just want to say what a joy it is to be with these beautiful babies, who are, like, for this second – I'm going to jinx it right now by saying – are the mellowest group of babies I have ever seen in my life.

[Laughter]

Okay. I know it's not going to last much longer, but it has been great.

[Laughter]

It has been great. Well done to all the parents, all the caregivers who are here. Chirlane is exactly right, this is something we do for the future of our city, for the future of our families. And paid parental leave simply should not be a luxury, it's something every family needs. And it is part of our fight to support working families in New York City. This is yet another crucial element of our effort to lift up all working families.

[Baby cries]

See? I was right, by the way.

[Laughter]

For too long, new parents have had to make an impossible choice.

[Babies cry]

See?

[Laughter]

It's a kind of groupthink thing.

[Laughter]

For too long, new parents have had to make an impossible choice between bonding with their child in those precious first few weeks or paying their bills. Today, 20,000 of our families are no longer faced with that painful choice. This personnel order provides six weeks of fully paid parental leave for 20,000 city workers.

[Applause]

Whether you have a new baby, an adopted child, or a foster child, we treat all these families equally. We want to support all these families. And new parents, if they want to take advantage of their vacation time and their sick leave time, will have the option of being able to take up to 12 weeks fully paid by putting all those pieces together.

[Applause]

Now, these 20,000 –

[Babies cry]

I've had this experience before.

[Laughter]

It's really going to be okay.

[Laughter]

Once upon a time, that was Dante.

[Laughter]

You would not – wouldn't believe it today, but, once upon a time, that was him. Now, 20,000 – 20,000 are direct city employees, but were also – and there are folks who are not members of a labor union – but we're opening our doors to our friends in our municipal unions to partner with us and extend this benefit to their members as well. And I can tell you right away there's great interest among our municipal unions in taking advantage of this opportunity.

Look, the bottom line is this – paid parental leave is common sense. It's fair, it's just, it's the kind of thing we need in the 21st century. As Chirlane said, people are working longer and longer hours – so much for progress and modernity – we're working harder than ever, and we need to support our families in new and better ways, and this is one of the ways we do it. So, if you believe in family values, you should believe in paid parental leave, because this is what really supports a family.

By the way – so important not only for our families, for our parents, but for the development of our children as well – that opportunity for a parent and child to bond at the very beginning pays lifelong benefits. So, we're not taking any half measures here. What we sign into action today becomes one of the strongest paid parental leave policies anywhere in the nation. New York City is leading the way.

[Applause]

And something we're very proud of – this new benefit comes at no additional cost to the taxpayers, and it's a great benefit, and a fair one for all involved. Now, many, many people are here – there are a lot of excited people here, and I want to thank them for being a part of this today and for their support.

Let me do this really quick. First of all, from our administration – Deputy Mayor Alicia Glen; Deputy Mayor Richard Buery; my council, Maya Wiley; Dr. Mary Bassett, our health commissioner; Lisette Camilo, our incoming DCAS commissioner; our fire commissioner, Dan Nigro; our consumer affairs commissioner, Julie

Menin; the commissioner for the Office of International Affairs, Penny Abeywardena; our aging commissioner, Donna Corrado. Let's thank all of them for what they do for our city.

[Applause]

I want to thank the many other leaders who are here first – the elected officials. State Senator Brad Hoylman; Assembly Member Luis Sepulveda; Assembly Member Nily Rozic; Council Member Laurie Cumbo; Council Member Daneek Miller; Council Member Andy King; Council Member Karen Koslowitz; Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer; Council Member Mathieu Eugene; Council Member Antonio Reynoso; Council Member Vanessa Gibson; Council member, and brand new father, Donovan Richards.

[Applause]

But wait, there's more – Senator James Sanders; Junior Senator Roxanne Persaud; Council Member Barry Grodenchik; Council Member David Weprin; Council Member Rafael Espinal; Council Member Margaret Chin; and then in addition, the president of Unite Here Local 100, Bill Granfield; and Dr. Frank Proscia, the president of the Doctor's Council SEIU. Let's thank all of them

[Applause]

Now, I mentioned what modern times have brought us, and we have to look this squarely in the face. For a lot of families, any disruption in their income really is painful and causes immense problems – that's the reality. For a family living on one income, you can't have disruption in that income in most households in this city – even disruption for a few days or a few weeks. A lot of families are struggling to get by and need multiple incomes, multiple jobs for each member just to get by, and any disruption is painful and it causes people to make very tough choices. Our job is to do everything we can to avoid that disruption. If we're going to take on the tale of two cities that I've talked about from time to time, this is one of the ways we do it, making sure that people have decent lives and that their income is steady. It fits with so much of what we've done.

And I want to thank our brothers and sisters in the City Council. I want to thank all the elected officials who have joined us in so many of these efforts – and that's the reason we expanded paid sick leave to a half-million more people in 2014. It's the exact same reason.

[Applause]

It's the reason we issued an executive order last year to raise thousands of New Yorkers' to a higher wage level through our living wage policy – thousands more people were reached through our living wage policy. And it's the reason why, yesterday, with many of you, we were so proud to announce that, from this point on, every single city employee, and tens of thousands of social service contract workers, will make at least \$15 dollars an hour, going forward.

[Applause]

Now, my friends, that's going to reach 50,000 workers, and then thousands – tens of thousands more family members. All of these pieces are adding up to support working people, to support families that are working so hard to make ends meet, and it's part of a bigger pledge. And this didn't get a lot of attention at the time, and it should have, but we're going to keep talking about it – in our OneNYC plan last year, we made a clear commitment – the greatest city in the world – the greatest city in the world is not going to continue to have so many people living in poverty. We pledged by 2025 to get almost one in 10 of us – 800,000 New Yorkers we will get out of poverty and to a better life by 2025, and this is part of how we do it.

[Applause]

This new announcement, my friends – it’s beautiful in any language.

[Laughter]

It’s nice in English, but let’s try some Spanish, shall we?

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

Can I get an amen?

Audience: Amen.

Mayor: Alright. Now, a dear friend and colleague for many years, going back to that kinder, gentler time when we were in the public advocate’s office – and she did great work there, and she is doing great work now as the director for community affairs for the New York City Department of Education. I see your boss just came over the check on you. Chancellor Carmen Fariña, we welcome you. Thank you for being here.

[Applause]

Chancellor Carmen Fariña, Department of Education: I remember when you couldn’t even teach when you were pregnant – you couldn’t teach.

Mayor: She said she remembers when teachers were not allowed to teach while pregnant. That was an enlightened time.

[Laughter]

We’re getting better. It is my honor to introduce the apparently pregnant, Sadye Campoamor.

[...]

Mayor: I want to say to Dennis, and to Sadye, and all the other expectant parents here with us today – I want to give you the formal New York City congratulations, and say mazel tov to all of you.

[Laughter]

And – and we are the world, Sadye. And this is a day we celebrate you. We thank you for being a part of this great city, and this great city government, and we look forward to making your journey a little bit easier as you continue on your way.

Now, we’re just going to take a few questions on this topic from the media, then we’re going to go over to this wonderful desk and sign this personnel order, making it formal.

Any questions from the media, on this topic? Yes.

Question: Does the policy become effective immediately?

Mayor: Yes, in fact, retro to – Bob Linn, come over here, wherever you are. You actually have to come here, Bob.

[Laughter]

You can answer the formal question of when it takes effect.

Commissioner Bob Linn, Office of Labor Relations: Retroactive to December 22nd.

Mayor: 2015.

Commissioner Linn: 2015.

Mayor: Okay.

Question: [Inaudible] paid leave policies not including that. Is that a [inaudible] for future policy or [inaudible]?

Mayor: Well, obviously, we have both the city paid sick leave law and paid sick leave benefits for our unionized employees here for the city government. We knew that we could get this done on paid parental leave with our non-union employees through a personnel order. For any other changes with our unionized employees, it had to go back through a collective bargaining process. Now, again, we've begun very positive conversations with the UFT, with DC 37 [inaudible]. We think there's going to be a lot of desire to get this done, but this is what we could do immediately. Clearly, at the same time, I believe there needs to be changes in both federal policy and state policy that reach more and more families in a variety of ways, and I'll certainly be working for that as well. I've worked with colleagues all over the country – progressive mayors who want to see federal legislation – and actually its part of the discussion in the presidential campaign, and there's a lot of talk in Albany of action. So, I think it's a great moment to get the bigger changes that will reach not only public sector workers but reach all employees.

Yes?

Question: Can you give us some more specifics on the conversations you're having with UFT and DC 37? And do you have a sense of, you know, what the timeline might be for [inaudible]?

Mayor: I'll start and turn to Bob Linn. I can say there's been real enthusiasm from both unions and I can say that our message to them is, this is something we would like to work on as quickly as possible. So, we're ready to sit down at the table immediately. And even though, of course, as with every negotiation, there are details – and we do need to find savings involved, it's something we want to do very quickly.

Commissioner Linn: So, conversations are on-going, and part of collective bargaining is we work out the issues at the table. I expect that each union will have their own particular issues and how they want to deal with it, and we'll solve them, as we've solved any number of problems over the last two years.

Mayor: Yes?

Question: [Inaudible]

Commissioner Linn: There was sick leave for the mother who delivered the child, and then there was annual leave.

Question: [Inaudible]

Commissioner Linn: Yes, that's correct.

Mayor: I'm getting a pat on the back from this – what's her name here?

[Laughter]

Unknown: Lily.

Mayor: Lily?

Unknown: Yes.

Mayor: Lily, thank you for that support. Lily's got my back.

[Laughter]

Other questions? Yes.

Question: Do you think this might set-off a baby boom in City Hall?

[Laughter]

Mayor: Yes. Well, so, Chirlane and I – Chirlane and I are very proud of that fact that – so, some of you have heard the story of how we met just down the hallway, there, for the first time. And I always like to say, it was September 9, 1991 – we're coming up on 25 years since we met – and for me, it was, truly, some version of love at first sight – for Chirlane, it was not.

[Laughter]

It took a while, but we got there. But the – two things I want to say – that particular corner over there, I was told by people in subsequent administrations, bred an unusual number of romantic relationships. So, something is going on over there in that corner. For all of you working there now, you may want to think about that.

But also, when we had our staff in the City Council and Public Advocates office, just lots and lots of people got married on our watch, or had kids, or got engaged. So, for any of you who are not yet there, it's a very fertile group.

[Laughter]

Okay. We get lots of good – Chirlane has – wait, let me give you a lift –

First Lady McCray: It's okay. I just want to add that now those families will be more successful because of this parental leave.

Mayor: Amen. Amen. Last call – questions from the media on this topic.

Question: Has every union expressed interest or is there any you talked to who say, you know, we don't want this?

Mayor: So, again, those two, which, obviously, are two of our very biggest – UFT and DC 37 – that have asked me, absolutely expressed interest. This is still quite new, and we had the holidays, but let's see if there's any other you would mention so far.

Commissioner Linn: No, that's it so far, but I expect that we'll be speaking to many unions in the weeks to come.

Mayor: Door is open – alright, last – yes?

Question: Where do you see negotiations at the state level – the governor has indicated he might push for paid family leave in his State of the State. Do you have any sense of where negotiations are where –

Mayor: I don't have a sense of it. I think, again, this is an area that lots of people would like to see action on all over the state because, you know, the state obviously has the power to make a law that will reach both private sector and public sector employees. So, we'd love to see that happen. It'd be very good for New York City and New York State. By the way, you know, we want to be economically competitive. Besides being humane and just, we want to be economically competitive. Part of what's amazing right now in New York City is this growing technology sector. You know, we want all the folks who work in this city to know that they have this kind of opportunity so they'll want to be in New York City. So, we really look forward to working with the state to get it done. I don't know the exact state-of-play. I do know there's a really great coalition fighting for this and I think it's a great year to get it done.

Last call for media before we sign this bill. Let's go sign this bill.

[Mayor de Blasio signs Paid Parental Leave Personnel Order]

###