

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Well, good morning, everybody. First of all, this is a crucial day for New York City in terms of the census – last day of the 2020 Census. This has been a very unusual journey. Let's say that to – for sure, the census part of the U.S. Constitution, that the whole people of this country should be counted every 10 years, everyone, no matter who they are or what their documentation status. And what we've had this year is a persistent effort to undermine the count emanating from the Trump administration. It's been a very, very sad chapter in our history. A specific effort to undercount immigrants, to under count people of color, to under count cities, to under count blue states. We're now at the last day. The Supreme Court made a decision. I don't think it was fair, but they made the decision to cut the census short. Here we are. New Yorkers, despite a pandemic, have responded really, really strongly. And our census team has done an amazing job reaching out to people no matter what's been thrown at them. But it all comes down to this. Our last chance to be counted, our last chance for fairness and justice, our last chance for fair representation of Washington, our last chance for our fair share of billions and billions of dollars, it all comes down to today. And every one of you, if anyone out there has not yet filled out the census, you can do it for your entire family. One person could do it for our whole household. It is crucial and we need you now. So go to my2020census.gov. If you have questions, call 8-4-4-3-3-0-2-0-2-0. We need you to take those 10 minutes and make a big difference. And hopefully a last minute surge here will get us to a final result that really will stand us in good stead going forward. We've done better than a lot of the parts of the country. We've closed the gap with the country, much better than 10 years ago, but we still have to do more. We've got until midnight tonight. Everyone, please get in there, fill out that census form. Thank you very much.

All right, now let's talk about the fight we are waging this week, this decisive week, the fight we're waging against a second wave of the coronavirus. And I say again, there does not need to be the second wave in New York City. We can stop a second wave in New York City if we act decisively now. So that comes down to all of us. So right now we're going into our second week of the pause in the red zones and the other zones that have been established by the State. We do see again, today's results indicate some leveling off, some improvement and that all these grassroots efforts, all the education, all the face mask distribution, the enforcement, the testing, it's all having an impact. We've got more to do, but tens of thousands of tests have taken place in the areas of greatest concern, that's helping. We're encouraging everyone to go out and get tested. We are seeing a plateauing now of the test results, and that is a very good sign.

But much, much more to do. And again, think about what a second wave would mean for all of us. A second wave would mean a lot shuts down. We go backwards. No one wants that. So we

can stop this once and for all in these areas of Brooklyn and Queens, where there's a concern and therefore protect the whole city. And that's what we're going to do. The testing again, always crucial to our efforts. So we are just flooding the zone with testing. We're saying to everyone, whoever you are, wherever you are, get tested, particularly in these zones, but well beyond, the whole city, get tested. Certainly if you haven't been tested in a while, or you've never been testing. Get tested. Here to tell you about these extensive testing efforts, especially in the zones of greatest concern is the head of our extraordinary Test and Trace effort, Dr. Ted Long.

Executive Director Ted Long, NYC Test and Trace Corps.: Testing is important because it gives us the line of sight that we need in order to suppress the coronavirus. Now in New York City, we've built out a massive testing regime. We do more tests per capita every day than European countries like Germany and Asian countries like South Korea. As the Mayor said, what we've done is we've focused our testing resources in on the three clusters. And in the last two weeks alone, we've conducted more than 17,000 new tests in the clusters. Now we've accomplished this by building out 32 new sites in the clusters. And among those, 18 of our new sites are specifically in the red zones, in the areas of highest need, highest risk.

Our sites will look like mobile testing units, self-swab stations where you can come get a kit, actually perform the test on yourself, hand the kit back. You're done in a matter of minutes. And we've built those out collaboratively with our community boards, with houses of worship to make sure that they're accessible to everybody. And we have our rapid testing sites where once you come in and get the test done, you'll have your result back within 15 minutes.

I'd like to announce today that we're opening another large rapid testing site at the Kew Gardens Hills Library. It's open as we speak. Now, I want to take a moment to say thank you to everybody that has come out and gotten tested. Testing again, gives us the line of sight that we need to fight the coronavirus. And for the 17,000 people that have come out into our clusters to get tested, each of you is proven once again that New Yorkers know that we're in this together and that we will succeed together. Thank you sir.

Mayor: Thank you very much Dr. Long, and thanks to everyone at Test and Trace because your devotion to making sure that people get testing is just wonderful. And everyone, again, unlike some places in the world, we have really gone the extra mile to make testing available widely, to make it simple, to make it fast, to make it free. Everyone needs to take advantage of that for the good of all. The better look we get at in all of New York City, the better we'll know what we need to do to fight back the second wave and make sure it does not reach us.

Now, of course, in addition to testing we always need enforcement. I want to say at the outset, the vast majority of New Yorkers throughout this crisis have done a great job wearing masks, practicing social distancing. That's true in all sorts of neighborhoods around the city. And as these problems have emerged in some particular ZIP codes and zones in Brooklyn Queens, we've seen a huge amount of support from community leaders, institutions. And people recognizing that it's important to participate, to wear the mask, to practice social distancing. But there's always going to be a few people – and this is true everywhere, there's going to be a few people who don't get the memo and we need to really push hard on. And so we continue a lot of inspections, a lot of enforcement activity. 1,700 sites were inspected yesterday by City

inspectors, 25 summons issued. And in the last two weeks, just to give you the overall picture, there's been 18,000 sites that have been inspected. You're talking about schools, stores, community institutions, every kind of location. 18,000 sites have been inspected. 288 summonses issued in some of those in the many thousands of dollars. So there's a serious, serious effort here.

And what we always hope is that the education efforts, the outreach efforts, the free mask distribution really carry the load here. And obviously the emphasis on testing. But where enforcement is necessary, it continues. It continues deeply. And I want to thank all the men and women of our City agencies who are doing extraordinary work. It's so important to understand this, that when you think about an effort this extensive, to go into areas of concern, to educate people, to work with them, to answer their questions, to give out the masks, to get people tested, to enforce, it takes a huge amount of effort. And all these City agencies you see on your screen, their enforcement agents have been out. You've had a tremendous grassroots outreach by all of them. It's been hard work. It's been long hours. It's not always easy, but they've all been out there doing the work to keep all of us safe. So I want to thank the employees of all these agencies for the big impact they're making on this city.

Now, again, we're going to use all these tools. All of these tools help us, and I want to come back to testing because it really is the essence of everything. Testing to get us the information we need to stop a second wave, testing to then drive back the disease further in this city, to go even further than we've ever gone before reducing the coronavirus. Testing is the pathway to the day we have the vaccine and we overcome this disease once and for all. Now we need more and more partners in this work. And we've had incredible partnerships, public hospitals, private hospitals, clinics, a lot of private health care organizations. It's really been a very positive story, how many people have come together to provide testing. But now we have new partners who do such important work and they particularly serve folks who are covered by Medicaid and they have tremendous outreach capacity. And this is going to be another part of getting more and more people tested and getting them tested more consistently. Yesterday, we talked about clear ground rules for how frequently people should get tested and a real focus, a reminder to all New Yorkers, if you haven't been tested in a while, you should be. If you're in one of those categories of people that there's a particular urgent need to get tested, you need to do it right away. We need all the partners we can get to keep spreading that message and make testing available and easy. So I want to thank our colleagues at Fidelis Care, at Healthfirst and at MetroPlus Health. All these plans are participating with us now to maximize testing. Between the three of them they serve over 1.2 million New Yorkers, many in the hardest hit communities. And they are going to be using all of their outreach ability to get people to testing, to help focus them on where the best testing sites are, to encourage people to do it, to answer their questions. And if anyone tests positive and needs support, they're going to help us, working with Test and Trace to get people safely separated and get them the support they need. So continuing to build that extraordinary network of people working together to protect this city.

Okay, now here's another part of the equation. We've talked about masks a lot. Masks has been an amazingly positive part of this equation. We have learned over the months that there's literally no tool more important than having that face mask on, but the face masks have caused a challenge for some New Yorkers. And we're talking about 180,000 New Yorkers who are deaf or

hard of hearing, having a mask over their mouth obscuring the ability to see their mouth limits lip reading and facial expressions that makes it harder for people to communicate. I want to tell you, this is an example of people coming up with solutions that I really appreciate. Our Mayor's Office for People With Disabilities, and there you see the wonderful Director of that Office, Victor Calise who has done amazing work on behalf of people with disabilities. Well, our Mayor's Office teamed up with our Department for Citywide Administrative Services and Department of Education and now are delivering 100,000 clear face masks, like you see in the picture there, that will protect everyone but also allow people to communicate despite all the challenges of this crisis. And this is particularly true for our school staff who work with kids who are deaf or hard of hearing. We're going to make sure they get the masks they need so they can continue the absolutely precious, crucial work that they do.

A couple more things before I go to our indicators. There are so many people who have stepped forward. I talked about these amazing partnerships to get people tested, to help people all over the city. There's a lot of folks, a lot of organizations, companies, people who have stepped forward and just wanted to help the people in New York City in a variety of ways. So it's a great opportunity today to say thank you to companies and organizations that have done great, great work and want to be there for the people of New York City who have put their energy and their talent and their money and their material where their mouth is. So thanks to Uniqlo, thanks to the Committee of 100, Perrigo, Trinity Church, Emigrant Bank, the Huamin Foundation, and Bombas all have joined together to help protect people and help fight through this crisis together.

One last thing before indicators. Today I'm wearing a purple tie and I'm doing that for a purpose. Today is Spirit Day. And this is about an important message, an important idea that I think has been made even more pertinent by the crisis we've all gone through together. You know, for a long time, we've been talking about the challenges faced by LGBTQ youth. And so many examples of discrimination and bullying and negativity directed at our young people. And we have to protect our young people. We have to be there for them. This is something our First Lady has focused on with an extraordinary team of dedicated folks who put together the Unity Project. This is something that should be of concern to all of us, our precious young people, our future. Yet some are being singled out and treated so negatively. We can't have that in New York City. And particularly after what we've all been through together in this pandemic, I hope we learn a new spirit of unity and understanding. We've all got to work toward that. So Spirit Day today represented by the color purple is a day to focus on stopping bullying against our young people. And to make sure that all of us model positive behavior and all of us step up if a young person is having a challenge and that in our schools, in our communities, any young person, any member of the LGBTQ community is suffering from bullying, let's stand up for them. Let's give them the support they need. Let's fight bullying and all its forms. School is back, and it's a good time to focus again on the fact that bullying will not be accepted anywhere in New York City.

Okay, daily indicators. Number one, again, this is for the whole city. Number one, daily number of people admitted to New York City hospitals for suspected COVID-19. The threshold is 200 patients. Today's report, 88 patients, and a confirmed positivity level for COVID of 18.6 percent. Number two, new reported cases on a seven-day average, threshold 550 cases, today's report 499 cases. And number three, percent of people testing citywide positive for COVID-19 that

threshold is five percent, today's report 1.31 percent. And the seven-day rolling average is 1.49 percent. Okay, a few words in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, let us turn to our colleagues in the media. Please let me know the name and outlet of each journalist.

Moderator: Good morning, all. We will now begin our Q-and-A, as a reminder, we're joined today by Dr. Chokshi, by Dr. Ted Long, and by Senior Advisor Dr. Jay Varma. The first question today goes to Gloria from NY1.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor. I wanted to ask you about some of the reporting my colleagues have been doing regarding some of these yeshivas that appear to be operating despite the rule right now, and specifically to ask you about what the Governor said yesterday, threatening to cut funding from the City if enforcement wasn't ramped up.

Mayor: Well, Gloria, two very different topics. So, the yeshivas, we are working with all the yeshivas to make sure they understand the rules and follow the rules. There is a gray area that we're waiting for more guidance from the State on, in the area of childcare and what the rules are related to childcare. So, this is something we're talking with the State about right now to resolve it. I think everyone needs clear standards. We don't have enough clarity on childcare. And as soon as we get that, we want to make sure that everyone understands it and follows it.

On the various efforts to talk about our funding. Look, you just saw, in the presentation, the numbers of how much enforcement has gone on, how much outreach is going on, and how much testing is going on. Here at the local level where the rubber hits the road, there's an extraordinary effort going on. People can talk in Albany, people can talk in Washington, but here where the real work is being done – I mean these thousands of City workers, out doing this job. They deserve the respect, that they are out there working very hard and selflessly to protect people. And these efforts in outreach and education and enforcement and testing, they're very real, they're very tangible. They're having a very big impact. I, honestly, Gloria – I'm very used to bluster from Washington and from Albany. I've heard a lot of it. I understand bluster when I see it, but here we have a job to do, the job is to protect New Yorkers. That's what I'm focused on every day. And I am deeply concerned that there is a threat here of a second wave. My job is to stop that second wave, not to play games, not to focus on threats, but the threat we should be worried about is the threat of a second wave of the coronavirus in New York City. That's what all levels of government should be talking about together, together, and not using wordplay, but actually supporting each other to get this work done. Go ahead.

Question: [Inaudible] you. Do you think the Governor is being a little bit punitive here, and when you're talking about bluster, do you think that this is hurting your efforts and then distracting from what the City should, and the State, should be focused on right now?

Mayor: Again, Gloria, I'm used to bluster from Washington. I'm used to bluster from Albany. I don't focus on that. I focus on protecting people. I focus on what's happening in our

neighborhoods and you know what? Focusing on the people – I've found this a long time ago, don't focus on politicians, focus on the people. The people are working with us to solve this problem. You do see a leveling off here. Thank God. That's because of a lot of hard work, a whole lot of hard work, all those folks in Test and Trace Corps, and all those other folks who have been out there turning this tide. Let's honor and respect them and stop these other games. Go ahead.

Moderator: The next is James Ford from PIX.

Question: Thanks for taking my call. Good morning. This is kind of a follow-up on the previous set of questions. I mean, today – this afternoon, Dov Hikind and a variety of other Orthodox Jewish leaders are going to be holding a rally on the steps of the New York Public Library on Fifth Avenue. They say that you and the Governor are targeting the Jewish community and they're conducting this demonstration under the hashtag, #EndJewHatred. That's their – I'm just taking it right from their press release. Just what do you say in response to these claims by these Orthodox Jewish leaders and the supporters who will be on the steps of the library today?

Mayor: I want to just talk about what we should be focused on, James. This is a community that I know well, and I care deeply for. I have a lot of love for this community and I always have, and I'm working with my team with so many members of the community who are trying to address this problem. They're not trying to politicize it. They're not trying to create, you know, tension and division. They're actually trying to address the problem together. And I can certainly say all my colleagues, Dr. Katz, Dr. Chokshi have been on so many calls, so many constant efforts to work with the community. And we see so many community leaders coming forward, so many community institutions coming forward to address these problems together. That's what we should be focused on, this danger of the second wave is – it would affect all of us. It's not about one community or another. But no, come on. We are facing a threat. Let's address the threat together and overcome it. And then we can be proud as New Yorkers that once again, we fought back the coronavirus. Go ahead, James.

Question: And a question from my colleague, Kala Rama, there are no snow days for the academic year. I want to make sure I'm clear on that. And for – if those days where there is heavy snow, everything goes remote, what guarantees can the City give that every student has full remote learning access on those days?

Mayor: James, look, first of all, yeah, you're right. Instead of the traditional snow day reality, we – you know, necessity became the mother of invention back in March. And we had to create from scratch a fully remote capacity for our school system. So, we have that when we need to use it. And then, you know, if there were a blizzard, that's what we would activate, and every student could participate. But, look, in terms of access to the technology, I can't say it enough times, we've been saying since March and April, that any child who needs technology, we're getting it to them, and anyone who needs it can call 3-1-1. And we've been distributing for months and months, hundreds of thousands of devices. And now we will – since school came back, we were able to distribute a lot of devices that were in schools. We know we have to purchase more and that's already been started. So, any time a child needs something, they should notify their school, or the parents should notify the school. A lot of times the school can address

the problem right away with just the technology they have available. But if there's other folks who need them, we're going to get it to them. And it's as simple as that.

Moderator: The next is Andrew Siff from NBC.

Question: Mayor, good morning. For a couple of days now you've described the cluster zones as leveling off. And you've also described this as a critical week. We're now at Thursday. Is leveling off enough to end the shutdowns after two weeks?

Mayor: Andrew, we're not there yet to know the final answer. I told you by the end of this week – and that means to me, Sunday – that we will have a good picture of whether we're in striking range of pulling off the restrictions next week, or whether we need more time. I can tell you the obvious, leveling off as the first step in the right direction. The first thing we all had to do was stop the growth of the virus, stop the increase in the infection rate and, you know, start to turn it around. That is clearly happening, but there's more to do. There's more to do. So, good start, a lot more to do. People have to get tested. They have to follow these rules. And then at the end of this week, we'll have a better picture of what next week will look like. Go ahead.

Question: Portions of the cluster zones, whether it's in Brooklyn or Queens, that are giving you the most trouble at this point, or even micro clusters as the Governor talked about it yesterday, that might prove to be the biggest obstacle.

Mayor: Look, Andrew, we are working with every community and I think what we're seeing across the board is community leaders stepping forward, community institutions stepping forward, more and more people wearing masks, more and more people getting tested. The testing numbers are really impressive. We need to keep building them. I look at it, that so long as we are reaching folks at the grassroots and change is happening and the numbers are moving, we can achieve a turnaround in every one of these communities. They may not all happen at the exact same time, but we can turn this around in every community.

Moderator: The next is Emma from the New York Times.

Question: Hi, good morning. So, I had a question, it seems like one of the side effects of the Governor, sort of, taking control of the hot spots is that you no longer provide updates by ZIP code. And one of my colleagues says that the City hadn't updated the tracing figures since September 19th. Can you provide that information that I think that New Yorkers are sort of hungry for?

Mayor: Well, Emma, it's a very fair question. We want to make sure that we're providing clear and accurate information. I do think, again – look, we're in an emergency status right now. That's not going to go on forever, but that's where we are right now. And the City has to defer to the State on some of these matters. And when there's a different measure being created by the State, there is the valid question of whether we're going to create more clarity and more confusion by having different numbers out there. I'll work with our team to figure out how best to put out the information consistently in light of the new structure of the State put together. But we want to be

accurate. We want to be clear. We want to be timely, but we also want to make sure that it aligns to how the State is presenting the information. Go ahead.

Question: Thank you. And I have a question for Commissioner Chokshi next. Can you talk about whether New York City has seen any people who've been reinfected, whether that's something you're looking for or expect to see, and perhaps there was someone who didn't have a positive test early in the pandemic that has been reinfected. Is that possible?

Mayor: Dr. Chokshi –

Commissioner Dave Chokshi, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene: Yes. Well, thank you for the question, Emma. And I also wanted to say, I'm glad to hear that you had a good experience at our rapid testing site. And thanks for helping us spread the word about it. With respect to your question about reinfection, it's an important one, because we are seeing some cases of reinfection that are being reported in the scientific literature including here in the United States as well as elsewhere around the world. With respect to re-infection in New York City, we are actively looking at that. As you may be aware, we have to really get into the details of specific cases to understand whether successive positive tests represent a real reinfection or not, because it's possible that someone could test positive multiple times, but not actually represent a real re-infection of the virus. So, it is something that our Health Department is looking at, but we have to do it in a rigorous way to get to true reinfections.

Moderator: The next is Juliet from 1010 WINS.

Question: Hey, good morning, all. And good morning, Mr. Mayor. Mr. Mayor, I wanted to get back to voting locations – early voting locations. There are some that are very far away from certain neighborhoods. For instance, in College Point, Queens, the only early voting location is in Flushing and you need a bus to get there. In Astoria, there are addresses in the Ditmars area and those people have to go to the Museum of the Moving Image, which is on the other side of Astoria, definitely not walking distance in that case. So, is there any way to get more early voting locations on board?

Mayor: Well, again, Julia, you know, that is all put together by the Board of Elections, which is not run by the City of New York. And I, again, say that with sorrow, because I don't like what's happening at the Board of Elections and I think it should be run by the City of New York or it should be run very differently. But I will say, you know, I think initially when early voting was passed by the Legislature – a huge positive reform, a real step forward – the Board of Elections really tried to do the minimum of early voting sites. They've clearly made some progress and there's a lot more than what they originally proposed last year, but I think what is in place now is going to be what we're going to deal with this year. Going forward after this year, I think we have to ask the question of what early voting should look like, particularly the crucial election next year and whether there should be more sites. I, obviously, would like to see as many sites as make sense for really reaching people and making voting a positive, easy experience. But for this year, I think the ones that they have set forward are the ones we're all going to try and do our best to make work. Go ahead, Juliet.

Question: Okay. This afternoon, the Brooklyn Diocese is back in court, in federal court, asking that churches be reopened because they have maintained social distance and the 25 percent capacity. Is there any way, given that their cooperation and behaviors have been on the mark, that they can reopen earlier than a two-week shutdown?

Mayor: I think the way to think about this, Juliet, is we are trying to stop a full blown second wave. Again, I think it sounds to a lot of people like an abstraction. I just want to take you back to March and April and just think about what that felt like, and do we dare want to go back to that? And, unfortunately, we're seeing around the country, we're seeing around Europe, they have lo and behold, unfortunately, gone all the way back to full shutdowns in some areas. We cannot let that happen here. So, if for a few weeks we're asking people to do something exceptional to help stop a problem from growing and stop it from spreading, I think that's fair. And I think the courts will understand that this is our health care leadership saying there's a clear and present danger, it must be addressed aggressively. And if we all address it aggressively, it's just for a few weeks and then we can go back to having a lot fewer restrictions.

Moderator: The next is Reuvain from Hamodia.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor. There's a feeling among some in the city that they're caught in a fight between you and the Governor. There's a New York Times article says that you've spoken to the Governor personally one time in the last month. I'm wondering if you can confirm if that's true. Has the Governor ever invited you to one of his press conferences and what you say to people who just feel that there's this fight between you and the Governor and they're caught in the middle?

Mayor: I think people should stop focusing on this. I think it's just a moot point. The City and State work together all the time, every hour, every day. The Governor and I talk sometimes, a lot of times the work is done between our staffs – that's perfectly normal. Sometimes we've been together for press conferences, a lot of times we do our own thing. It's just – let's stop rehashing the same point. What matters is getting something done. Overwhelmingly, we agree on the broad strategies. And, guess what? The City and State are going to have differences sometimes, that's been true forever. In a crisis, you try and obviously minimize differences, get on the same page, but you're still going to have some inherent differences of views. It's just, the State does a different thing than the City does, but we ultimately get to a lot of agreement, move forward together. That's where it really matters here. Go ahead.

Question: The NYPD announced the monthly crime statistics, that was just right before you announced this new shutdown, and it seems to have forgotten, I don't think it was addressed at all in any press conference. September was the fourth consecutive month that shootings went up by more than 100 percent. I'm wondering if you can comment on these latest crime stats and what, if anything, is being done. I know you had some plans in the summer, different programs. Have you seen any progress? What is being done to reduce this pike?

Mayor: We've definitely seen progress. Look, we've gone through a perfect storm here and we've gone through a massive disruption. Again, we can keep going over the same material, but I just want people to remember we saw a million people lose their jobs, we saw schools closed, we

saw houses of worship close. We saw life at every community absolutely totally disrupted, people cooped up for months, massive frustrations. It all came out and it led to an uptick in crime and it was very difficult to deal with, but NYPD moved resources around, shifted on the greatest problem areas, increased gun arrests, and you have seen some real improvement. What we needed was the consequences to come back, the court system come back. And now, it is coming back and that's great. And I thank Judge DiFiore and everyone at the Office of Court Administration, they are rapidly reopening the court system, the prosecutors are prosecuting more cases. This is what we've been needing and it's finally happening. So, this has gone to allow us to turn the tide and the horrible, aberrant situation of 2020, we will not repeat, because we went through hell, and now we're working our way out of it. And now all of the strengths of this city and the NYPD will come back to the fore.

Moderator: We have time for two more for today. The next is Erin from Politico.

Question: Hi, Mr. Mayor. I want to follow up on the question regarding the Governor's statements yesterday, that he would withdraw the City's funding over this disagreement on enforcement. I mean, you refer to it as bluster. Does that mean you think this is an empty threat, or do you have any kind of genuine concern? You know, considering that the City has already lost \$9 billion that, you know, this could be harmful. And, you know, second to that, it seems like the two of you have a fundamental disagreement on the standard for enforcement. He actually said yesterday, the childcare center, they're not allowed to operate as childcare centers, so they should be shut down. And, you know, he doesn't want any warnings, whereas you want warnings. He says, just go straight to enforcement. So, is there a reason you sort of fundamentally disagree with that approach?

Mayor: Again, everything I understand from our health leadership is we do not have written standards from the State, which is – we're a nation of laws, we have to have written guidance to determine how we handle a situation. We don't have it yet for the childcare centers. I'm sure it's something we'll resolve, but, look, the focus should be on getting the work done. And I think all over this city, all over the state, what people is for leaders to focus on solving the problems. And the last thing that should happen is to take away resources from a place that is suffering through so much. So, in the end, and I think the Legislature will agree, that the focus should be on solving the problems, stopping the second wave, addressing the recovery of the city. That's what everyone should be focused on. Go ahead.

Question: Alright, thank you. And then I just have a question regarding the Board of Elections, you've been very critical of them and said just now that you wish it was run by the City, or it was run very differently. But the City Council does have a role in approving the commissioners of the Board of Elections. And as we've reported today, they're set to approve two individuals who, you know, are in the mold of people who are politically connected. One of whom has been penalized in the past for nepotism. The other is, you know, very close to the Brooklyn Democratic Party. So, I'm wondering if you think that, you know, that these people should be approved and if there's – and anything that can be done to affect reform through this approval process.

Mayor: Erin, look, I know it's a sincere question, but I just have to say to you that is really not on my radar screen. I'm focused on stopping the second wave. I'm not focused on who's going to

be on the Board of Elections. What I think would be great is for the Council, the Legislature, everyone to come together and agree that the current structure of the Board of Elections makes no sense. You can't have a partisan structure in the 21st Century. It should be abolished. There should be a nonpartisan entity that works on this. It should be either just a plain City agency, which we know would come with plenty of oversight, or a State agency, whatever way they want to do it, but not something that's overtly political and can't get the job done.

Moderator: Last question for today goes to Katie Honan from the Wall Street Journal.

Question: Hey, good morning, Mr. Mayor. I wanted to ask, I don't see Chancellor Carranza on the call, but I wanted to ask hopefully, he or someone at the DOE listening, when we, reporters and just the public, can get the school attendance numbers. And by that, and also because if you have the attendance numbers, we should be able to get enrollment numbers. I know a lot of people have been asking. So, I just wanted to ask you if you have any insight into when we can get that.

Mayor: Yeah. I know that work is being done to get those finalized. I don't have the exact date but, Katie, my impression is that'll be next week. Obviously, we're dealing with the reality unlike any year we've ever been through, but what's important is schools are up and running. Parents are now getting to see what's happening. They're going to have a crucial moment coming up in the next few weeks to make a choice of whether they want all remote long-term or whether they want to opt in to blended learning. And parents will have an opportunity of seeing weeks of school underway to make that decision, but we'll get the attendance information out as soon as it's really firmed up. Go ahead.

Question: I also have another education question to ask. You know, I know the DOE has been updating it's a map of which schools are shut down because of coronavirus cases. They have it broken down by entire school or for classes, but I've heard from parents in some schools who say that their schools have been shut down because of COVID, but they're not on the map. And they're concerned about transparency issues about just the actual school. I know you said the other day, I think two schools have been shut down, but that isn't true. It has been more. So, again, Chancellor Carranza isn't on the call, but is there any concern that these maps are just not updated frequently enough where there is some sort of transparency issue here with these schools and these cases, right?

Mayor: Respectfully, Katie, when you say, I said something that's not true, I would ask you to ask it is a question. So, let me help you. Yes, it was true because I was not counting any school that was shut down because it was in one of the zones because that's moot, it's in the zone. It was shut down anyway. Two, is the number. I was at the Department of Education at six o'clock yesterday and confirm this number, two. If you exclude the red and orange zones, there are two schools shut down for a 14-day period in the entire city as of 6:00 PM last night. There are some schools that are shut down for 24 hours or 48 hours for investigation. I don't know of any case in this whole time – I've not heard anyone say that a school is shut and that it has not publicly acknowledged that it is shut.

So, if you have evidence of that, I would really appreciate it because we want to make sure if anything was not handled right, that we fixed that. But what we've seen out of 1,600 schools, very, very few required, a longer shutdown, some of required a one-day or two-day shutdown. And then they're back up and running. The vast, vast majority of schools have continued with no shutdown. And the testing in the schools continues to be extraordinary. I will give you an example. This is from yellow zone test sites over the last three weeks – 3,100 test results and four positives. This is all testing of teachers and staff in those schools. I mean, everything we're seeing so far, is the testing of the schools is coming back very, very well, very, very, very low positivity levels in schools. But whenever a school does need to be shut down, whether it's for a day or for a longer period of time, we want that information to be out to the school community. So, if you have any example where that didn't happen, please let us know.

Okay, everybody, look simple as this – crucial week. This is the week to stop the second wave. We know how to do it. We've done it before, we can do it again, but it really takes focus. And, again, just in some of the questions you heard there, there is the possibility that maybe people are discounting second wave and what it could mean. Look no further to some states of this country or to countries in Europe, you do not want to experience the second wave. You do not want to see a full scale shutdown again in New York City, and it does not have to be. We can stop this and we can turn around and we can do it quickly. So, everyone let's get this done. Let's get this problem out of the way and go back with the extraordinary progress we were making in terms of restarting this city. That's what we need to go together, and I know we will. Thanks, everyone.

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