



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

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

**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS PRESS GAGGLE AFTER GETTING
TURNED AWAY AT TORNILLO CHILD DETENTION FACILITY**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: ... everyone who works here knows that a group of mayors from all over the country came here on behalf of our millions and millions of constituents to know what's going on, and the fact is this is our federal government denying access, not allowing information – and it's not American, it's crazy. They've turned away senators, they've turned away members of Congress, I've never seen anything like this. These are public facilities paid for with taxpayer dollars. How on Earth are we not allowed to see what is happening to these children? So it's astounding and it feels really un-American. It feels like something from a different place and a different time but it's happening right here.

Question: Did it surprise you? Did it actually surprise you to see that gate sliding closed as you approached?

Mayor: Yeah I think – you know, there's no surprise that the whole country is paying attention here. Everyone here knows this. The people in charge here know this. There's no surprise that a group of 20 mayors from all over the country came here to try and get answers on the behalf of our constituents and it's affecting our cities too now. So the notion that they don't even want to talk to us, they're not even going to give us any information, they're not to tell us what's happening to these kids is unbelievable.

Question: Well did it have the look of a planned response?

Mayor: There's no question it's planned to shut down information, to stonewall, to keep people out who are trying to get the truth. I mean – you know, I said yesterday in my city we found out we had 239 kids that the federal government had not told us about. Obviously they are denying access here, it makes no sense, it's not fair to the taxpayers.

Unknown: We're going to open it but we – we just ask you all to – to [inaudible] and also don't cross the boundary because this is federal property because – [inaudible] – you are already on federal property [inaudible] but we'll allow you guys to stand right here. I don't – we'll open the gate, we just don't want to be overran by media, so if you guys could do us a favor and just stay on that side, we're going to open the gate. We have to let outbound traffic out.

Mayor: Okay, is there someone, sir, that is you or someone else to talk to about an opportunity –

Unknown: Wait – wait a minute sir.

Mayor: To see what's going on, is there someone here to talk to about –

Unknown: Sir, to my knowledge everybody is unavailable. Yes, sir. Again, we provide security here at the port, but that's all we are doing here.

Mayor: I appreciate what you're doing, I know you're doing your job but I think it's amazing to me that we got 20 mayors from around the country trying to get answers, just would be good if someone would come forward to talk to us.

Unknown: Yes, sir.

Mayor: Thank you.

Unknown: Thank you, sir.

[Inaudible]

Question: Mayor de Blasio, what do you hope to accomplish here that you couldn't accomplish in New York?

Mayor: The same thing my fellow mayors hope to accomplish, to jolt the situation. We have got an unacceptable situation here and we're talking on the behalf of millions and millions of people and saying the status quo can't hold. And look, what's happening in Washington isn't changing fast enough. We're trying to show the American people this is a situation that does not represent our values and our constituents don't accept it, and we need change. So the notion is, bring it right here to where the problem is and show people that this is unacceptable. Look at the notion – my constituents are outraged that we're not being given honest facts.

Question: Right, and I'm one of your constituents, I'm a reporter from a paper back in the city, so my question is have you learned more about the 240 kids that they found in East Harlem?

Mayor: Just what I told you yesterday and we're waiting now for answers on how those 239 kids are going to be reunified with their parents and we're going to try to support them and their families in every way.

Question: [Inaudible] do you know who they are?

Mayor: That's what we're literally in the process of doing right now. What we can do for them is make sure that they have legal support, if there's any way we can provide legal support for their families, we're going to do that to help them get reunified. We want to make sure the mental health services and the physical health services are there for them. The social service

providers are trying real hard but they've never seen numbers like this before, so our Health Department is in there, particularly on the mental health angle. These kids have been traumatized, imagine any child torn away from their mother and father. So we're going to do everything we can to help them and to push for their reunification with their parents immediately.

Question: Are City health workers being let in to the [inaudible] facility –

Mayor: The facility has been very receptive. The Cayuga facility, a non-profit that the City of New York works with, they want to work with us, they want the help. They've been receptive, they've been telling us the truth, they've been offering answers. The federal government is not doing that.

Question: [Inaudible] not being let into see, what does this say about the administration and their handling?

Mayor: It's not American. It's – I – you know, it's crazy that, you know, again this is a taxpayer-financed facility under federal control, it's not normal in America to turn away public officials. It's not normal to turn away the media when you're trying to simply get the facts of what is going on. And when you talk about the fact that it's children alone and there's real health and safety issues, it becomes even more of a problem. I've never seen anything like this, I've never seen the government say to elected officials, you can't even look at what's going on. This is something people should really worried about.

Question: What does President Trump needs to be doing now – what does President Trump need to be doing now?

Mayor: President Trump needs to reunify these families and he needs to get rid of the zero-tolerance policy. Those are the two fundamental immediate things and then congress needs to pass comprehensive immigration reform. People are demanding it, there's obviously a bipartisan consensus in this country [inaudible].

Question: And it's a huge problem that these kids are now separated how could that possibly – how can they be reunited now?

Mayor: They can be reunited if there's the same – the same energy that was put into separating the families can be used to reunite the families. It can be done.

[Inaudible]

Question: [Inaudible] Facebook Live feed [inaudible] Mayor de Blasio [inaudible]?

Mayor: It's just appalling – appalling that anyone who is here on behalf of millions of people wouldn't be invited to see what's going on. What are they hiding, why are they hiding, why are they breaking the norms of any kind of democratic [inaudible].

Question: Have you gotten any assurances from the feds [inaudible] 239 –

Mayor: No, we're waiting for information and assurances, that's the whole point –

Question: There was sources telling the Post that there might be more kids on the way, has anyone notified City Hall about that?

Mayor: That's what we're demanding, answers, and what's happening to these kids and if there's going to be any more?

Question: Yeah, and just one more off-topic? Albany took away –

Mayor: No, we're not going to do off-topic right now.

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