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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, if you feel overwhelmed sometimes these days by the constant barrage of so many news developments in national politics, you may be relieved to know that we will begin the program today as usual on Fridays with our weekly Ask The Mayor segment. But you may not be relieved to know that it feels to me like the kind of week in New York City news that we've gotten used to seeing, or do we never get used to it, in national news. So much happening, and it's not supposed to be this way, in what we used to call in journalism the dog-days of August when we search around for stories. There are no dog-days anymore or at least that's what it feels like. Manhattan DA Cy Vance says he's going to basically stop prosecuting marijuana possession or use in Manhattan. The de Blasio policy that heads in the same direction is under new scrutiny for perhaps giving the police too much leeway to make exceptions when it comes to marijuana arrests. There's a similar debate about enforcement of turnstiles jumping. City Council [inaudible] moving toward a vote next week on a cap on Uber and other ride-hail cars and the company is furiously pushing back on civil rights grounds. A council committee yesterday approved the highly contentious Inwood Rezoning proposal; more affordable housing or more gentrification? That now goes to the full council for a possible vote next week, what legislature takes so many big votes in August, with implications beyond the one neighborhood. We had the last public hearing this week on the charter revision proposals likely to appear on the New York City ballot in November, changes to the City's constitution in effect, that could change the way we elect the Mayor and other officials, and many other things that might be in that. And the Trump Administration continues to house children in New York City who are separated from their parents at the Mexico border, deemed "ineligible for reunification." Many days I feel like that's all we should talk about until those cases are all resolved. And there's even more but I won't keep adding to the list because our Ask The Mayor segment has to include the actual mayor at some point, so Mr. Mayor welcome back to WNYC.

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Well that's very generous of you, Brian.

[Laughter]

Let me just note your opening. You're right. We deal with so many confusing stories on a national and international level. I just want to say, the things you talked about that are happening here in New York City are about creating affordable housing, they're about criminal justice reform, there's about making the reforms that will democratize our city further so I actually think New York City is a nice counterpoint, a positive counterpoint, to what's happening nationally because everything you talked about was about creating constructive new policies to address issues, as opposed to the divisiveness –

Lehrer: Whoops, what happened to the Mayor's line?

Mayor: Here.

Lehrer: Oh, yeah we lost you there for a second.

Mayor: Okay.

Lehrer: And I was going to say touché in putting it in that context compared to what's coming out of Washington. Listeners, it's my questions and your questions for the Mayor, so our lines are open at 212-433-9692, or tweet a question, use the hashtag #AskTheMayor. So let's go down a few of these stories before we get to calls: Inwood Rezoning. Full disclosure, you know I live there, and I've remained publically neutral because of my role as a moderator in these discussions, but you know that so many of my neighbors just don't believe this will mean more affordable housing as opposed to more gentrification. Some feel betrayed by Councilman Ydonis Rodriguez, who was on the fence, casting his yes vote in committee yesterday. I believe some protesters are occupying his office even as we speak. I know you're for it; how can you reassure people it won't mean they'll be pressured by landlords out of their suddenly more valuable apartments?

Mayor: Brian, I've got to challenge the construct of the question, with all due respect. I believe you are struggling to maintain neutrality but the question wasn't neutral. The concept of the rezoning, the reason we do rezonings, is to create affordable housing. I want to make this clear to all New Yorkers. If the councilmember representing a community, democratically elected to represent a community with – working with community boards and committee groups and public hearings [inaudible], if a councilmember says I'm not interested in a rezoning in this community, we will move on, we will go to another community that wants it. Why do communities want it is the underlying question, because it creates affordable housing, preserves affordable housing, in the case of Inwood, 4000 apartments will either be built or preserved and that means, when you think about the multiplier in terms of people, well over 10,000 people in that community will have affordable housing who don't have it now. I'm talking about long-term, decades of guaranteed affordability. If anybody – any councilmember says no, I don't want something that will create 10,000, you know, affordability for 10,000 of my residents who don't have that guarantee right now, we'll move on. In this case, in Inwood, \$200 million in new investment in the community; it only happens because there is a rezoning. There are new educational programs, STEM programs, Pre-K initiatives in the community, there's a new library. There are waterfront – there's waterfront access and park improvements. There's all sorts of things that this community has wanted for a long time. So respecting you, and respecting your question, you

didn't say well on the one hand a lot of people have demanded investment in the community and more affordable housing, on the other hand people fear gentrification. I think the gentrification has been happening already and Brian, I think the world of you, but I think you could objectively say, and knowing a lot of your neighbors, gentrification was happening well before, decades before, anyone talked about a rezoning. So I argue all over the city, the market forces are already creating the pressure on rent and on folks who live in the community. When the government steps in and creates some rules, and some boundaries and some guarantees of affordability it actually rebalances the equation in favor of the people.

Lehrer: All true, and I would put the opposite emphasis, by the way, on the question to the opponents of the rezoning, you as a proponent of it get the question the way I framed it. But it your opinion what are the implications of this vote for other rezoning debates elsewhere in the city?

Mayor: I think it's very straightforward. The fact is, when you look at the major rezonings, East New York, Far Rockaway, Jerome Avenue in The Bronx, East Harlem, all communities that historically did not get enough investment from the city government. All communities that need more affordable housing, a number of them facing gentrification pressures. In each and every case after a very expensive public process, literally including hundred, even thousands, of community residents, in each case the rezoning passed because the judgement of the councilmember was it was a clear net gain for the community. That we needed the guarantees of affordable housing, both the new and the preserved affordable housing, we needed the big investments in schools, parks, all the amenities that a lot of these communities did not have enough of historically, and rezonings are basically a once in a generation opportunity to create a vision of what kind of new investment a community deserves from the city. Any, again, any community that says, or through the councilmember, "I don't want that, keep the investment, I don't want the affordable housing, I don't want the new affordable housing, I don't want the preserved housing, keep moving on," we'll take the resources and the focus elsewhere because there's plenty of other communities who want it. So the bottom line has been over four and a half years, every neighborhood rezoning has passed because we created a structure that worked for the community, and here's the difference in the path, and bluntly I will call out my two predecessors, who did not focus on affordable housing and rezonings and didn't guarantee the outcomes. Whatever we commit to we are doing and people can see it. If we commit to affordable housing it is a legally binding requirement that that happens. And that's part of why I think council members have felt comfortable that they're getting a good deal for their community.

Lehrer: Let me go on the issue of marijuana arrests. I'm not sure if you and the Manhattan DA are on the same page regarding not prosecuting or possession or public use. Are you 100 percent?

Mayor: Yeah I think we are. I think it's taken some time for all of us to make sense of new approaches on marijuana, on fair evasion, on a variety of issues, but I think we're actually ending up in largely the same place. On the lowest level offenses and Brian there's a crucial qualifier, if it's a low-level offense only, not a low-level offense where some has an outstanding warrant for a serious crime, or a low level offense where someone also happens to have a weapon on them,

or something else that might be an extenuating circumstance. For a low-level offense only, we all want to move away from arrest, and we are moving away from arrest. It's a summons situation. In fact, what the NYPD announced this week, after piloting around the city this concept with fare evasion are now going to do it more broadly, all over the city, if someone is stopped because they're evading a fare, the officer, right then and there, if they have an outstanding summons, outstanding warrant I should say, right then and there, will take them to the nearest court to address the previous warrant, to address the new offense of fare evasion, to clear it all, and move forward.

But at the same time, Brian, it's very clear there's still enforcement; it is illegal to evade your fare, it's illegal to smoke marijuana - that might change next year - or it's illegal to possess marijuana, that might change next year, but this is a very different approach. Arrests are already down radically. In 2017 we had a 100,000 fewer arrests in New York City than we did four years earlier. That number is going down even further, many fewer arrests this year, crime keeps going down, and the other great thing is that this new approach is going to allow officers to get back on patrol because they are not going to spend a whole lot of time processing arrests, they're going to deal with the immediate issue, and then get back to patrol which we think will add to safety. So I do think we are all getting on the same page here.

Lehrer: The - well MTA Chair Joe Lhota says a more relaxed approach to turnstile jumping is one reason for the officially recorded decrease in subway ridership this year. Do you buy that?

Mayor: I don't have any proof of that. I think what's happening and I - look I respect Joe Lhota, we want to in every way we can support real change at the MTA. We still - the jury is still out on whether the MTA is doing what it needs to do with the resources that we provided and the people of New York City have provided, but I want to see them succeed for sure. I think the central challenge around ridership is of course unreliable service and overcrowded trains. That's why we're trying to create more alternatives like bus service, ferry service, you know, biking, all sorts of other alternative.

I don't have evidence that there is more fare evasion. In fact the point here is by keeping the officers on patrol and not taking them away because of an arrest. An arrest basically takes an officer off their beat for the rest of the day. This new approach is going to get the officers to deal with the immediate issue and get right back out there. I think you're going to see more presence around turnstiles as a result as a preventative measure and we still take it seriously. If you evade your fare there will be a consequence and I don't think anyone likes to be stopped by an officer, given a summons, have to, you know, either appear in court or pay a fine or anything like that, that's a real consequence. I think it will in fact give us more ability to prevent while doing a better job when someone is a fare evader of dealing with them quickly and efficiently and getting the officer back out there to do their job.

Lehrer: The Politico New York Newsletter today emphasizes how your marijuana policy has a massive loophole for certain people with criminal records, a loophole the NYPD wanted it says, but the Times says that's exactly the group of people most disadvantaged by the way marijuana arrests versus summonses have gotten decided in the past. And we know who that means in terms of race and ethnicity. How do you respond to that?

Mayor: The goal here, we want to break all the negative cycles that have plagued our City and our society. We want to break the cycle of mass incarceration. We want to break the disparities and end the disparities in policing. This is part – everything we're talking about here, on top of ending the broken policy of stop and frisk, retraining the police force in de-escalation, implicit bias training which our officers are now getting, it's all part of a bigger vision of reform that's moving forward, body cameras on all of our officers by the end of the year.

We need to break that history and I believe what that exception is about to be exceptional, not to be typical, to allow space for the fact that sometimes there are extenuating circumstances where, for example, if someone has an outstanding warrant for a serious crime, we're going to deal with that, and that's for public safety. But the goal here is to consistently reduce the use of arrest. It's been proven by the way under first Commissioner Bratton, now Commissioner O'Neill, arrests constantly going down, police interactions with community going down, and yet safety increasing and improving. So we're dedicated to that, but I do believe there are some exceptions that are in the interests of public safety.

Lehrer: And from the other side of the marijuana debate there are people who say, you know, you're not enforcing public smoking anymore and guess what? There's public smoking all over New York City today and some people don't like it.

Mayor: We are enforcing, but we're enforcing in a different way. So first of all, the big decision that the State has to make as early as next year is whether marijuana use will be legalized but even in states that have legalized public smoking has still been illegal and you look at the country there are still sanctions for smoking in public. There are still fines for example and summonses.

So right now, until that issue is resolved on state level, what we're doing is we are enforcing, we're just using arrests a lot less. I still believe, people respond, humans respond to a police officer approaching them, saying that they're doing something wrong, telling them there is a consequence, and providing a summons or whatever it might be as a way of that consequence. That still affects peoples' behavior.

And that enforcement will continue. We believe in quality of life policing, we believe in addressing concerns that community residents raise, we believe in neighborhood policing which is supposed to be very community responsive, but it's a different kind of enforcement, but there will be enforcement.

Lehrer: Eric in Manhattan, you're on WNYC with the Mayor, hello Eric.

Question: Yeah, hi. When Mr. de Blasio was initially campaigning, one of his promises broadcast on WNYC was that he would see that all stairwells in public housing were properly lit since there great fears expressed by people having to walk up unlit stairwells, and as you may know, there was later the tragic incident of a visitor shot to death accidentally by a police officer whose life and career was ruined when he had his pistol out while patrolling an unlit stairwell. Has anyone been brought to account for being among those who would not follow through

maintaining public housing causing the, you know, incidents to occur? I have not heard of anyone being prosecuted or having their career ended for ignoring Mr. de Blasio's orders to put lights back in housing stairwells.

Lehrer: Alright, Mr. Mayor go ahead.

Mayor: Thank you for the question Eric. I mean I think there are a couple things that are a little different than the way you described. One, yes, we absolutely need to make sure all the stairwells are lit. It's a huge job given the history of decades of disinvestment in public housing by the federal government and the State government, and even sometimes the City government. Since I came to the office, we've increased the budget for public housing by almost \$4 billion in new money. We've made a pledge with the federal government to add even more on top of that going forward. That's going to really help us address the problem. And in the coming weeks we'll have a lot more to say on additional ways to help public housing.

But I want to say I don't think it's right to say in a particular tragic incident like that one that the lighting was the whole story. I think there were other things going on there and obviously a human tragedy. But what we are making clear is as more resources are flowing into public housing and we have new leadership at public housing that is very capable and proven. We expect to see a lot more of these situations addressed.

The other thing to know about is the lighting outside. In a lot of our developments there was a lack of lighting outside at night that really created a huge public safety problem. We had a serious crime problem when we were first coming in in public housing. If the crime in public housing has gone down substantially – there is more to do – but has gone down substantially, because in the most troubled developments we put in a whole lot of lighting so that residents could feel comfortable, police could see what was going on, discourage criminal activity. So that kind of investment is going to continue and deepen because people deserve to have well-lit stairwells and well-lit surroundings when they live in public housing.

Lehrer: Do you have a good count on the number of lighting, especially stairwell lighting, problems in NYCHA housing?

Mayor: I don't, I'm sure our management, our General Manager Vito Mustaciuolo has that kind of metric. I mean we are addressing that issue while obviously addressing a host of other issues that are crucial, particularly related to health and safety, and again trying to get a lot done with much more limited resources than we would like. But it is an important problem and when it's reported, it's our job to make sure it is addressed by the local employees at NYCHA.

Lehrer: Lyric in Brooklyn, you're on WNYC with the Mayor, hello Lyric.

Mayor: Hi, good morning Mayor de Blasio. Mayor de Blasio we in our building are having problems with HPD and I know that we are not isolated in our issues. HPD relies wholly and solely on input from the citizen to ensure safe sanitary housing yet in our case we have, how do I put this, it's pretty much a merry-go-round of violations are written and removed, written and removed, when nothing is ever repaired.

If that's not bad enough, we're being forced to deal with an unwritten policy that HPD has in regard to heating in the common areas of buildings. Their position is, they don't have to put it here so they can rip it out. However, sir, we're in a rent stabilized building and that heating in the common area is a required base service for so much as State law. This is something that HPD has been made aware of but they just do not care and over the span of a year and a half, they pretty much aided and abetted our developer in violating the provisions of the rent stabilization law and endangered our building as well as the adjacent building via all the gas line hacking they turned a blind eye to.

Now in my opinion this is sort of tantamount to a homicide detective telling a person that he can sell drugs to kids because he doesn't deal with narcotics. Why is one housing agency aiding and abetting developers and landlord and violating provisions of the Rent Stabilization Law? I would think that would be an outrageous violation of public policy.

Lehrer: Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: Well thank you for raising the concern and I would like you obviously to provide your information to WNYC so we can have folks follow up with you directly. I don't know the specifics of your building but I have to say the – obviously I'm concerned but I don't hear anything in the description of that consistent with what I've seen from HPD. From what I have seen from HPD, they have been very aggressive at going at bad landlords, very aggressive at going at bad developers, very protective of affordable housing. In fact we have a host of new anti-harassment legislation that the Council passed which gives a lot more power and teeth to the efforts of HPD and the Buildings Department to enforce on bad landlords. And I think the point about heating is, I mean heating needs to be available anywhere by law that it is required and we need to make sure that it happens, including ordering the landlord to do it or the landlord won't do it, getting it done by the City and then the landlord is charged. The violations are a serious matter, they are not – if you experienced a merry-go-round, I need to know what happened there to see if someone is not doing their job or there is some misunderstanding. But the bottom line from my point of view is HPD is supposed to be a very aggressive enforcement entity. And job one for all of us is protecting affordable housing. So I want to have folks follow up because I want to understand what happened here and if we have to do something differently, we will.

Lehrer: Uber and Lyft, Mr. Mayor, and Via also cited – we were talking about Joe Lhota saying that the relaxation of enforcement of turnstile jumping is one of the reasons for officially decreased subway ridership numbers this year. Also Uber, Lyft, Via cited as a reason for less subway use as more people use them as a way to escape poor service underground. That's one way those companies are pushing back as you know against a one year cap on new cars that City Council might approve next week. The other big way they are pushing back is civil rights. The Reverend Al Sharpton and the Urban League and others saying an Uber cap will mean more people of color than otherwise can still be discriminated against by yellow cab drivers because an app doesn't know what color you are. How much do you buy the civil rights argument?

Mayor: I think there is an historic problem that's very real and I don't accept any cab driver, for hire vehicle driver, anyone discriminating against people of color and in fact we added some

additional, new reality, working with the Council, there's going to be an office within the TLC to fight this specific problem. But you should also know the existing penalties for refusing to serve someone because as a whole they are, are very intense. The first is a fine, the second offense is suspension of license, the third is revoking license, meaning someone can no longer drive a for hire vehicle. So –

Lehrer: Can I jump in on that for a second on those criteria, we got a caller last week who said the problem with that is, it's so hard to prove against an individual driver, first you have to be a regular person on the street willing to pursue the case after you get passed up and then according to this caller, you have to demonstrate that the driver made eye contact with you and somehow prove that to the TLC – that's a high hurdle, that whole set of things, for an individual, you know victimized, potential rider.

Mayor: Look, there has been a number of instances where the drivers were held accountable. So I believe, yes there's a particular set of conditions that needs to be met, but has been met in a number of cases and we are adamant that we are going to enforce, so that's a very real issue but we have a lot of the right tools and now we are getting new tools, working with the Council to strengthen that enforcement. I think we can do that very effectively and I think obviously in the age of the cell phone camera and social media, it's much easier to go after bad actors. And we are going to send a clear message to all professional drivers that we will not tolerate discrimination and the consequences of it are very severe. But on the bigger point, I think the Council is doing the right thing here on this larger issue of for hire vehicles and one of the most central reasons is exactly why I ran for this office, to fight income inequality – I mean look at what is happening to these drivers in the for hire vehicle sector, recent study came out from the University of California Berkley, most overwhelming majorities of drivers are now making subminimum wage because the business model of Uber in particular is to flood the zone with more and more vehicles, more and more drivers, grab market share, even if it means a lot of the drivers have no opportunity to make money because there is so many people competing for a certain amount of rides, it's dumbing down the whole reality, it's kind of a race to the bottom. It's hurting the livelihoods of the yellow cab drivers as well. So what's happening across the board because of these huge corporations is they are driving down the wages of hard working people who work in this field. That alone is a reason to call a time out and assess what's going on here.

Lehrer: What were the additional tools that you referred to that there would be for enforcing discrimination against riders by taxi drivers?

Mayor: A new office is being created, it was announced this week. – with the Council and the administration to further educate drivers and to educate the public on the kind of enforcement. So making very clear to the drivers that discrimination is unacceptable and that the consequences are severe including literally being unable to do that work anymore. And to educate the public that they can and should report any discrimination immediately and it will be followed up on aggressively.

Lehrer: Dennis on Staten Island you are on WNYC with the Mayor.

Question: Yes, good morning Mayor de Blasio. You mentioned earlier affordable housing and I'm really trying to wrap my head around it, because I hear so much about affordable housing but yet there is 23,000 children sleeping in homeless shelters. And to your credit Mr. Mayor, you have devoted a lot of resources to fighting homelessness, I give you credit for that. But my question is this – will you commit at least ten percent of the units in your affordable housing plan to homeless New Yorkers? And out of that ten percent can you make 24,000 of those units created through new construction?

Mayor: Dennis, thank you for the question. I mean we have right now a plan that I'm comfortable with so I really want to respect that you are sort of putting a square question to me, but I'm answering by saying I think the current approach which focuses the affordable housing plan on addressing the affordability crisis for all New Yorkers, not just folks who happen to be homeless but a whole vast cross-section of New Yorkers who are facing affordable housing challenges but at the same time there is a substantial amount, I can get you an exact figure of that housing that is addressing the homeless problem on top the supportive housing that creates 15,000 apartments of supportive housing. That is new, permanent affordable housing to address folks who often have been homeless with for example mental health needs or substance misuse needs. So we have a very big commitment to affordable housing to get people out of homelessness.

But the central effort, the central focus of our affordable housing plan is for the vast majority of New Yorkers who are struggling but thank God never became homeless. On the good side, since the administration began so now over four years, about 90,000 people who were in shelter were helped to long term affordable housing.

So, we have had a lot of success with the existing affordable housing supply helping people out of homeless and keeping them out of homelessness. So, we want to just deepen those efforts. I think that's going to take us in the right direction.

Lehrer: Jordan in Greenpoint, you're on WNYC with the Mayor. Hi, Jordan.

Question: Hey, how are you doing?

Lehrer: Alright.

Mayor: Hi, Jordan.

Question: Mayor de Blasio, I'm curious as far as your statement about affordable housing goes. I'm a real estate professional in north Brooklyn so you can probably guess where this is going. But you, pardon me if I'm wrong, made the case earlier that rezoning leads to a net gain of affordable housing. I would really like for you to point to some recent examples of that and if you could maybe address what the rezoning has done to north Brooklyn, Williamsburg, and Greenpoint. I would appreciate that very much.

Mayor: Jordan, it's a great question because what you're also doing is raising the history here. So, let me say this real quick. The rezoning done in the Bloomberg administration in your

community was, in my view, misguided in the sense that it did not focus enough on affordable housing, did not raise the bar high enough. Remember, the Bloomberg administration did not believe in Mandatory Inclusionary Housing. That's one of our central affordable housing achievements. It was to get a law – a law, a binding law that says when the City grants permission via rezoning for development, there must be guarantees, legally binding guarantees of creating affordable housing. Depending on the income levels – if it's a lot of lower income housing, it could be 20 percent, 25 percent, or 30 percent depending on the income mix. That law never existed before.

It's, I think, the most progressive in the country because it's not debatable. You either – if you're a developer, you follow those rules or you're out. That didn't exist when Greenpoint and Williamsburg were rezoned and I think, bluntly, the previous administration was pretty lax in following through on whatever commitments of affordable housing were made.

So, in your community, it's not a good example of what a rezoning should produce. Around the city, we're beginning to see the more positive examples with tougher rules that we put in place. Part of why in the last fiscal year we financed over 30,000 affordable apartment is that we start to see the rezonings create more affordable housing. I mean there's never been a year ever in New York City history when the government produced 30,000 affordable apartments. That's enough to reach close to 100,000 New Yorkers. That was made possible in part by the new approach and more aggressive approach in the rezonings.

The last thing to say – and I'm speaking now from my home neighborhood, Park Slope. I'm thinking about surrounding neighborhoods including Prospect Heights, including Bed-Stuy, including Bushwick that never had a rezoning, went through intense gentrification, and the development pressures pushed out a huge number of residents, raised the rents for a lot of people there. Nothing came back for the public in the bargain. There was no investment. There was no new affordable housing created. There were no guarantees.

The absence of a rezoning has been proven, to me – the absence of rezoning can lead to rampant negative impacts from market economics. The presence of rezoning with very tough rules to guarantee the public interest makes sure that there is some major amount of affordability created and preserved despite market forces.

Lehrer: We're just about out of time. Two quick things before you go. One – charter revision. We had a guest this week promoting instant runoff voting to be included as one of the things that your commission allows the city to vote on this November. Are you for it?

Mayor: Not yet. I am interested in it. I think it needs some real study. I think for this charter revision commission, which has done great work and I want to really credit the –

Lehrer: Whoops, I think we lost the Mayor's line again –

Mayor: No, I'm here. Can you hear me?

Lehrer: Yep, we got to you.

Mayor: We're going to work on that technical difficulty. But in any event, the charter revision commission has done great work. They are first and foremost focused on the issues I put forward earlier in the year – campaign finance reform, getting money out of politics, more public financing of elections, better election outreach meaning better efforts to get people the information they need to vote, translation services to help people voting. They're looking at some other very interesting reforms as well. But I'd say on instant runoff voting, it's a big interesting idea. I don't know enough about it to know yet if it would work in New York City, if it would be the reform we hope. I need to know a lot more about whether it really does increase voter participation.

So, I think for this go-round it's a big piece to consider. I think for the future, it's the kind of thing that if we can really research it, it might be a very promising option for New York City but let's look at how it has been used around the country and around the world and really get clear about what the impact would be.

Lehrer: So when you see a big piece for this year, you mean it's not likely to be in the proposal?

Mayor: Again, that process is going on still so I don't want to prejudge. I'm saying – my personal view – it is such a big idea and it's such a major change to how we run elections, it's certainly not what I proposed for this charter revision commission but I think it is a meritorious idea worthy of some real study and real public debate. I'm just not sure we can do that effectively on this timeline. The commission is certainly looking at it. But I think if they don't do it now it's something that deserves some real serious focus because, look, any idea that will increase voter participation and will increase representation is very interesting me. IRV may be one of those ideas but I need to know a lot more.

Lehrer: And final thing. Politics – you haven't endorsed yet in the gubernatorial primary. Cynthia Nixon gives the keynote speech today at Netroots Nation in New Orleans. We were covering this week how she's running on New York State's single payer which most Democrats in the Assembly and State Senate are for. The Governor has not taken a position. Are you there yet between Nixon and Cuomo, and I think you're there on state single payer? But remind me.

Mayor: Absolutely believe in the single payer idea for New York State – Assembly Gottfried's bill. I support it. I think the time has come and the notion that one of the impact would be to reduce healthcare costs for everyone while requiring those who are wealthy to pay their fair share is absolutely consistent with this moment in history and everything that I believe in. So, I'm going to support that vigorously. I commend Cynthia Nixon for taking that stance.

And I think she's raised a lot of important issues that are having a positive impact on the debate in this state. And that's what you want to see in an election. As for who I'll be supporting in New York State, who I'll be supporting around the country because now I have a new entity I put together to support progressive candidates and Democratic candidates around the country. I'll start to roll out those decisions soon. I remind everyone, you know, everyday people are really going to focus on this in the final weeks before the primary and then the final weeks before the general election so there's plenty of time here but I'll let New Yorkers know what I'm doing and why quite soon.

Lehrer: Mr. Mayor, thank you as always. Talk to you next week.

Mayor: Thank you, Brian. Take care.

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