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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON CNN'S NEW DAY**

**John Berman:** A big moment for New York City. The city begins its first phase of reopening. Right now, some 400,000 workers are expected physically back on the job today. Sunday saw the lowest number of new coronavirus infections here since the beginning of the pandemic. Joining me now is New York City's Mayor, Bill de Blasio. Mr. Mayor, thank you so much for being with us. What is your message to the thousands of people coming back to work physically in New York City today? What do they need to do now to get to the next phase?

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** John, it is literally a beautiful day here in New York City. This is a triumphant moment for New Yorkers who fought back against this disease. This was the epicenter and folks did the hard work. They sheltered in place, they did the social distancing, the face coverings, and got us to this day. So, my message, John, is stick to it, come back to work, but remember to stick to those smart rules that got us this far. And if we keep doing that – and I think, John, there's a real sense of discipline and purpose here in this city because of what we've been through, because we've lost a lot of people, there's a lot of pain, and I think it's created a sense of, we're all in this together and we've got to get it right. So, we're going to have City inspectors out at work sites to make sure people are following the rules. But I think everyone is clear, they got to keep using the hand sanitizer, do all the smart things to stay safe. And if we do that right, then we keep moving forward.

Also, we've created a huge test and trace program – and this is crucial, John – thousands of City workers who will be out engaging folks, making sure once they test positive, we track all the people in their circle that they've been in close contact with, get those folks tested, get folks who need isolation or quarantine free hotel rooms, whatever it takes to stop the spread of the disease. And I think that's a huge, kind of, counteroffensive that's going to help us keep this disease in check.

**Berman:** Mr. Mayor, you're in the middle of a whole bunch of stories right now. You have announced that you are going to divert funds from the police into social programs. You said you don't know exactly –

**Mayor:** Youth programs.

**Berman:** Youth programs. You don't know exactly how many, but explain how reducing funds for policing will make people safer.

**Mayor:** John, here's the thing that we've known for decades. If we address the needs of young people, it actually makes the entire community safe. If we help keep young people away from negative influences, away from gangs, away from crime, it's best for the community and the police. And a lot of police leaders have believed this for a long time. So we're going to do more and more to give our young people those positive avenues and options. We have a big, strong, effective police force. We're going to be able to take money out of that police force, put it into youth programs, and still of course keep New Yorkers safe. But this is preventative. This is proactive. Our Police Commissioner, Dermot Shea, has spoken about this eloquently over the last year. The NYPD needs to reorient to young people and stop problems before they start and actually be part of solving the problems in their lives. That's his aspiration for the NYPD.

**Berman:** All kinds of rumors overnight about a shakeup inside the New York City Police Department. What's the truth?

**Mayor:** The truth is that we have great leaders who are doing a great job. As I said, Dermot Shea's vision has been to make policing more about youth. I support that. I support him. Terry Monahan, our Chief of Department helped to peacefully disperse a protest in Washington Square Park last week and the protesters said, show respect for what we're saying, take a knee with us, and he did. The Chief of Department, highest ranking uniformed officer in the biggest police force in America, took a knee with respect for the protesters. That didn't get the attention it deserved. I gave him a lot of credit for that and the way he handled these protests. There are problems to address, John. There are full investigations going on, on the way the protests were handled, to see if there's things that need to be addressed and done better. There are some individual officers who did not do the right thing and their discipline has already begun and accountability. But when you look overall, John, biggest city in America, no National Guard – I wouldn't let them in. It did not make sense to bring the military in. And we had, thank God, no loss of life, few major injuries. We had some property damage, but we stopped it quickly. No police precincts burned, no mounted units, no tear gas, no rubber bullets. This NYPD kept the city safe with a much lighter touch than I think people are realizing. But that being said, there were still mistakes. There are still things that must be addressed and there must be faster discipline for any officer who does the wrong thing

**Berman:** And you have – and you're aware of this. I don't need to tell you, you've been criticized from both sides. There was criticism when there was the looting and the physical destruction that took place in the city. And there has been criticism from the other side, which said you've been too supportive of the police, including this letter that I'm going to read a little bit of now from some 400 people who have worked for the City, including for you over the years. And in this letter, it says, “We have joined together in writing this letter because we cannot remain silent while the administration we serve allows the NYPD to turn our city into an occupied territory. Our former boss,” – that's you – “might not hear the cries for justice from Black and Brown New Yorkers, but we do. We are demanding radical change for the Mayor who is on the brink of losing all legitimacy in the eyes of New Yorkers.”

**Mayor:** Well, I've been all over this city in recent days, John, and the vast, vast majority of New Yorkers have the intelligence and the subtlety and the practicality to want both safety and justice. And that's what we've been doing in this administration. We ended stop-and-frisk. We reduced

incarceration. We have the lowest number of people incarcerated since World War II in this city. We brought down crime while simultaneously healing the relationship with police and community with a neighborhood policing policy. 180,000 fewer arrests last year than the last year of the previous administration. I mean, this is so much, John, that's been the direction of change and reform and more is coming. And I'll tell you neighborhood people, I was out in Southeast Queens on Saturday talking to the neighborhood people. And what they said to me was they want to see change in the NYPD but they also need safety and they need to work with the NYPD cooperatively. That's what everyday New Yorkers, working class, New Yorkers want to see.

**Berman:** Mr. Mayor, as we said we have a lot going on right now. We wish you the best of luck going forward with the reopening beginning today. Thanks so much for being with us.

**Mayor:** Thank you, John.

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