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**RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOSTS PRESS CALL ON UPCOMING
TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP (TPP) VOTE WITH FORMER U.S. SECRETARY
OF LABOR ROBERT REICH AND ROOSEVELT INSTITUTE SENIOR ECONOMIST
ADAM HERSH**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: I thank everyone for joining with us today.

Obviously, people are – all over the country – very focused today on what action could happen in the House of Representatives on the trade bill. And I think we can safely say the situation is gray in terms of what the outcome will be. But I want to talk about – I know my colleagues on the call want to talk about the underlying issues here. And I think for many of us, there's deep concern that this country is about to make a mistake we've made before. And it was certainly – looking back at the history of NAFTA, we have an exceedingly cautionary history we have to learn from and not repeat.

I've been working with progressives all over the country who feel this same deep concern. A number of us unveiled a document back on May 12th – the Progressive Agenda. And you can see at progressiveagenda.us. And one of the planks in that 15-point agenda was the need to make sure we don't have the kind of trade deals we've had in the past that undermine the jobs of American workers and didn't rein in the power of multi-national corporations. And I think the history of NAFTA is profoundly troubling. We saw how it hurt our economy. There are estimates that as many as a million jobs that were lost as a result of NAFTA. Obviously, it had a hugely negative impact on manufacturing in this country. And there's too many realities around the current trade deal that are reminiscent of NAFTA and there's still too much we don't know. A lot of us are deeply concerned about the regulatory structures created in the trade proposal that – certainly from my perspective and I think a lot of other progressives – will undermine the power of government regulators in relationship to corporate power. There's real concerns on a consumer-level. The patent strengthening for the pharmaceutical industry – very well could have the effect of making it harder for everyday people to get cheaper generic drugs that they need. There's a lot in this deal that appears to reinforce the status quo that is not working for the American people. And even the more generous estimates of the positive impact it could have for our economy don't seem overly impressive. So I think, for a lot of us, we see profound danger in this deal and a lot of bad history and very little about it that is encouraging that any lessons had been learned from the past.

So, trade is obviously a crucial part of our lives and our economy but it has to be done the right way. And what we've seen with fast track – what we've seen with the trade deal, as outlined so

far, is clearly not the right way. So that's my opening. I want to see now – Bob Reich has joined us. Okay, it seems like a no, so we'll call again to find out – I think we have him on the line. But let's go to Adam Hersh – the senior economist at the Roosevelt Institute – for him to offer his cause.

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Mayor Bill de Blasio: Bob, you're always fun to have on the call. Well, look, I'll summarize this and say, first of all, we're on this call today because we believe this country is poised to make a huge mistake. And obviously, we want to see the House act and vote down Fast-Track and stop this mistake in its tracks. There are progressive leaders all over the country who feel the same way, and voices at the grassroots, and certainly a majority of the American people who are tremendously nervous about additional trade deals given the bad track record that we've all experienced. I think it's particularly powerful to hear that former labor secretary who tried to enforce the previous agreement tell us straight up that it couldn't be enforced, and that points out how false some of the arguments are in terms of this trade deal. So I want to thank you, Bob, as always for powerfully framing the situation. Now I would like to welcome the journalists on the line to ask questions of any and all of us.

Question: Mr. Mayor, [inaudible] from Newsday at City Hall. TPP supporters say the deal would open markets from New York to five Asia Pacific countries that aren't trading partners now and expand trade with six other ones. How can you be against the TPP if it's good for New York, if you say it's bad for New York? Can you give us some specific city reason that it's not good for us?

Mayor: Sure, I'll give you the – my perspective as Mayor. I think it would be great to let Bob and Adam have that question too, about what I think is the falsehood of the benefits being promised in this deal. I think both of them already gave you some of those answers, but I'd like them to specifically amplify in terms of the way you phrased the question. But my answer is simple. I believe the constant downward pressure that we've seen on the standard of living of American workers has had a deeply negative effect on New York City. The deeply troubling facts – I've talked about the fact that the average American family is worse off today than 25 years ago when you adjust for inflation. Bob just used that very troubling stat about the decline of the minimum wage in real terms since 1968. The fact is we've seen a series of government policy decisions that have made it harder and harder for people to reach the middle class, and that has deeply affected the people of New York City, which is why I have 46 percent of the people in my city at or near the poverty level. So, we are trying to do a lot of things here to address income inequality, but we need changes in national policy if we're going to make a profound difference. And my fear is that this trade deal will just deepen an already negative trend and we'll, again, continue to empower corporations that have been part of creating this unfair economy. And we can't make this mistake again. So the theoretical argument, well, it's going to open up business opportunities – I don't believe that's going to be transcendent for this city. I think the must bigger issue is to stop going down the wrong rode that has only deepened income inequality. Bob or Adam?

Senior Economist Adam Hersh, Roosevelt Institute: Well, let me just state exactly the same point a slightly different way, and that is that we know that the two forces that have been pushing inequality and pushing the median wage downward, if you adjust for inflation, are globalization

and technological change. But [inaudible] variable here. Other nations exposed to those two factors, that is, globalization and technological change have not succumbed as much as we have to both inequality and both stagnant or declining wages. The medium wage in the United States has dropped nine percent over the past decade, and that means half of Americans are worse off than they were ten years ago. Those Americans happen to be mostly in our large cities. So trade has played a role. Although people get their lower priced goods, they're losing jobs. Most of the jobs created in the United States, certainly over the past 15 years, have been in retail, restaurant, hotel, hospital, service transportation, childcare and elder care. These are jobs [inaudible] areas. They don't pay well. We're losing and have lost the kind of manufacturing base, but also the – the – the – the investment base that allows Americans to flourish and do well. To the trade and the investment provisions in the Transpacific Partnership will unfortunately further these very troubling trends.

Question: Mr. Mayor, this is Ann Gearan with the Washington Post – I wanted to ask you a related question. On Saturday, in New York City, Hillary Clinton will be talking about her campaign themes. And certainly a fair amount of that speech is expected to be along the lines of some of the things you've talked about here, about middle class economic access and so forth. What would you like to hear her say specifically on trade and the TPP?

Mayor: Well, I'd like to answer that in honest and give Bob the chance as well, since he has a long, deep relationship with both Clintons. I'd like to see a very clear statement that this trade deal should be opposed and should be stopped. I think, when you think about the 2008 campaign, Hillary Clinton said very powerful things that really resonated with people in places like Ohio and Pennsylvania. I happened to be out in Ohio supporting her effort and I saw the ability she had to move people by talking about not making mistakes with the past we have seen with NAFTA. I think it's very important she speak up, make clear that there will be no more NAFTA, that this trade deal is unacceptable. I think that's important as a matter of policy, but I also think it's important politically. I think people all over the country at the grassroots – certainly Democrats all over the country – are looking to her for leadership and her strong voice at this moment would make a very big difference. Bob?

Former U.S. Secretary of Labor Bob Reich: I agree. I would hope that she very clearly and specifically opposes the Trans-Pacific Partnership. She has already so far in her campaign made impressive statements about criminal justice, immigration, voting rights, some of which position her very differently from Bill Clinton's positions in the 1990s, and the policies that he invoked in the 1990s. I hope she does the same with regard to the Trans-Pacific Partnership relative to NAFTA, because I've said the Trans-Pacific Partnership is NAFTA on steroids.

Question: Mr. Mayor, this is Dana Rubenstein from Capital. Do you believe that you could support Hillary for president if she doesn't oppose TPP?

Mayor: Dana, thanks for the question. I don't deal with hypotheticals and I've said consistently, I've been very impressed by what she's said so far on criminal justice reform, voting rights, immigration reform, \$15 dollar minimum wage. I'm very optimistic about where she and her campaign are going. I think she has to speak to issues like trade to provide us all with a full picture of how she's going to address income inequality and the future of our economy. So, I don't want to prejudge different scenarios. I'm looking forward to hearing from her. And again,

I've heard her say things in the past that are very encouraging to me because I think she understands what a devastating impact NAFTA had.

Question: Mr. Mayor, this is Andrew Hawkins from Crain's New York Business. I'm just wondering – your message is having difficulty getting across in Washington on TTP, on Fast Track – also difficulty in Albany on 421-a and other, and rent regulations. I'm just wondering if there's going to be a change in strategy in terms of how you're lobbying for these things?

Mayor: No, Rome wasn't built in a day. I think, again, my colleagues on the phone here have been at this work a long time, as have I. I think progressives who believe in changing the debate, changing the rules of the game, understand that is work that takes a while, but boy there's a rich history going certainly back to the original progressive movement a century ago, and to the New Deal – strong progressive voices changing the foundational concepts of policy and how we go about things in this country. And, I think that this is one of those moments. I think – and I give Bob tremendous credit – I give Adam and everyone at the Roosevelt Institute tremendous credit – they have been sounding the alarm for years now on income inequality. Well, we just saw a poll last week – CBS News-New York Times poll – here's one of the most important new inputs in this discussion. It showed overwhelming concern around the country on the question of income inequality. It showed extraordinary concern among Democrats and obviously those who make the decisions about the future of our party and our nominee.

I think this issue's time has come in every sense and that doesn't mean that every time we go to bat trying to change policies that dug this hole that folks in the status quo are going to respond. It doesn't shock me that I go to Albany and call for fundamental changes to address income inequality, and there's not a receptive audience from those who have represented the status quo. It certainly doesn't shock me that this Congress has a lot of people in it who don't want to take on big corporations and don't want to make sure that the playing field is more fair for working people. But I think the debate is changing, and I think the views of the American people are changing, and that will ultimately win the day.

Question: Mayor, Jillian Jorgensen with the Observer. Question for you and for Secretary Rice. Just wondering what you think of the message you're hearing on TPP from other contenders in the Democratic primaries, particularly Bernie Sanders and Martin O'Malley. What do you think of the message you're hearing from them?

Mayor: From what I've heard so far, my view is they both said very important and appropriate things on trade, and I give them both credit for that. And I think that represents what a lot of people in this party feel on the ground all over the country.

Question: Secretary, if you could?

Secretary Rice: Yes. My impression is exactly the same – that Bernie Sanders and Martin O'Malley have sounded the alarm about the Trans-Pacific Partnership, and I hope Hillary Clinton does the same.

Mayor: Any other questions?

Question: Mr. Mayor, on housing [inaudible] – Ryan Hutchins at Capital – wondering if you think at this point that there’s any chance of actually getting any changes to 421-a in Albany –

Mayor: [inaudible] – hold on, hold on – topic at hand. This was specifically a talk about trade issues, and we allowed a little bit of variation there, but I can’t go specifically into 421-a. I spoke to that yesterday. Last call on questions specifically about how we open this discussion related to trade in the vote coming up. Any other questions?

Question: Secretary of State, is this issue going to factor into whomever you may endorse for president?

Secretary Rice: Well, I’m in a slightly different position from others in the sense that I am chairman of Common Cause, a non-partisan citizens group that’s trying to get big money out of politics, so I feel it inappropriate to endorse anybody. But more generally, [inaudible], this is, as Mayor de Blasio said, this a long struggle. I mean, TPP is part of a movement and the opposition of TPP are part of a movement that is going to take a great deal of time, but is gaining momentum. The Fight For Fifteen, Black Lives Matter, the extraordinary opposition to the Trans-Pacific Partnership among organized labor, and others I think is bringing people together around a very common theme, and Mayor de Blasio, and the Roosevelt Institute and others have contributed mightily to this – and that is that we’ve got to have an economy that works for the many, not the few.

Mayor: Amen. Last call. Any other questions on trade?

Question: Yes, Mr. Mayor. Quick follow-up – have you personally discussed the Trans-Pacific Partnership with Hillary Clinton? And if so, can you detail the conversation for us?

Mayor: No, no, I have not. But I think my views are quite clear, and my colleagues on the phone and a lot of strong voices in this country have spoken out against this trade deal. So, I am certain she’s up to date on it, and I think it’s important that we all hear her voice.

Alright, everyone. Thanks very much. Thanks to my colleagues. Thank you.

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