

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 3, 2020, 8:45 AM

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

TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON NY1

Pat Kiernan: Voting is underway in the city. As we have cautioned you many times, it is unlikely that we will have results as early as we have had in the past, whether that's here or elsewhere in the country. The City, also preparing for the possibility that there will be protests or unrest in the hours or days after this election. Mayor de Blasio with me now on the telephone. Mr. Mayor, thank you for spending some time with us this morning. You and I, whether you know this or not, spend an inordinate amount of time every morning when we have the live coverage of your daily coronavirus briefings, and I think one of the things that you have said day after day is this is a time for New Yorkers to pull together. How does that apply to Election Day?

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Well, Pat, you're right when you say this is an election – first of all, it's literally the most important election of our lifetimes. And I think the future of New York City is hanging in the balance here. I mean, let's put it in context. The future of the city hangs in the balance with this election. Joe Biden gets elected, we're going to have a major stimulus. That's going to help us speed our recovery. Joe Biden gets elected, we're going to have a vaccine that people can believe in and are ready to take. So much riding on it. But, look, I think the fact that – you're right, it's going to potentially take days to get the result. It means that people need to be a little patient with a democratic process. They were patient when we all were standing in line there in early voting. Let's realize we're not going to get an instant result most likely, but if people have concerns, the way to address them is first, by voting today. Anyone who hasn't voted, you got until nine o'clock tonight. And it's such an important thing for people to come out and participate. Anyone in line by nine o'clock gets to vote, no matter how late it goes. But then in the days ahead, let's let the democratic process take its place. That's the crucial thing here.

Kiernan: Mayor de Blasio, we have seen lines this morning at the polls, but we've got 1,200 poll sites open instead of 88, as was for the early voting. When you see these lines this morning, at what point does that cross from being engaged voters in New York City to being a problem?

Mayor: I think given the energy to vote, that is unprecedented in our lives, it's not going to surprise me there's a lot of long lines. Thank God for early voting. You know, that's still real new for us as New Yorkers. If we hadn't had early voting, 1.1 million people voting early, we'd really have crazy lines today. But no, I don't think it's a problem. I think it's a good thing if people are coming out. And as you saw in early voting, people handled it real well. The Board of Elections didn't handle it so well, but the people handled it well. I expect that again today. I think everyone is going to be excited and has been waiting for this day. So, the important point, Pat, today is, you know, this is the no excuses day. If you haven't voted yet, get out there no matter what it

takes. And generally, people are making it a positive atmosphere. And the workers, the folks who work in the polls, I don't want to hold any of the Board of Elections' mistakes against them. People working the polls are really trying their damndest to make it a positive experience.

Kiernan: I'm just thinking back to the day that you did your early voting. You know, you could have made the decision to come back on Election Day. You could have probably been slipped in the side door, but instead –

Mayor: The Rudy Giuliani approach [inaudible] –

[Laughter]

Kiernan: But, instead, you were there, and you talked to some voters, you caught up on some emails, they've got a picture on the screen right now of you making some phone calls, doing some City business. What did you take away from that time you spent with other new Yorkers on the line?

Mayor: Yeah. And let me say two major takeaways. The first was just how good the people of this city are. Honestly. I mean, folks were joking around that. Of course, they have strong opinions. So, I got to hear lots of different opinions on lots of issues. But it was, you know, a beautiful moment, in that people cared so much they would wait as long as it took to vote and it's kind of a little bit of a, you know, a communal carnival atmosphere on one level in a good way. The other side of the equation, the other takeaway is the Board of Elections must be fundamentally reformed. We can't have a Board of Elections that was created by Tammany Hall, you know, still in the 21st century. That has to happen in Albany because early voting could have been and should have been a much faster, better experience. And we want that for the future. We want that. We need that. But New Yorkers – I mean, New Yorkers are amazing. The commitment to participating was actually a very beautiful thing to see.

Kiernan: I want to ask you about the possibility of protest, whether that is tonight or tomorrow or in the days ahead. We have seen some examples, not a lot of examples, but enough examples of NYPD officers misbehaving in that there is a lot of support for Donald Trump in – among the NYPD, among our police. They are going to be the ones who are out there enforcing the law and keeping the peace if there are protests. Is there a conflict of interest there? And what message can you send to officers who might bring their own political feelings to the work that they would have to do if there is unrest?

Mayor: Well, what I'll tell all our officers, and I think they know it already is, leave your politics at the door. The minute you put on that uniform, you represent all of us. And I really believe, Pat, the overwhelming majority of officers understand that and comport themselves professionally. Anyone who doesn't is going to suffer the consequences. Look, we had an officer last weekend, decided to express some pro-Trump views. You're not allowed to express partisan political views in uniform. That officer was suspended right away. So, we will not tolerate any officer taking their political views and trying to take advantage of, you know, the wearing of the uniform. But look, I don't expect that. If there's a few bad apples, they're going to be dealt with, but overwhelmingly what we've seen is the police doing what they're supposed to do, respecting and

supporting the democratic process. We've seen that at the poll sites with early voting, we've seen that year after year. We see that at the protests [inaudible] with poll sites and protests, but remember also, Pat, there's a stereotype that has to be bluntly confronted here. Our police force is diverse in every sense, politically, ethnically, where people live, more than half our officers are people of color, almost half our officers live in New York City. There's a wide range of political views. I'm a little thrown by the notion that when people talk about the NYPD, the only image that comes into a lot of people's minds is, you know, a pro-Trump, suburban, older, white male officer. That's actually not the NYPD today. It just isn't. And let's respect the fact that officers have a wide range of views. But what we pay them to do is to put on a uniform, protect all of us, and not be political at all. And I really think they understand that.

Kiernan: Mayor de Blasio, thank you for being with us on Election Day. I appreciate it.

Mayor: Take care, Pat. You be well.

###