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**RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR BILL DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY FOLLOWING
ALBANY BUDGET TESTIMONY**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Let me just start by saying I had a very cordial and productive meeting with Majority Leader Flanagan. This is really the first time we've had a chance to sit down one on one and spend a bit of time. And I thought it was very productive – you know good exchange on a whole host of issues. And we certainly agreed that we're going to be talking more often, and, you know, reviewing a lot of issues as this session proceeds.

Question: Mayor, welcome to Albany.

Mayor: Thank you. Good to be here.

Question: This morning [inaudible] voted to make PR firms register as lobbyists. I'm just curious your reaction to that, and would it make you – persuade you from meeting with let's say Berlin Rosen more often [inaudible].

Mayor: I've got to see what they did. I don't know specifically what they did, so as soon as I get a chance to look at it and digest it I'll be happy to give you a comment.

Question: Do you think New York City is coming out net positive, net negative or –

Mayor: Well, as I said in the hearing, I thought it was a very productive hearing – long yes, but very productive. You know, there's a lot we don't know about this budget. There's a lot of question marks. There's a lot of areas where we need to hear more detail before we can judge this budget let alone a comparison to previous ones.

Question: [Inaudible]

Mayor: Hold on please, hold on.

Question: The senators were questioning you a lot about the property tax. In fact, while you were testifying they went, in the Senate [inaudible] to extend the property tax cap to New York City. Were you prepared for that?

Mayor: Look, I hadn't heard as much of it previously. With that being said, it seems to me we're talking about an ideological difference that's not surprising. And I thought, look, the hearing indicated some of the realities we live with in our state. There are partisan differences; there are regional differences. I still think it was respectful. I think it was a pretty informed and fair hearing. And I told them exactly what I thought about why the situation in New York City made clear to me that that was not a good idea – not a productive idea for our future. But I thought it was a perfectly fair discussion.

Question: Did Senator Flanagan, in your discussions, say that he would – anything explicitly linking the cuts on Medicaid that Governor Cuomo has proposed to [inaudible]?

Mayor: Not at all. Not at all. We touched on the Medicaid and CUNY cuts, but there was no [inaudible] whatsoever.

Question: Can you characterize what he said?

Mayor: No, I'm not going to characterize a private discussion. I think it was a very productive conversation.

Question: What is the status of the talk with the Governor's Office [inaudible]?

Mayor: As I said in the hearing, we look forward to hopefully having some more formal discussion starting next week with our budget folks sitting down including Mr. Fuleihan right here. And look, there's a really important discussion to be had about ways that we can look for reforms and efficiencies, but that's just beginning. Until we have that conversation in earnest I can't tell you more about where it's going to go.

Question: [Inaudible]

Mayor: I won't go into a lot of detail. I'll simply say I think he's quite familiar with my partisan affiliation, and I'm quite familiar with his. And it's very respectful. And the bottom-line is at the same time we have work to do in terms of our government roles. And I think there was a real commitment in the meeting to working together despite whatever is happening in the context of the election.

Question: [Inaudible]

Mayor: Yes, we did. Again, I'm not going to get into detail, but what I said to him was that I am certainly ready and willing and able if any hearings are called related to mayoral control whether they're here or whether they're in the city, I will happily attend personally. And I'll give as much time – I think I proved today I'll give as much time as is needed.

[Laughter]

Question: [Inaudible]

Mayor: I don't want to predict. I would say I made my argument already about why I think longer term is appropriate and historically grounded. And I'll make that argument in great detail if a hearing is called. But I think we're at the very beginning of a session, and there's plenty of time for dialogue.

Question: [Inaudible]

Mayor: Hold on, coming around – moving geographically here.

Question: Are you surprised that issue didn't really come up in the five hours of questioning? I know there was a lot of focus on other things. I know it's a big priority for you. And you've been [inaudible].

Mayor: Politics and not pedagogy. That's very nice. We'll borrow that. I was surprised it didn't come up more, but, you know, again it's a perfectly valid conversation. I think it's a great conversation to talk about why mayoral control works because in my view it's one hand clapping. There is no other system that's been proven to work, and I'll happily have that debate with anyone and show them the things we're doing to increase the graduation rate, raise test scores, fix schools that had been previously failing. You know, we are happy to have that conversation. It didn't come up so much before, but I'm looking forward to an opportunity to do that more.

Question: What have the discussions looked like so far on the \$600 million dollars in sales tax [inaudible]?

Mayor: Well again, I've certainly spoken to the Governor about it; Dean spoken to his counterpart about it. We put it out on the table today very clearly, and I thought the dialogue on that was also an informed dialogue. From our point of view it's quite clear. A court of appeals decision is a pretty straightforward thing.

Question: Do you think you have to consider the two percent tax cut now that you're hearing about it from both sides?

Mayor: No. Not at all. I think the question is what's right for New York City. It's not right for New York City. And by the way, I heard about it from a lot of Republicans; I heard about it from maybe a couple of Democrats. I would say the vast majority of Democrats would not agree and certainly the vast majority of members of the Assembly would not agree. So no, of course, we're going to say what's right for the people of New York City. And it's not the right idea for the people of New York City.

Mayor: Thank you. I was going to call on you Karen.

Thanks, everyone.

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