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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON THE BRIAN LEHRER
SHOW**

Brian Lehrer: It's the Brian Lehrer Show on WNYC, good morning everyone. You know, it's not every day that the head of the NRA mentions the Mayor of New York City by name but that happened yesterday as Wayne LaPierre pushed back indirectly on the students, really who survived the Parkland shooting and now want assault weapons and large capacity magazines banned. He didn't want to call out grieving students or their parents by name so he used the Mayor and Governor of New York, one of whose names he couldn't pronounce as proxies to label as un-American.

***Wayne LaPierre:** President Trump's election, while crucial, can't turn away the wave of these new European-style socialists bearing down upon us. I'm not just talking about Bernie Sanders. I mean, he's near the end of his career. But how about Kamala Harris, Elizabeth Warren, Bill de Blasio, Andrew Cuomo, Corey Booker, Christopher Murphy, and Keith Ellison?*

How about that? NRA President Wayne LaPierre at the Conservative Political Action Conference yesterday – if nothing else putting the Mayor and the Governor on the same side of an issue for a day, the same day that Mayor de Blasio said that if he was in high school right now he would be one of the kids taking part in a gun safety protest planned as a short student walk out next month.

And with that we begin the program as usual to end the week with our Friday Ask the Mayor segment with Mayor Bill de Blasio. Our phones are open for you to ask the Mayor something at 2-1-2-4-3-3-WYNC, 4-3-3-9-6-9-2. Or you can tweet a question with #AskTheMayor. Hi Mr. Mayor, welcome back to WNYC.

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Good morning, Brian.

Lehrer: Are you a European socialist?

Mayor: Look, let me break that down for a quick moment here. Wayne LaPierre and the leadership at the NRA, the people responsible for the school massacres – it is as simple as that. They are the people who have engineered the laws around this country to make guns, including

assault rifles available at an incredible level, an unacceptable level, including are people on the terror watch list, including for people with mental health conditions, including for people who have committed a crime of domestic violence.

This is what the NRA leadership has wrought and I think a very important discussion is to separate the leadership which is militant and is in the thrall of the gun industry from the everyday rank and file who actually – the rank and file of the NRA have shown much more interest in sensible gun safety legislation and background checks and not allowing people on the terror watch list to have access to guns. But the leadership of the NRA has poisoned the legislative process in this entire country right down to the state level and they have taken over the Republican Party on this issue. So, Wayne LaPierre is one of the people responsible for these massacres.

On the question of beliefs, you know, I am a homegrown American in the tradition of Franklin Delano Roosevelt who believes that our government should make sure that people have a decent standard of living and should make sure there is opportunity for all. And what I see has happened in the last decades in this country is that working class people and middle class people have been going backwards not forwards and in fact the problem has been that the free market has been allowed to do what it wants, there's been more and more tax cuts for the wealthy. And less and less of a government policy to make sure people have economic opportunity. It's time to reverse that. And I think democrats and progressives should be very proud of that belief so I'm not going to be moved by Wayne LaPierre, especially given his guilt when it comes to the national situation.

Lehrer: President Trump said he wants more immigrants from Norway, think he knows he could get a lot of actual European socialist that way?

Mayor: That's one way to do it. I mean you know look, I think another thing we need to talk about is that to the great credit of Bernie Sanders, his campaign last year changed the whole discussion of this country about what are the options for how we create economic fairness. And a lot of younger Americans, a lot of younger voters are not scared of the government playing a role in ensuring there is fairness in our society. And they certainly see that the one percent just gets richer and richer and government policies have made the one percent richer and richer. I mean this is a great irony – you want socialism but socialism has all been for the one percent.

So I think the discussion is changing in this country. I think more and more people are comfortable with progressive positions. They are not scared when something is called socialist, they don't go running away from it. And I think Wayne LaPierre is using the kind of rhetoric that was invoked decades ago. But he's trying to distract from the central point – we saw a national tragedy is having an extraordinary resonance and people are really demanding change. So, of course Wayne LaPierre needs to change the subject because if he doesn't the blame will rightfully fall on him and the leadership of the NRA.

Lehrer: There is a nationwide student movement brewing as you know for a march and various school walkouts. I think the main walkout is a 17 minute walkout on Wednesday, March 14th at 10 am to represent the 17 people killed at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. You said

yesterday if you were that age, you'd be taking part. Did you just give a million New York City school kids permission to leave their school buildings and are you actually doing something – you know instruct schools on ways to facilitate it?

Mayor: Of course we are going to instruct schools. Look this is a teachable moment on top of the moment for potential profound social change. And by the way social change has been led by students and young people in this country and all over the world for a long time. Remember the Civil Rights Movement, remember the movement to end the unjust war in Vietnam, you know there is plenty of examples of young people leading the way and they are doing it now. These high school students are doing something very commendable and very powerful. We are going to do lesson plans around this issue leading up to that day. We are going to make sure that there's a real educational impact. We are going to make sure that whatever happens is done in a safe and orderly fashion.

But look, I think something profound is happening here. For high school students – we are going to be very clear, we want parents to weigh in, to let us know if they are comfortable with a young person walking out. It is supposed to be for 17 minutes. We expect the school day before and after to proceed. For younger folks – middle school, elementary school, the model I'm interested in, we are still working on this is to have it be within the context of the building, you know to gather in the building for the memorial to the 17 young people lost, 17 people lost I should say. And again that may be silent, that may be with young people speaking, that's all being worked through.

But look, I have to be very consistent and straight forward – I see a moment of profound change and I see young people leading the way. And I think we need to support them.

Lehrer: When you say lesson plans, are you going to make sure that there's a line between a kind of indoctrination in your opinion on these things and a nonpolitical, you know opening people's minds to learning about, learning the facts and developing their own opinions?

Mayor: I give our Department of Education a lot of credit meaning for years and years the DOE has worked to make sure that we present all side in different historical issues and current events and that individual educators' viewpoints did not lead the discussion. I certainly wouldn't want any individuals' viewpoint leading the discussion, my own included.

But I think it is an important moment for young people to debate and to reflect and to think about the world that they want to create. Last week when I gave my State of the City I talked about a democracy agenda for the City because bluntly we need to re-democratize our society. Our society is really declining in terms of level of participation and in terms of access to voting.

We are going in the wrong direction all over the country with more restrictive voting laws. This state New York has some of the worst voting laws in country, 2 million people who are eligible to vote are not registered because of how hard it is to register to vote in this state. So I want a democracy agenda that really fundamentally changes the levels of participations and encourages everyone to get involved. I think part of that is changing how we do civics education. We have to

update it. We have to make it urgent. We have to make it current. We have to show young people that they can have a huge impact in their neighborhood and their society.

Look again as a matter of consistency, here is an unprecedented national moment. You literally can see these walkouts in 50 states and we need to recognize the power of the moment and let young people participate but the discussion around it educationally needs to be an objective one.

Lehrer: The big nationwide March For Our Lives protest is being organized for Saturday March 24th in cities around the country. That would be four weeks from tomorrow, what can you tell us at this point, if anything, if there's going to be a New York City addition, have people approached the City for a permit? Is the City working with March organizers for a route, anything like that?

Mayor: Brian, I don't have those details, I fully expect there will be a march in New York City. Of course we will work with the march organizers. One of the things this City does very, very well when it comes to democracy is giving all sides the opportunity to express themselves and to protest in a peaceful, orderly democratic fashion. We will of course facilitate that. But I don't know the exact status of it at this moment.

Lehrer: And we will take out first question for you today from Twitter where a listener writes is there any planned change to the New York City school lock down procedure in light of the Parkland shooting where the fire alarm was pulled first? This scenario could be replicated in any school to circumvent the lock down procedure writes this listener.

Mayor: I'm going to speak about our overall approach. I will let the NYPD speak to the fire alarm question because I don't know that specific protocol and how it's handled. But here's what I'd say – we by law do drills, what we are saying now to every school is that they have to consistently do those drills for shelter in place. We are going to do accountability measures to make sure they are done properly.

On top of that we will be doing unannounced scanning in middle schools and high schools all over the city. So some schools, relatively small number have full time scanning. Others have scanning on occasional basis. What we will be doing is going to every school, every school, every middle school and high school with unannounced scanning on a daily basis. It may be you know, there's a school that has scanning one day and then it doesn't happen again for a month or more.

Lehrer: Can I ask what is the unannounced scanning accomplish? It sounds like it's not aimed at the kind of school shooter in Parkland or that kind of thing correct?

Mayor: No I'd say there is more than one thing going on here. And maybe I should back it up and give you context. The effort to protect our kids has lots of layers to it, and it lots of elements because there's many different things we have to account for.

There have been threats made, against schools from within. There have been threats made from outside. We don't talk about those a lot because they have been thwarted by the NYPD on a

consistent basis. The NYPD uses the same capacity that we used to fight terrorism, we use to protect schools. I think sometimes people think the only layer of safety for our schools is our school safety agents. There are 5,000 of them, they do a great job – they do a great job of getting the kind of information from young people in particular that helps us to protect everyone because the information is crucial to this.

But the entire NYPD is in the business of protecting schools, 36,000 officers including a huge counter-terrorism apparatus and intelligence gathering apparatus that we use to look for any threat. For example what you saw in Harlem last week where a former teacher was arrested. That was a joint effort by the NYPD and the FBI. So those efforts are constant for every conceivable kind of threat. The shelter in place is for a variety of different kinds of threats.

When I talk about the unannounced scanning we believe that kind of deterrent helps in many situations including something that, of course, is more a part of what we've known previously which is if a young person tries to bring a weapon to school, that unannounced scanning is a good way to throw off anything like that.

So, there's a lot of different pieces to this equation but what I want all New Yorkers to know is the decisions related to school safety whether it's an everyday situation or whether it's a threat like what we saw in Florida or what we saw emerging in Harlem, those decisions are made the NYPD and they are constantly updated. We will make tactical changes depending on what we're seeing school by school every given day.

Lehrer: One more thing on this. Senator Marco Rubio, in that CNN town hall Wednesday night, criticized New York State's assault weapons ban and after – five years ago after the Newtown, Connecticut school shooting. Listen –

Senator Marco Rubio: So in New York, they have passed that ban and you know what they've done to get right around it – it took them 15 seconds to do it – they simply take the plastic tip off them. They just take the plastic grip the front or the back, same gun and it becomes legal, performs the exact same way.

Lehrer: So, that was an odd clip to me, Mr. Mayor, because it sounded like Rubio, who opposes an assault weapons ban was saying that New York's isn't effective enough. But what's your response to Rubio? Do you think this law is working in New York State?

Mayor: Marco Rubio is just a walking case of hypocrisy. He can't decide who he is. You know, at times he's trying to be a moderate Republican and then he's trying to play the right-wing. I think this is why he failed so spectacularly in 2016 because there's just no [inaudible].

Thinking about the fact that 17 of his constituents were murdered, you would think he would stand up as a voice of conscience and say, "Yes, of course it's time for an assault weapon ban. Yes, of course, it's time for deeper background checks." Instead he's trying to have it both ways. That makes no sense to me.

New York State did the right thing and we need to keep going farther all over the country. While respecting legitimate gun rights of everyday people, we can do so much more for gun safety and to avert these horrible tragedies which are consistently undertaken by people who should never have had the right to get a gun to begin with and who got access to military-grade weapons.

So, it makes no sense that Rubio is quibbling about whether there is a loophole in the law. He should be talking about what he can do in Florida to strengthen their laws in the aftermath of this tragedy.

Lehrer: It's the Brian Lehrer Show on WNYC, our weekly Ask the Mayor segment with Mayor Bill de Blasio. Pat, in Bay Ridge, you're on WNYC with the Mayor. Hello, Pat.

Question: Hi, Brian. Hi, Mr. Mayor. I'm really, really nervous to make this phone call but I'm going to go ahead and ask this question. In response to your call, Mr. Mayor, for New York City to be the fairest city, I want to bring to your attention a problem with chronic late payments of part-time adjunct faculty at LaGuardia High School for the Music and Art and the Performing Arts. This is the most iconic high school of performing arts throughout the country and it requires hiring highly specialized people to supplement the specialized nature of training that occurs at the school where dancers, musicians, designers –

Mayor: Got it. Got it.

Question: You know, began [inaudible] –

Mayor: I'm ready to answer. I'm ready to answer.

[Laughter]

Question: Go ahead, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: No, Pat, I appreciate the question and I think you're right. I don't know the details but obviously we want all those wonderful artists and performers who help train our young people – and you're right it is the premier performing arts high school in the country – of course, they should be paid timely basis. Please give your information to WNYC. We'll follow up to find out what happened in any case specific to you or that you know of, but I will also follow up with the DOE on ensuring those payments happen on a timely basis.

Brian, if I could just take you back to the previous topic for a quick second. One real public service point – and this is something Commissioner O'Neill talks about a lot. I really want all New Yorkers to hear this. We can stop any danger to our young people, we can stop these horrible tragedies in many ways if people would come forward with the information that they have. I understand that's not a perfect [inaudible], I understand there was some real missteps in Florida but we have an extraordinary public safety capacity here and you saw what happened in Harlem last week to stop a plot and there's many others stopped.

When a student calls 3-1-1 or 9-1-1 to report something or when they go to a parent or a teacher or a school crossing guard or anyone, an officer, to tell them what they're hearing; when a parent calls in, when the teacher comes forward a lot of times that is what will stop the violence, that information.

And you know, I worry sometimes that the way the public discourse goes, people think you know it us up to our police officers alone to protect us. That's not how it works. Our police officers do a great job. They need information. Everyone is part of protecting each other.

So, I just want to say strongly, anyone listening right now who thinks they know of a problem, they know if a young person is talking about violence to themselves or others, they hear someone talking about something that might suggest a threat to our schools in anyway or to any part of New York City, you've got to report it. It can be lifesaving. And this is still the x-factor.

We need people to participate.

Lehrer: Lameen, in the Bronx, you're on WNYC. Hello Lameen.

Question: Hi, Brian. Thank you for taking my call. I love your show. The only time I don't listen is when I'm in [inaudible]. My question is for the Mayor – I really applaud his administration's effort in putting more resources and effort in housing which is a very serious challenge for most of New York [inaudible] struggling day-in and day-out.

I live in a private house like so many New Yorkers [inaudible] my landlord keeps raising my rent to an astronomical high that I just can't afford it. And I'm curious [inaudible] working and paying this rent and then being in school. It's really tough for me, the more I put [inaudible] impact me on the other side –

Lehrer: Lameen, are you asking the Mayor to do something specific?

Question: I didn't even send letters [inaudible] affordable housing because I apply several times and not even a single reply –

Lehrer: So, let me get the Mayor's response in just one second. Lameen, I want to ask one more question. Do you live in a neighborhood of the Bronx that's gentrifying? Is that why your rent keeps going up?

Question: No, no. It's not a gentrifying. I live around [inaudible] –

Lehrer: Okay, Mr. Mayor go ahead.

Mayor: Sure, well, Lameen, we want to help and this is why we are creating more affordable housing than any time in the history of this city. 25,000 apartments each year – apartments, so, that means enough for 75,000 or more people – each year are either built or preserved meaning subsidizing, kept affordable for decades to come.

So, I want New Yorkers to think about it this way, when you're applying for that lottery for affordable housing, you may not win the first time, the second time, the third time like every other lottery in the world but it's really important to stay in it because the supply keeps growing.

We have now a plan that goes out for years ahead. It will be 300,000 apartments total. That is enough, right there for 800,000, 900,000 or more New Yorkers. So a huge number of people will be served. Meanwhile we're also stopping illegal evictions at a higher rate than ever before. We're keeping affordable housing protected better than ever before and not losing it.

There's a lot going on here that's making a huge impact. Lameen, I want you to give your information to WNYC so that we can follow up and make sure you have everything you need to know about how to apply. It's a single application that puts you in the pool for any number of apartments that are coming online. But again it isn't – some people win right away, some people will be trying for years honestly but the important point is we continue to increase the supply.

One last point, if someone is in rent-regulated housing, there's a lot we can do to protect them. We obviously had two years of a rent freeze because of the rent guidelines board that I named. We have a lot of legal protections we can act on. If you're not in rent-regulated housing, it's harder although sometimes we can provide legal help and that's another thing we're doing on a higher level than ever before. Where there's illegal activity by a landlord, we can provide legal help directly to the tenant.

But the big answer here is – we're just building and preserving a lot more affordable housing than ever before and people should be applying for it.

Lehrer: Lameen, hang on. We're going to get your information off the air and pass it on as the Mayor invited.

To the question of affordable housing and expanding it, the neighbor I live in, Inwood, is the scene of your rezoning plans now. There was a Community Board 12 public hearing scheduled up there last night, as you may know. I wasn't there but I know some of the issues and they reflect the concerns of people in many neighborhoods where upzoning for more density is on the table. In Inwood's case, you would add high-rise buildings where there are hardly any now adding more than 10,000 new residents to a neighborhood that's only a few square miles. Some of my neighbors don't like that. So, people are concerned about ruining the character of the neighborhood. A Williamsburg-ization of upper Manhattan, some people call it with all the overcrowding and public safety delays that come with –

Mayor: I don't think you meant public safety delay, did you?

Lehrer: Public safety response delays like police and fire, this is what's in one of the flyers that they're passing around. It would take longer for police and firefighters to get to you because there would be more people, more demand. And the Municipal Art Society says, "Our concern is that by increasing density near a large of buildings with rent stabilized units the rezoning would put additional redevelopment pressure on nearby properties which in turn could lead to potential indirect displacement of low-income residents magnified when considering that a quarter of

Inwood's population lives below the poverty line and many have preferential rents below the legal maximum."

So, my question is, if you want community support up there, what can you promise to the preferential rent recipients and others who would be vulnerable from gentrification?

Mayor: I want to question the premise first and then I'll answer your question, Brian. Look, I think NYPD and FDNY are doing extraordinary work. We obviously are the safest big city in America. The Fire Department has done amazing work in recent years to protect lives including of course EMS. I don't find it believable that because there would be more people in the neighborhood – and by the way that takes years if not decades for the population to grow in that fashion – I don't see it having an impact on response time. If more capacity was needed in a neighborhood, we would add more capacity. So I just wanted to spell that point right up front.

This is a debate that we have over and over again and I don't think it probably ever be resolved, but I want to state my position for people again. The City is growing, there is no question about it, we're going to have 8.6 million people by the end of this year, that's the City planning estimate, we've never been that big, we'll be at 9 million people by 2030 or so.

If you stick your head in the sand, in my opinion, if you stick your head in the sand and say, let's just try and leave everything the way it is, I think what you'll find is they'll be incessant building where developers can build as of right – right now, with no affordable housing given back in the equation, no public amenities, no community benefits. We'll see constant development because the demand is there and we won't get anything back.

My argument is, these rezonings give us an opportunity to create a lot of affordable housing in the case of Inwood, I believe the number is 1,300 permanently affordable apartments, that's enough for 4,000 to 5,000 people in this City to have affordability long term. That – the difference in rezoning, the way to think about it is, if you don't do rezoning you don't get that affordable housing for 5,000 people.

If you do the rezoning, you're able to do that, you're able to get a lot of other benefits and other investments in the community. You're able to control the situation because the public sector is determining the rules of engagement with a community process.

But I think the notion that in an already gentrifying area, that is not going to be pressured into displacement, I find that very strange. I always use the example of my home neighborhood in Brooklyn, and the surrounding neighborhoods, I saw it in Park Slope, I saw it in Prospect Heights, I saw it in in Bushwick, I saw it in Bed Stuy, that there was no rezoning, everyone knows there wasn't a rezoning in any of those areas, well in Park Slope there was at one point, but later on none of those other areas.

But, the development increased constantly with no rezoning. There was huge displacement, look again, Bed Stuy, Bushwick, huge displacement without a rezoning, no new affordable housing as a result and the scarcity of housing actually exacerbated the displacement. If you are not adding

supply, you have a precious supply of housing, more and more people want to be there, of course that creates a massive displacement pressure.

Lehrer: One follow up, you said 4 or 5,000 affordable units –

Mayor: No, 4 or 5,000 people. 1,300 affordable units enough for 4 or 5,000 people.

Lehrer: So that would be about a third of the people who would be added. A coalition of neighborhood groups, and this again reflects concerns from many neighborhoods with rezoning around the City, has a proposal that includes requiring all the new apartments in upzone buildings to be set affordable for the neighborhood level rents. They say that's what adds housing while avoiding you creating more gentrification by having maybe two thirds of the apartments be market rent, you know, pushing up the other rents in the neighborhood.

Mayor: And again, I'm going to debate you on that last piece of the equation. The – I'll explain to you why I don't think that's a viable idea, as much as I would love it, I'm going to tell you why I think there is a fundamental problem that people need to come to grips with about how much affordability we can keep.

But I want to go on that second point. This, we've got to have an honest conversation in this City, if people think that no rezoning will just freeze paradise in place and everything is going to be wonderful, that is a fundamental misunderstanding of what's happened the last 20 years in this City. Look at the places that had no rezoning and tell me how things went. There was many, many cases a huge amount of displacement. But in the places where rezoning was done right, not in the previous administration, previous administration bluntly did not –

Lehrer: They're – they're calling for new building density but with only affordable.

Mayor: And I'm saying the problem with that, in a perfect world of course I would love it, but bluntly in the perfect world we would go back to creating a huge amount of public housing in the traditional sense. We've cut out the middleman. We just create a whole lot of housing, and we'd own it, and we'd run it, and wouldn't it be wonderful except there is no money for that.

And so, if you say 100 percent affordable, you are saying all taxpayer funded. Let's be honest about this. The money has to come from somewhere and has to be there for decades to come. If – you don't want an affordable building that is going to be affordable for a year, you want it for decades.

Someone has to subsidize that. That'd be the taxpayers, we don't have the money to do 100 percent affordable everywhere, so what we do, and I think it is a sane approach in the real world dynamics that we're experiencing, is we take the market conditions where, you know, the developers are interested in building, we bargain to get a very high percentage affordability, we bargain to make sure that is locked in for decades.

Private sector money subsidizes the affordable apartments in a way that public sector money never could reach. I will give you one example. We had \$2 billion, in public dollars, to

affordable housing plan a year ago just to help reach more low income people, more veterans, more seniors. It did not change the overall number in our plan, it made it reach different folks at a different income level. That was \$2 billion for one tweak in our plan. To do all affordable everywhere is tens of billions of dollars that we don't have.

Lehrer: I want to take one more call for you and we're getting a call from Rikers Island, Jose, who is I believe an inmate at Rikers Island, is using allowed phone time to call into the show and we're going to put him on the air. Jose, you're on with the Mayor, hello.

Question: Hi, how're you doing? Good morning everyone.

Lehrer: Good morning.

Question: Mr. Mayor, my question is that on Rikers Island they give you mental health treatment, and then – like for my case in particular – they say that I don't require this mental health treatment anymore. However, because of how the system operates, they won't – I won't move back to the general population because this is the third time they tried to give me mental health treatment, and the next time they try to do it, and I refuse, they are going to send me to a hospital which is going to affect my ability to defend myself. And I asked the gentleman here to like seal my case or do something like, correctional health, to – so I can be able to go back to GP and not worried about having to deal with the mental health system again, but they won't do that.

Lehrer: To be clear, Jose, are they forcing you to get mental health treatment that you don't want, is that what you are saying?

Question: Well that's true too. Like, they give you mental health treatment, I refuse, and like they say I have the right to refuse, but they don't actually say – I don't know so – you know, they will harass you for a longtime until you do come and talk to them, you know. So I don't – I don't know what you could do about this because I've talked – I've tried every avenue. Like, I've gone to court, I won my court cases, they will order medication, keep it there, and then I'll come – like for instance right now I'm on a parole violation, it's funny because I'm parole violation because of homelessness but, like – they'll use that to substantiate for the mental health treatment. I'm telling them this is indirect discrimination.

Lehrer: Jose, let me get a response for you from the Mayor.

Mayor: Jose, please at the end of this call give your information to the folks at WNYC, and I'll have someone senior at the Department Corrections follow up with you and with the people working with you. I just want to say this, we believe very strongly in making mental health services available. About 40 percent of inmates in Rikers have a mental health condition, in the past there was not enough service provided, there were not enough options provided.

I understand, I don't know what the details of your situation, but I understand that a mental health professional may be trying to urge different options and provide different options, I think that's their job by and large, is to keep communicating, keep looking for something they hope will be helpful. But again, I want to make sure that we're responding to the concerns that you're

raising, so I will have one of our folks follow up directly with and with the people working with you.

Lehrer: And Jose, we'll take your contact, and I know we're a little bit overtime, but this to wrap it up for today, brings us back full circle in a way to some of the school shooting prevention issues because people are talking about more forced lock ups of people deemed to be mental health risks to become school shooters. Is that a conundrum? Do you have a policy prescription for that as to where the line is?

Mayor: Well help me understand the question, now when you say forced, what do you – how do you mean that?

Lehrer: Well, you know, in Florida they are talking about what they call the Baker Act down there that lets them basically imprison or detain in a hospital people who are deemed at risk of harming themselves or others for a period of time, I'm sure we have law like that in New York State too, the President yesterday, or the day before, was calling for more of that.

But you know, the mental health – the advocates for people with mental illness, will say of course so few people with mental illness ever commit violence and we have a risk of falling off in the school shooter debate on the side of locking too many people up.

Mayor: Brian, look – look, there is legitimate concern, and there's legitimate cautions, let me put it this way, yes the State of New York has such a law, yes we utilize that law as appropriate, there are people who are a threat to themselves, there are people who are a threat to others, who the appropriate action with the consent of medical professionals, the appropriate action is that they be involuntarily put in a situation that they cannot harm themselves or others.

That is legally allowable, and we do it on a discreet basis. It's not something we overuse, it's something we do when we see those conditions are warranted and again have to be confirmed by a medical professional. I think the other side of the equation is where the fundamental problem is. That there is not a culture of treatment in this country, there is not a willingness to have an open discussion of mental health challenges.

Part of what my wife Chirlane has done with the Thrive NYC Initiative is get people to talk about it, de-stigmatize, talk about it in houses of worship and workplaces and everywhere so folks who have a concern do not feel that they can't surface it, they do not feel that they are going to be shunned or held back by talking about it, but it is something as comfortable as we talk about a physical health condition. People never hesitate to talk about the broken leg they have. They don't feel like it's a value judgment on them but they do so often with mental health.

So to actually get to the core of this, I believe in my heart there will be a lot fewer tragedies, not just these horrible school massacres, there will be less homelessness, there will be less incarceration, there will be fewer schools dropping of school, there will be more kids doing better at school if we actually identify mental health challenges early in life. One of the big ideas in Thrive NYC is to have mental health professionals in our school system right down to the Pre-K level so that if they can identify a challenge, work on it early, you know.

Chirlane says something that is very damning about this country. A typical American with a mental health challenge goes ten years between the time it manifests and the time they get treatment. That's when the damage is done. So I think we really want to talk fundamental change, it is allowing mental health conditions to be fully acknowledged comfortably and acted on quickly, and we'll see a lot less social dysfunction if we do that on the front end.

Lehrer: Mr. Mayor there was some complex stuff today, we thank you for answering all the questions, and I'll talk to you next week. Thank you as always.

Mayor: Thank you, Brian. Take care.

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