

Transcript: Mayor Eric Adams Delivers Remarks at Cinco de Mayo Celebration

May 5, 2022

Commissioner Manuel Castro, Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs: [Spanish]. Well, good evening and welcome to New York City's Cinco de Mayo celebration at Gracie's Mansion, hosted by Mayor Eric Adams. My name is Manuel Castro, and I am the commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs. And while I am in charge of the wellbeing of the over three million immigrants in New York City, and I've been embraced by many communities over the last several months, I'm especially honored to be here today as the first Mexican-American Commissioner to hold this role.

Commissioner Castro: [Spanish]. So Cinco de Mayo is really a symbol of the perseverance, despite all odds, despite all obstacles, it is really our David versus Goliath story. And this is why for immigrants, this is especially important celebration for us. And it resonates because our communities here in the United States have faced so many challenges. And especially the last two years, I, myself, as many of you know, I crossed the Mexico/US border when I was five years old, I grew up undocumented here in the city. And with other undocumented youth, I created the Dreamer Movement. And since we've been fighting for our communities and for our families. And so this is a testament of what you can achieve in New York, that I can now stand here and be a Commissioner for the city of New York.

Commissioner Castro: So I want to first and foremost, thank Mayor Adams for his commitment to New Yorkers, with my experience, for his commitment to immigrants, by naming someone with my experience as commissioner. So thank you, Mayor Adams for this opportunity and for your commitment to immigrants in New York. You'll see in this room, a wide representation of the thriving Mexican community in New York City from NYPD officers striving to keep our community safe, striving to have representation within the force, to deliveristas who have been so essential and have risked their lives throughout these years, to teachers, administrators, civic leaders, nonprofit leaders, all of whom over the last many years, and the last many decades have grown this community. So I want to congratulate you and say thank you for being here. [Spanish].

So again, thank you, Mayor Adams, for opening your doors and for your commitment for this community. And I want to say, and our community wants to say, [Spanish]. So with that, I'm proud to welcome the Mayor of the City of New York, Mayor Eric Adams.

[Applause]

Mayor Adams: Oh, commissioner, we have a full house. Oh, I want to know... You're translating for me, right?

Translator: I am translating for you.

Mayor Adams: Okay.

Translator: Yes. So you need to pause.

Mayor Adams: Because I want my words heard.

Mayor Adams: I want my words heard.

Mayor Adams: I am not the mayor for the English speakers. I'm the mayor for every language spoken in this city. When I was campaigning, I was on the train one day. It was sometime in the month of May. And I sat across from a family from Mexico. The mother was there with her baby. That just graduated from school. I looked at her. I saw my mother. I saw the pride. I saw the hope. I saw the aspiration. The dream. Of one day... Having her baby... Going from a child, to hopefully becoming the mayor of the city. I went over to her. And I told her, she reminded me of my mother. And if I become mayor I am going to do everything possible to lift up the voices and concerns for all New Yorkers.

Mayor Adams: I won't just say it. I will do it. That's why I appointed Commissioner Castro, a dreamer and the first Mexican to hold this position. And we are going to have so many more firsts. The first Latino to be the commissioner of the Department of Correction. The first African-American woman to be the police commissioner in the City of New York. You are going to see the continuation of those who are going to be the first to represent our city. I don't know your concerns if you're not at the table with me to address those concerns. Other people will talk about it, I'm going to be about it.

Mayor Adams: In this room today, we have the leaders and consul generals from Brazil, Columbia, Ecuador, Peru, Argentina, and of course, Mexico. And for far too long, you were not in this house, the people's house. We have not had a Cinco de Mayo celebration since 2008. So I say welcome back. And to my brother, my good friend, the consul general of Mexico, my brother Jorge, I cannot say how much I appreciate you, so much. And we want to congratulate tonight's honorees, Francisco Puebla, who helped catch the subway shooter last month, in Sunset Park. And NYPD detective Carlos Ramos. And the deliveristas, who keep us going and allow the city to function. When everyone shut down, they stood up.

Mayor Adams: Cinco de Mayo is a celebration of courage in the face of adversity. Against overwhelming odds. Fighting for your independence. Fighting for self-determination. Fighting to be included in your society. I say that to say, that courage, that strength, that self-determination cannot be left in the 1800's. It must be what you do, right here, in America. It's a celebration of freedom and opportunities. And it speaks to all of us.

Mayor Adams: Every New Yorker and American came from somewhere. So if someone states, you go back to your country, you say you will when they go back to theirs. You are on the front line to take us through these difficult times. New York City is the Mexico City of America. And you are representative of the diversity of our great city. And so, to my Mexican brothers and sisters. I want to thank you, for not only what you did during COVID. But somewhere out there is the mother I saw on the train. I want to thank her for aligning me to my purpose as mayor. And we will continue to move our city forward, in the right direction.

Mayor Adams: And consul general, no matter how important this day is, there's an even more significant moment for this day. It's Commissioner Castro's birthday. Happy birthday. So now I want to bring on my good friend, the council general of Mexico, to greet you. And he's a true representative of what is special about this city. And what we have to offer. Consul general.

[Applause]

[...]

Commissioner Castro: [Spanish]. And up next, I'd like to invite Commissioner Ed Mermelstein and Commissioner Fred Kreizman. Please join me. Both Commissioner Mermelstein and Commissioner Kreizman have been tremendous friends, colleagues. And so they'll be sharing a few words today. And well, first off, Commissioner Ed Mermelstein. Thank you.

Commissioner Edward Mermelstein, Mayor's Office of International Affairs: Thank you, Commissioner Castro, and happy birthday. Once again, my name is Edward Mermelstein, and I'm the commissioner of international affairs for New York City. My team and I are very proud to be with you tonight to celebrate Cinco de Mayo and the 160th anniversary of the Battle of Puebla. I want to acknowledge the council general and the council staff that are with us tonight. Thank you all for your collaboration. Thank you also to Council General Islas and the council of Mexico for their support of this event.

Commissioner Mermelstein: My office serves as the link between New York City and the international community, including the Counselor Corp and more than 70 trade commissions. We work daily to attract and retain business here and share globally the opportunities available in our cities. We also collaborate with the consulates to ensure that New York City agencies have access and resources as well as services for the consulates.

Commissioner Mermelstein: I would like to join Mayor Adams, my fellow commissioners, and our entire administration in wishing everyone a wonderful Cinco de Mayo and acknowledging and celebrating the wonderful contributions of the Mexican and Mexican American people in New York City and in the United States. Feliz Cinco de Mayo.

Commissioner Fred Kreizman, Mayor's Community Affairs Unit: Good evening. Fred Kreizman, Commissioner of the Mayor's Community Affairs Unit. First of all, I just wanted to say good evening. And what honor is here to be back at Gracie mentioned to celebrate this wonderful Cinco de Mayo. Thank you, Mayor Adams, for recognizing the importance, the value of this community. And also the value of appreciation he has for this community by appointing the first Mexican commissioner in the Commissioner Castro. We work closely on a regular basis to make sure that communities across the city are served and well-represented. And that the voice of the people are felt across all city agencies. So again, thank you, Mayor Adams, for ensuring the diversity of the city is

strong, it's recognized, and all everyone is appreciated. Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Thank you for everyone attending. A happy Cinco de Mayo. And happy birthday, Manny.

Commissioner Castro: Thank you. We have a couple of certificates that we would like to present to some of our community members today. But first of all, I'd like to acknowledge the presence of many of our incredible commissioners. Commissioner Gary Jenkins is here with us today from the Department of Social Services. Commissioner Jenkins, where?

Commissioner Castro: I want to make sure that the community gets to know all the commissioners and how meaningful this event is for us today. And we want to be sure that we are working closely with the committee. Commissioner Ydanis Rodriguez is here with us today from the Department of Transportation. Commissioner Annabel Palma from the Commission on Human Rights. And Commissioner Sewell from the New York Department of NYPD.

Commissioner Castro: And I'm sure I'm missing a couple more commissioners, but I wanted to make sure that you all know how important this community and our immigrant Latino community is, that we're all here today. And so to present our first certificate to Detective Carlo Ramos from the NYPD Mexican Police Association. I'd like Commissioner Sewell to come and join me and Mayor Eric Adams.

[Crosstalk]

[...]

[Applause]

Commissioner Castro: The next certificate will be presented to Francisco Puebla. One of our most recent heroes who identified the Sunset Park Shooter recently. And we want to honor him today. Not only is he a Mexicano, his last name is Puebla. Por favor.

[Applause]

[...]

Mayor Adams: Hold on, hold on. And we want to really acknowledge our amazing District Attorney, from the borough of the Bronx, D.A. Darcel Clark that's really a real partner, around public safety. And also speaking of the Bronx, come on get into some of these pictures, our Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson is also here. You know I just want to make sure. And I see our acting fire commissioner, I just saw her facing off here, Commissioner Kavanaugh that's here in the back as well. Erick Salgado, another one of our high leaders is here. I'm seeing your faces now popping up.

Jorge Islas Lopez, Consul General of Mexico in New York: And for the final certificate, we'd like to welcome up Cesar Solano, Juan Solano from the NYC Delivery Food Movement. The Deliveristas.

[...]

Islas Lopez: Viva! So to conclude the program, [Spanish].

Mayor Adams: I thought I also saw Commissioner Palma here as well. Let's get some birthday cake and some food!

[Applause]