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NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 23, 2020, 10:00 AM

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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Good morning, everybody. Well, we are now in the heart of summer and people are more and more out and about this city. We see some really good, positive signs. We've got a lot of work to do. We've got a long road ahead, but let's be thankful. Let's be proud of the hard work of New Yorkers. You see people out and about. You see the economy slowly, but surely, starting to come back. It's going to be a long time, but more and more people are coming back to work. More and more businesses are starting to open. Great things happening, like our Open Restaurants initiative. The outdoor dining has been a huge hit. A lot that we should be proud of and a lot of work to do to build upon it, and a lot of new things we're going to bring into the equation. In a few minutes, we'll talk about our public pools, starting to open again. Some of them are going to be open as early as tomorrow, and that's good news for this city.

So, as we continue to fight back, build back, we recognize the tools that we need to keep doing that. And one of the biggest pieces of the equation is our test and trace program. You're going to hear a lot more about test and trace in a few minutes, but I want to frame things for you about what it has taken to get into phase four, and how far we've come. Because, really, when you think about it, for us to go through phases one, two, three, four, it took a lot of commitment from a lot of people, and certainly not just in the City Government, but folks in the private sector, nonprofit, so many people who worked hard to keep bringing us back. And so many people who worked hard in partnership to make it work for people. We had a great partnership with the MTA and the State to improve the subways so people could feel more comfortable, the buses so people could feel more comfortable. And we're seeing now some really striking progress. One example, when you compare the time right after the pause was put in place and the worst of this crisis to now, subway ridership is up 75 percent; bus ridership up 57 percent; Staten Island Ferry ridership up 70 percent. These are really striking figures. And what's interesting is, for a long time, bus ridership, which is so important in this city, that was actually ahead of subway ridership. Traditionally, subways, obviously, a lot more people use. For the first time in a while, we now see subway ridership surpassing bus ridership overall, which means more and more people are feeling confident that they can go into the subway and stay safe. We do see more activity in terms of car traffic, but not as much, by any stretch, as what we're seeing with mass transit – an increase of 23 percent of the East River Bridges; 17 percent on the Harlem River bridges. So, we definitely recognize that real activity, real progress is happening, and all of these pieces have to come together for it to work.

Now, testing – from the beginning, we've talked about testing. We've talked about the fact that, if you have enough testing, if you have the right testing, then you can really fight back against this disease. And the testing underlies the core principle that we've used in New York City successfully to fight back, the focus on data, the focus on science – real numbers, real results that tell us what we have to do. We see that, that's been used around the world, that approach works.

When it hasn't been used, the results have been very, very painful. We are going to keep expanding testing, because we need more and more people that have access to it. So, we're announcing a new partnership with the urgent care organization Medright, four new testing sites, three in Manhattan, in Inwood, Midtown, and the Garment District; one in Clinton Hill, in Brooklyn. And this, with other actions, will allow us to expand testing in New York city to 50,000 tests per day. This is the number we've been wanting to get to for quite a while. We will now have that capacity.

Now, I talked about test and trace. This is crucial. This is the big strategic piece of the equation. Obviously, something we have to build from scratch – now, the largest test and trace corps in the nation. And it's extraordinary what is happening as a result of having that ability to confront the disease. When you see it pop up, to actually be able to address it person by person – what a difference that is making. And here to tell you more about that, a man who's leading this effort with a great team. And thanks to his great work – Dr. Ted Long.

Executive Director Ted Long, Test and Trace Corps.: Thank you, sir. I wanted to start by saying thank you to New Yorkers. As we sit here today, we have the lowest rate of new cases of coronavirus than we've had since the beginning of the pandemic. So, every time that you wear a mask when you go outside, every time that you stayed at home when you're sick, oftentimes a great personal or family sacrifice, and every time that you pick up the phone when one of our tracers of the Test and Trace Corps calls, you've earned where we are right now with the lowest levels we've seen of coronavirus. Now, for the past month and a half, one thing that has not changed is that the levels have been low. We've maintained that low level. One thing that has changed is the city is starting to wake up. Now, you're going to work. Your office building is open. Construction is happening. You can go to the zoo. You can eat outside at a restaurant. Across all of the phases of reopening, the Test and Trace Corps has been there to support you and suppress the coronavirus. And I'm proud to say that today, our rates of new cases of the coronavirus through all of those phases of reopening have not had an uptick whatsoever. They've been completely stable. That's good news.

Moving forward, the Test and Trace Corps. is going to continue to suppress and drive down the coronavirus to keep New Yorkers safe. And I'm going to start with telling you two of the key metrics that we strive towards in order to achieve that goal. The first is, we need to be reaching 90 percent of all new people in New York city diagnosed with the coronavirus. Second, is that we need to, for 75 percent of all new cases, or people newly diagnosed with the coronavirus, be completing intake with them and monitoring them so that we know that they're isolating, keeping themselves safe and keeping other New Yorkers safe. And we know that we've had the opportunity to offer them resources. More than 6,000 New Yorkers now we've paired with our resource navigators to give things like food delivery, help with medications, even help with eviction notices or paid sick leave. We want to help New Yorkers to keep New Yorkers safe.

I'm going to talk to you about our current data now. Right now, as we sit here today, we've reached 89 percent of all new coronavirus cases across New York City. That's a substantial improvement since when we started the program. So, we're right there at that 90 percent benchmark that we need to be at to keep New York safe. Now, the second benchmark that we've set for ourselves is the 75 percent of new cases that we need to know are isolating so they're not going out and potentially infecting other New Yorkers. For that number, 71 percent of people that we've reached are completing our intake process – have completed our intake process and

we're monitoring, knowing that they're isolating. However, 64 percent of all new cases are currently – have completed our intake and are being monitored and we know are isolated in therefore. So, we have more work to do there, but we're going to do that work. And we're working as hard as we can to keep New York safe. To give you some raw numbers, to show you the scope of what we've done for New York so far, the Test and Trace Corps has identified more than 17,000 new cases across New York City, and those new cases have given us more than 17,000 new contacts or people they have exposed to the coronavirus when they were infectious.

Now, I want to drill down on one really important number today. There's a group of contacts or people that we know have been exposed to people newly diagnosed with the coronavirus that, by the time we call them, are actively symptomatic with symptoms consistent with coronavirus. So, if our program did not exist here today, if we hadn't called them, if we hadn't intervened, they would have gone out and they would have infected other New Yorkers. Now, how many they would have infected – right now, our number of cases day to day is stable. So, they may have gone out and infected one more New Yorker each. But, right there, our ability to intervene and to get them to isolate has potentially prevented thousands of new infections, assuming they infected one of the other New Yorker. Each other models have shown that one infectious person or case can actually with coronavirus infect 2.5 other people. If they'd gone out there and infected 2.5 other people each, then we've potentially prevented, by not allowing that to happen, more than 5,000 new cases of the coronavirus across New York City since our program began on June 1st. Our ability to use the program to intervene, to catch people early in their infectious state before they've even been tested is the reason we exist and the reason we're going to continue to work so hard to keep New York safe and to find people before they can infect other New Yorkers and give them what they need to get themselves and their families through this, with all of the resources brought to bear at our hands.

I want change gears and talk about something you've been reading about a lot in the news recently. It's a very important issue. It's our lab turnaround time, as we're seeing across the rest of the country right now, other cities and states are horrifically seeing what we've felt and lived through an April in New York City – there are surges of coronavirus. Because they're having more cases, they're doing more testing, and that means that some of the national lab companies are therefore doing more testing for them that otherwise could have been done for us in New York City. Because of that, we saw an increase in the number of days that it was taken for people to get their labs back. Knowing that this day might come, we've already planned a few steps ahead. One strategy that we've employed this week is something called pooling. Pooling is where if you have multiple different samples of coronavirus tests from patients, you run them all at the same time. And if that overall sample is negative, then you don't need to run each one individually because you know that each one individually is negative. So, it saves a tremendous amount of time. Through using strategies that we've had in our pocket for this sort of contingency, we've been able to now drive down the turnaround time for labs, we've cut it in half. The median turnaround time for labs right now across New York City is two days.

I'm going to change gears again and tell you about something that we're really excited about and something that we're going to continue to do and bring to New Yorkers to have us all fight coronavirus together. It's called our hyperlocal response. We're doing a lot of testing, more than 30,000 tests a day. And we can, as the Mayor said, do 50,000 tests a day now in New York City. However, we've learned that there are certain communities that have people that are more often testing positive, and they also have lower testing rates. Those are the communities where we

need to bring testing to them and to get the communities activated so that people can come out and get tested. So, we started this two weeks ago in Tremont, ZIP code 10457. We set out to do 2,500 tests in that community. We've now done 2,800, surpassing our goal. But importantly, what we did is we brought in mobile units. We activated trusted healthcare facilities that are already there. We even brought in a new machine that can give you a coronavirus test back in less than 15 minutes. We did all of that, working with community-based organizations to make sure we were doing it right. And they brought people out and activated the community, and therefore it was a big success from the ground up. We want to use that same mentality in the next two communities, moving forward, to build off of the success we've had in Tremont. So, I'm happy to announce today that we're going to be going to Sunset Park in Brooklyn, and the Rockaways and Queens next, bringing our machines that will give you a result back in a matter of minutes, bringing our mobile vans and building up all of the resources there, working with our community-based organizations so that we can come together community by community where we're needed the most and fight coronavirus together. Thank you.

Mayor: Thank you so much, Ted. Fantastic report. And thank you to all the good people at Test and Trace Corps who are doing this important work. Now, everyone, just a couple more quick things. And I mentioned at the beginning, it's summer and people are more and more out there doing great stuff. And one of the things that's going to be wonderful, it's opening up again some of our public pools. Now, I said weeks ago, we wouldn't be able to, for a variety of reasons, open all of them, but we're opening up some key pools around the city. And this is going to be wonderful for neighborhood residents and particularly young people, especially as it's gotten so hot. So, tomorrow, eight public pools will open up for the first time this summer – tomorrow, Friday, the 24th. And there'll be in all five boroughs – the Mullaly Pool in Highbridge in the Bronx; Sunset Park in Brooklyn; Kosciuszko Pool in Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn; Wagner in East Harlem; Liberty in Jamaica, Queens; Fisher in East Elmhurst, Queens; Tottenville in Staten Island; Lions in Tompkinsville Staten Island. All these pools will be open and then next week, next Friday, seven more – and we'll be announcing those again in the course of next week. Look, we're going to be careful with them. There'll be rules, there'll be social distancing. There'll be smart efforts to keep people safe, but it's also going to provide a lot of wonderful relief for residents of those neighborhoods and folks from all around. So, we're really excited that our public pools will be opening up again, starting tomorrow.

And now, let's go to our daily indicators. Number one, daily number of people admitted to hospitals for suspected COVID-19, threshold is 200 – today's report, 69. Number two, daily number of people in Health + Hospitals ICU's, threshold 375 – today's report, 297 patients. And number three, percentage of people testing positive citywide for COVID, threshold of 15 percent – and a number of you will be very familiar with today, two percent, and a very good number it is.

A few words in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

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

Moderator: We'll now begin our Q&A. As a reminder, we're joined today by Dr. Ted Long and by Senior Advisor Dr. Jay Varma. First question today goes to Juliet from 1010 WINS.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor. How are you doing today?

Mayor: I am good, Juliet. You're a good lead-off hitter. So, we welcome you.

Question: Well, let's try to get a base hit here. You've said many times that encampments are not allowed and yet I've been seeing them and receiving photos from listeners of encampments that are very large. One listener tells me commercial tenants cannot get into their building. They call the precinct, they're told to call 3-1-1 and nothing happens. So, is there a way to be more proactive about this situation?

Mayor: Yeah. Juliet, it's a great question. I appreciate it. Overwhelmingly, we've been successful in recent years, making sure that encampments did not continue in New York City, as they did for decades. When we see them, we stop them, and sometimes it does take a couple of days, but we've managed to do it successfully with very little reoccurrence. Please let my team here at City Hall know the locations. Anyone who tells us about an encampment, we're going to have it addressed right away by Homeless Services, Sanitation, PD, whatever it takes. Go ahead.

Question: Okay, great. Thank you. I will do that. About the pools – great news about the pools. So, can you talk about the specifics? How many – how many will the pools limit? What are the regulations when people get there? How does this work?

Mayor: Yeah, it's a great question. Look, we're going to be careful about not overcrowding, now, you know, in the pools – it's a good situation, and doctors will attest that chlorine is our friend in fighting the coronavirus, but we still have to be really careful about crowding, really careful about people being in too close contact. Smart about – we're going to have distance lines, limited number of people in locker rooms, social distancing when not in the pool, face coverings, really careful limits. But, you know, having 15 public pools up and running in the heart of summer is going to be really great, even with those limits. And we're going to do our best to get as many people the opportunity to experience those pools.

Moderator: The next is Gersh from Streetsblog.

Question: How are you guys doing this morning?

Mayor: Hey, Gersh. How are you?

Question: Good. A couple of quick questions about schools, Mr. Mayor. Thousands of public school parents have signed a petition asking you to create open streets in front of all the City schools for either classroom space or to free up classroom space in lunch rooms and gyms. Closing those streets to car traffic would also simply make kids safe from being run over. So, will you do it?

Mayor: Well, we're going to look at that. We're going to look at everything, Gersh. Outdoor space could be really valuable, and wherever it is, whether it's the street, or some schools have courtyards or other areas – definitely want to look at how we can use outdoor space. Now,

remembering that that works for some parts of the school year. It won't work for when it gets cold or won't work on bad weather days, but we're going to look at that for sure. And there's a lot of work going on, including listening carefully to school communities what they think will work, but we still have obviously a good amount of time before school begins and we'll plug in some of those ideas as we go along.

Question: Okay. Just a very quick follow up on that. You know, the Department of Education has been saying for weeks that it has no plan devised yet for the 150,000 students who rely on school buses. So, if there's no plan, you might see tens of thousands of parents driving their kids to school every morning, would carry the aforementioned risk of children being struck by automobile drivers. So, what do you think? When are we going to get a plan for how to move kids around?

Mayor: Yeah. No, I don't agree with that characterization, respectfully. School buses are clearly part of the mix. We have to do it safely. Everything's about safety and health first. A lot of work is going into figuring out how to do that the right way, but that work will be done in time. We'll have announcements, school buses will definitely be part of the lineup as per usual.

Moderator: The next is Henry from Bloomberg.

Question: Hello, Mr. Mayor? How are you doing?

Mayor: Good, Henry? How are you?

Question: I'm good. Actually, that's actually my first question – is how do you assess your political standing in this city since the advent of the virus, and all of the political hits you've taken, the criticism you've taken? How has this affected you and how do you gauge and measure this impact on you? I mean, how seriously you take it?

Mayor: Yeah, I thank you for the question Henry. I know it's an honest question. Look, I don't think we're in a political moment. Honestly, I think we are in a crisis that is all about just getting things done for people. And look, the mayoralty in New York City is one of the offices with the greatest ability to get things done at any public office in the nation. And my job is to do exactly like, the things we're talking about today, to make sure we have a lot of testing. We have strong a Test and Trace Corps. We're getting schools ready in a safe and smart way. We're getting as much support for communities like opening up the pools. There's nothing about the, you know, the backdrop and the critiques and all that changes the basic work of just serving people and getting things done.

Question: Okay. My second question is a little bit more limited in scope. It's about testing. I know a lot of people who are still waiting ten days for tests. And you're saying that it's taking two days, are these Health + Hospital tests? I've also heard that the instant tests, if you will, are only about 70 percent accurate?

Mayor: So, Henry the first point is we had a really bad stretch where the national crisis and the strain it put testing was clearly affecting everyone, including New York City. We've pushed back on that with a variety of new plans with the labs and with expanding the work that Health + Hospitals is doing. So, we had a really bad stretch. It's now getting much better. And that

citywide average is when you combine all testing around the city, it's come back down to a much more acceptable timeline. We hope to keep it that way. On the rapid turnaround test, Dr. Long or Dr. Varma, let's just do a quick explanation of what we know about it, what works, what doesn't and how we use it. Go ahead.

Executive Director Long: Sure. I'll get started and I'll turn to Dr. Varma. So I appreciate the question. The rapid turnaround test is really good at figuring out who has coronavirus. So a positive test result from it is very helpful in terms of making the diagnosis. A negative test result from it is not necessarily definitive with the type of rapid turnaround we have now. So we are doing an additional confirmatory PCR test to make sure that we're getting the completely accurate information to all New Yorkers as we do it.

Mayor: Good answer, Jay, anything to add?

Senior Advisor Jay Varma: No, just to highlight again, the point about the testing turnaround time. You know, one of the challenges of course, is that the turnaround time for results varies depending upon which laboratories do those tests. So as the Mayor has noted we have been working very aggressively to reduce the turnaround time at commercial laboratories. People may still be experiencing some delays, but they should start to see those resolved fairly quickly.

Mayor: Okay.

Moderator: The next is Rich Lamb from WCBS 880.

Question: Mr. Mayor. Good morning.

Mayor: Hey Rich. How are you doing?

Question: I'm okay. Listen, Governor Cuomo yesterday criticized the slow cleanup of the spray-painted graffiti in Lower Manhattan and the amount of graffiti generally in New York City, saying it's symbolic of a return to the 1970s. How do you feel about that criticism?

Mayor: We are never going back to the 1970s. I think there are some people who live through that time who were deeply affected by it, but it's just not part of our lives anymore. That was a really, really horrible time in New York City history in some ways, not every way, but in some ways, for sure. We have left that behind, we're an entirely different city. We're never going back.

Question: Okay, Mr. Mayor. And you know, you often say that the State and the City work closely together but very often the Governor doesn't seem to provide public evidence of that assertion. Does this criticism sting? Is he nicer in private?

Mayor: Rich, your use of the English language was very elegant there. You have a career in diplomacy ahead. I don't get lost in, you know, what different politicians say, I just don't. And it kind of connects back to Henry's question. This is now about doing the work serving people in this city, doing what I know is right. That's what I was sent here to do. I am so used to the noise and the backdrop as just a thing you got to work through. So, I don't really get lost in whatever any public official is feeling that day or whatever message they're trying to put out. I just want to

get the work done. And when it comes to getting the work done, the City and State have actually done pretty well together.

Moderator: The next is Julia from the Post.

Question: Hey, good morning, Mr. Mayor, and everyone on the call. Just to follow up on Rich's question, on the Governor's comments yesterday. In addition to you know, the graffiti, he criticized your delay in cleaning it up. He said, I think the City makes a big mistake in not addressing these situations. I mean, clean it up. It's spray paint. So, looking for your response to that?

Mayor: Again, we're cleaning up everything around the site down here by City Hall and anything that happens on a public building, we will do the same.

Question: Okay. Thank you. And then for Dr. Long and Dr. Varma, I'm just a little bit confused about this two-day median turnaround time, because I asked Dr. Varma on Tuesday during the technical briefing, and he said he didn't have that data. And I'm wondering what it came down from? Dr. Long or Varma cited that it was much worse. So, what has it come down from?

Mayor: What was the worst average a week or two ago? Do either of you have that number exactly? Go ahead.

Executive Director Long: So, a week or two ago, it was a little bit more than double. However, the issue was that there were some labs where it was actually more than a week of wait time. So as labs have gone on to use strategies like pooling, their numbers have precipitously dropped. And enough of them are using strategies that have caused a drop like that, such that this citywide average has gotten much, much better. However, to your point, there are still some labs that are not yet using pooling or their turnaround times are much higher. They do plan to start using pooling as soon as possible. And that's what we're pushing on from our perspective. But it is true that there is a lot of variation between what lab one would do and lab two would do. But we want to get to the place where all of them have the fastest turnaround time possible. And we're pretty close.

Mayor: Amen.

Moderator: The next is Alejandra from AM New York.

Question: Hi, good morning, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: Hey Alejandra. How are you?

Question: Good. How are you doing? So yesterday you said that you wouldn't make a final decision about reopening schools this fall until September. And so I was curious to see – you spoke with Governor Cuomo about [inaudible] before making that decision, because I know the State wants to make a decision by August?

Mayor: Again, I'm not going to get lost in the day to day dialogue. The State is going to make a decision, as I understand August 7th on the broad authorization for school to move forward. And

we respect the State's role in this obviously. But between August 7th and the first day of school, you're talking about a month. And a lot can happen in a month. So I keep emphasizing this, health and safety first. We're going to follow the data. We're going to follow the science. Let us hope and pray and do the hard work to be in as good a situation as we are now or better at the time that school opens. But again, the final decisions will be made as we get right up to it, based on the data we have in front of us. But parents should be planning on the reopening of schools because that's the direction we are building toward.

Question: Okay. So just to clarify your office didn't reach out to the Governor's office at all anytime yesterday or the day before you –

Mayor: We talked – our teams talk multiple, multiple times a day about everything. But again, I want to emphasize the difference between the decision that the State will offer for all schools in the state in the first week of August, versus what we have to decide, all of us together as we get right up to the point of school beginning.

Moderator: Last question for today, it goes to Emma from – sorry, two more for today. The next one is Emma from the New York Times.

Question: Hi, good morning, Mayor. I have two questions for you. The first is about the COVID testing. I'm actually still waiting for results for a family member of mine, it's been 17 days. This is a private lab, but when you say that the two day, the two day wait, is that the median or the average? And does that include both hospital sites and private labs like Quest Diagnostics?

Mayor: Yeah, let me have Ted and Jay answer. But let me say 17 days is just plain unacceptable. So actually, if you'd be kind enough to, if you're willing, let our team know what lab that was so we can follow up, that should not be happening to anyone anywhere. So something else is wrong with that picture, but you guys want to – you Jay or Ted speak to the methodology?

Executive Director Long: Yeah. I'll start and then turn it to Dr. Varma. I also just really do want to say I'm so sorry you've had to wait 17 days. That really is unacceptable. And I would be happy to personally help to follow up on this if you'd allow me. We need to get answers way faster than that. A couple of thoughts – one is that we all use different labs. The number that we've shared is the median across all labs citywide. And at New York City Health + Hospitals, we have a variety of lab arrangements that we use. So our wait times have actually been some of the lowest throughout the whole ordeal. So if you do have the opportunity to bring a family member to one of our more than 50 in New York City Health + Hospitals sites we would love to see you. And I'd love to make sure that you get the lab turnaround time that you need for it to keep your family safe. There are a couple of labs in particular that are moving towards pooling now, some of the larger ones. When they do that, it will have a substantial impact. And that will happen – our aim is within the next week. Dr. Varma I don't know if there's anything you want to add?

Senior Advisor Varma: No, nothing else to add.

Mayor: Okay, great. Go ahead. Emma.

Question: Big picture here. You and Governor Cuomo both said this isn't going to happen, you know, at the height of the pandemic here. And people have been waiting even at hospital sites sometimes ten to 14 days. We're hearing widespread reports of delays. So how did this happen in New York City after you and Governor Cuomo, both committed that this wasn't going to happen?

Mayor: You mean the wait times?

Question: Yes. Wait times for testing.

Mayor: Emma, I would say two things. First of all, it was – we had good turnaround times for the vast majority of the time that we have had a substantial amount of testing. We had a real dislocation with, again, the growth of the national crisis over recent weeks. It took up lab capacity that we were using. A lot of labs were overwhelmed, and we had to reset the equation with the kind of techniques that Ted and Jay have talked about. So, I think we've been – Governor's been consistent. I've been consistent. We want fast turnaround time. We want maximum number of people tested. And that has been working overwhelmingly until we hit this glitch. But we are telling you now that in many ways that has been resolved and people can have confidence and better turnaround times, particularly if they go to Health + Hospitals.

Moderator: Last question for today, it goes to Reuvain from Hamodia.

Question: I'm hitting it in the nine hole today.

Mayor: I like it. You are keeping the analogy alive. Good for you.

Question: Yeah. Well, I would say go Yankees, but of course being a Red Sox fan, you accuse me of having bias.

Mayor: I would, I would, but I understand your bias. I accept your bias.

Question: Several groups have sent you letters seeking to paint their own political messages on New York City streets. I know that one is Blue Lives Matter and another is Women for Trump. Maybe there are others. They say that once you've allowed a Black Lives Matter mural, you have to allow other political messages as well. Do you plan on allowing these messages?

Mayor: No. Everything's individual and specific. We have again, you and I think just disagree on this point. I think we have had a seismic moment in this country's history. I think what's happened here can only be compared to the Civil Rights Movement of the 50s and 60s in terms of its importance. The original sin of the United States of America, slavery and all of the effects over 400 years being brought out in the open in a new way and a chance for this country to get it right, to address this problem, to move forward. And it's summarized in the three words Black Lives Matter. And so this is about something much bigger than any one group. This is about righting a wrong and moving us all forward. So I think that's the right approach. Go ahead.

Question: I'm not agreeing or disagreeing. I just asked if you were going to answer those groups. They say that the first amendment mandates that the City government can't promote one from one political message over another.

Mayor: I don't think it's a political message in the traditional sense. I think it's a message about human respect and the value of human beings and addressing the fact that one group amongst us in particular has been devalued for centuries. And that can't go on. I think it transcends any notion of politics.

Okay. Everybody let me close up today where I started, just recognizing that we have come a long way. Now, there's not a single person I know who is overconfident or takes our situation lightly, but I want to keep reminding you, the reason that things have moved forward in New York City is because the people get it. The people feel it, people reinforced with each other, the importance of wearing those face coverings. People reinforced with each other social distancing. We have talked to so many people who are starting up their businesses again and doing things in their communities. And they're always thinking about safety and health in doing that. That has been what has worked for this city and the fact that we have devoted ourselves fully to a test and trace approach, that means that anyone needs that support. It's there for them. And we're constantly looking to make sure that if someone is infected by the disease, they don't infect someone else. This is why New York City keeps moving forward. And this I believe is what's going to sustain us until the day that we get a vaccine. Again, I will always say thank you to the people in New York City, because you're the heroes here. You're the people who have made this much success. Let's go even farther. Thank you, everyone.

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