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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO DELIVERS REMARKS AT EXODUS
TRANSITIONAL COMMUNITY'S EAST HARLEM PRAY AND PROTEST**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Thank you. Everybody, I want to start by saying, God bless you all for being here.

[Cheers]

God bless you, because – Julio said it – without action, just words. This is action, changing our society from the grassroots. God bless every congregation, every clergy member who is here, because I've seen change. I'm going to talk to you about how change can and will be made in this city. I don't have a doubt we can do that, because we affirm together in New York City that black lives matter.

[Cheers]

And we will show that through action. We know that change can come. We know it, because of the extraordinary action taken in Albany this week – the most sweeping reforms for criminal justice reform transparency change that they said could not be done for years and decades. Assembly Member, thank you. Thank your colleagues, because you did it – you did it. You showed it could be done.

[Cheers]

We know change can happen, because we have seen lives change. What does Exodus do every single day – it turns lives around. That is the work of Exodus, I've seen it with my own eyes.

[Applause]

This man right here is a living embodiment of a person who could not only change himself, but can change the whole community around him. Julio, God bless you for what you have done. God bless you.

[Cheers]

So, you will hear plenty of Doubting Thomases who will tell us we cannot progress, who will speak from hopelessness. I speak from hopefulness, because truth is coming out. What do they say about the truth shall set you free – this country is staring at a truth it tried to deny for a long

time, this city as well, and we have to come to grips with it. We have to not be afraid of being blunter and blunter about the truth, because it actually is what will move us forward. I happen to be a white man. I have experienced privilege my whole life. I didn't even understand the extent of my privilege. I didn't understand what I did not understand. In these days, it's becoming clearer to me. The changes we've begun not enough. They are changes – when I took office, 11,000 people in our jails, there are 4,000 today. That is change.

[Cheers]

In 2019, there were 180,000 fewer arrests than the last year of Bloomberg – fewer arrests, fewer incarcerated people. But it's only a beginning, because if anyone has to wonder if they will be treated right, then something's wrong. Every black man in New York City's still wonders when, not if – when they will confront racism today. That is an unacceptable state of affairs. And so, we have to change it. It's true for every black woman. It's true for people of color across the board. It is not supportable. It is not allowable. It will not work for the future of this city that racism pervade the lives of our people.

[Applause]

So, what do we do? We proceed from hope and empowerment. We proceed from the community up. The things we will do, we will take money from the NYPD budget and give it to youth services and social services –

[Cheers]

We will take money and give it to those who stop violence before it happens, the Cure Violence movement, the Crisis Management System – community people, stopping violence in their own community.

[Applause]

And we will take what the State Legislature began, and we will pass the laws in the city, and we will give the orders so that when an officer does something wrong you will see consequences that you will see them quickly so you can believe there is justice. We have many officers who do the right thing. We aspire to have more and more every day. We aspire to have a police force of, and by, and for our communities. We have shown it can change. We showed it with stop and frisk. We showed it with fewer arrests. We showed it with neighborhood policing, but we have only begun. The day when every young man of color walks down the street and feels respected, not rejected. That is the day we aspire to in this city. That is the day we'll all achieve.

[Applause]

So, I thank you. I thank you. I know we have it in us and I know people of faith will lead us, as you have down through our history. Change will come in New York City. Change will come in New York City. God bless you all.

[Cheers]

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