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**RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO AND WIN CEO CHRISTINE QUINN HOST PRESS
CONFERENCE ON HOMELESSNESS**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you so much, Chris.

Wow, this is an extraordinary, extraordinary facility, and WIN does amazing work. I want to thank Chris Quinn. We were just reminiscing that we now go back 23 years by my count –

Christine Quinn, President and CEO, WIN: We were five.

Mayor: We were five, yes. We were in an early internship program for kindergartners.

Quinn: Yes, exactly.

Mayor: Chris has done a lot for this city. And she did it as an activist, she did it as a staff for the City Council, she did it as a Council member, as Speaker, but now, leading this extraordinary organization – Women In Need – which is really one of the great providers of support for women and children in this city. And when you go around this facility, there is so much love in this building. There's so much commitment, there's so much togetherness – and it is uplifting. You know, it's a time of year that we take stock. And you see a lot of people here struggling and then you see a lot of other people there with a helping hand, trying to lift them, help them forward – a lot of noble things happening here in this facility, but all throughout everything that WIN does.

So, Chris, I want to thank you for your leadership. You – you are doing great work in a great place. And it was a joy to – well, we had the experience a little earlier – you know, back in my day, we got the gifts and we were supposed to wait until Christmas morning, so things moved a little bit quicker – it's the modern age – we got to watch the kids receive the gifts and then instantly open them, and the joy on their faces and the beauty of these young people at the holidays is something very special. So it was really a pleasure to be a part of that.

And, as Chris mentioned, we had a very powerful conversation with Jennifer Ashford, who's a resident here. She has three daughters here. And Jennifer is someone who really should be held up as an example for all New Yorkers to understand exactly what Chris was talking about – the new face of homelessness, the new reality of homelessness. Jennifer's a hardworking mother of three. She not only works for a living, she helps other people – she helps people with mental health challenges, and she's committed to that work. And it's – it's tough. The work's tough, making ends meet is tough. But she is the kind of person that epitomizes today's reality – of New Yorkers doing all the right things, who we could put on a pedestal, but still ends up with no choice but to go into shelter. Thank God there's a place like WIN to pick her up and help her through. And she was telling us with pride about her job. She was telling us with pride about her 17-year-old daughter, who's been accepted to several colleges already – thank you, Ms. Brown, for your great work helping them along. And Jennifer's looking forward to the day when she gets into long-term housing, and WIN is helping her to do that. So I just want to thank her for that great conversation and thank all the people who work here, because you're really doing fantastic work.

And it is a season of thanks, so I want to thank members of my administration – Steve Banks, our HRA commissioner, Bill Chong, our DYCD commissioner, who do such extraordinary work helping people in need.

From WIN, I want to thank the board chair, Jaqui Lividini, and her daughter – is it Calliope?

Calliope: Yeah.

Mayor: Calliope, thank you for being here.

From Community Board 16, I want to thank our great partners at Community Board 16 – the chair, Ms. Betty Kollock-Wallace, and the District Manager, Ms. Viola Greene-Walker – thank you very much, both of you, for your leadership.

[Applause]

And yes, elected officials matter too, and we want to – and they're good friends who do a lot of good work. I want to thank Senator – now Senator – got a promotion – Roxanne Persaud, and Council Member Rafael Espinal – thank you very, very much for your leadership and your support of people in need every day, and for all you do for us in Albany – we appreciate it greatly.

So WIN is one of the great examples and it has been for a long time – it's been over 30 years – housing and services and support. The one thing that Chris was bragging about – and rightfully so – in WIN facilities, there's childcare – in every one of your residential facilities?

Quinn: Absolutely.

Mayor: There's afterschool. This is an extraordinary range of services to help the whole family – and that's why the WIN model works.

Quinn: And the camp!

Mayor: Don't forget the camp. I have a conscience and it reminded me to mention the camp, which does extraordinary work. So think about all the support for these kids – they – despite the challenge and the disruption of homelessness, the love, the embrace, the support, as their families get back towards a better life.

WIN operates ten shelters, 230 supportive permanent apartments – serves over 10,000 New Yorkers every year.

Now, here, 700 people served, over half of whom are children. And you heard about it – WIN takes the right approach, I think – the long view how you break the cycle of homelessness, change someone's life for the long-term, especially the work they've done on supportive housing – it's tremendous and something we believe in fundamentally and we're investing in more than ever.

And here is a really good-news statistic – and WIN should be proud of it – 90 percent of the women who transition from WIN shelter facilities to supportive housing are in the same apartment two years later. Meaning, when WIN helps someone to a new life, it works. And they keep with that new life and they're on the right path for the long-term. So, so much good happening here.

Now, Chris said something very powerful. I want us to really think about it and New Yorkers need to talk about it. More and more homeless folks are working. That's a change – that's a different reality. Why? Because wages and benefits are so low. And we have to do a lot to keep rising those up because the cost of housing is so high

and we have to create the affordable housing to address that. But the bottom line is these are people who are working or are ready to work. And it's our obligation to give them every opportunity.

So, when we talk about a very painful reality of 58,000 New Yorkers in shelter right now, the difference today is so many of them are working people or people who worked recently. They're family members, they're people who don't have, thank God, a mental health challenge or substance abuse challenge – they have an economic challenge. And our job is to address it in every way we can.

Look, I'll just repeat very quickly – we have tried a whole host of new approaches. We believe they're working and they're more and more having an effect, but there's a lot to do. This will be a long effort. When Chris and I were first in the City Council, homelessness was already a huge challenge. It's been a challenge for a long time here in the city. We have to defeat it, but it'll be a long battle.

Still, we're proud to say we've gotten 22,000 New Yorkers out of shelter and into better housing just in the last two years.

We've put \$60 million dollars into legal services to prevent eviction – to help people stay in the apartments they have a legal right to. We've served 91,000 New Yorkers through prevention efforts to help stabilize them in the apartments they're in now. Stability is the key. Helping people keep what they have, and not having their apartments slip through their hands. And those prevention efforts are some of the smartest things I think we do in government. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure – that old saying is accurate. Every family we can keep in their apartment, we can help from slipping into homelessness – it's not only the humane thing to do and so much better for the family and particularly the children, it also is much, much better for the taxpayer. And that's why we're so devoted to those prevention programs. So, we're going to keep building on those.

Obviously, our overall affordable housing program will be crucial to providing these working people who just need an affordable place to live more and more options. Over 30,000 affordable apartments now already secured under our plan. And I want to note that 85 percent of those apartments, so far, are for low-income families because we know how deep the need is amongst low income New Yorkers. And we've focused very intensely on our lowest-income fellow New Yorkers. Supportive housing – the 15,000 units we've pledged – look at the model of WIN, look at how well it works – we want a lot more of that. 15,000 apartments over the next 15 years. And we're already working with WIN as part of this effort. In October, we teamed up to break ground on a new supportive housing development that Chris mentioned down the block. So, it's happening right now. Organizations like WIN are building out their capacity.

As I said the other day, 250 supportive apartments will be ready, minimum, next year. And we intend to go farther very, very quickly. That's what we have to do.

And our HOME-STAT approach that I announced last week – literally, reaching out to each and every one of the 3,000 to 4,000 New Yorkers on the street, figuring out what they need individually. Everyone has a story. Everyone had a path from what was a stable life to the streets. There is a path back from the streets to a better life. We're going to find it for each and every person who is now on the streets of this city.

I will conclude first with a little English, then with a little Spanish. But last year a very eloquent woman, who happens to be my wife, visited a WIN shelter, and was very impressed. And she said at that time, quote, "Our work is to hold our city's children gently like the precious seeds of our future they are." I married a very eloquent woman. And that is the truth – and you saw before as we had the joy of giving those children gifts, those children constitute the future of our city. Those children deserve to be treated as the precious seeds of tomorrow they are.

I want to thank everyone at WIN. I want to thank you for exemplifying what this season is supposed to be about, but you do it all year long, not just for the holidays. You do it 365 days a year and we thank you for that. And it's part of how we build a stronger and fairer city – supporting efforts like this.

Very quickly in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, we'll take questions about this facility, about anything related to homelessness. And then we will switch over to off-topic questions.

Yes?

Question: [inaudible] WNYC profiled another working mother who lives here at this shelter – Shakira Crawford. She has a [inaudible] voucher and for ten months she's been looking for an apartment and has not been able to find one. Why hasn't this program worked for her and what's your message to her?

Mayor: I'll start and I want Steve Banks to jump in – and I know Chris Quinn feels deeply about this as well, and has been the forefront of defending the rights of women here, who have every right to use that shelter. Now, look, we all know there's not as much available housing as there used to be because of the cost of housing, but what's very clear is the law, which, again, I had the honor of voting on, as did Chris Quinn – is very clear. You cannot discriminate against someone based on source of income. A federal housing voucher must be treated the same as if you showed up with a stack of cash or a platinum card. It has to be respected and any – any form of discrimination against those who have valid government support is illegal in the city and we will very aggressively enforce that law through our Human Rights Commission.

Steve, you want to add or Chris – either one?

Commissioner Steven Banks, Human Resources Administration: There are two kinds of landlords that we've encountered with these programs – we've encountered responsible landlords and they've been part of the effort that enabled us to move out 22,000 children and adults from the shelter system, many of them using the LINC vouchers, the FEPS vouchers, and Section 8. We've also encountered landlords who have been irresponsible and unscrupulous, and as part of an effort to address that, the Human Rights Commission of New York City is investigating 85 cases. We're working directly with Chris Quinn and WIN on several cases and we intend to hold any owners or any brokers accountable for violating the local law. Meanwhile, we are going to continue to work with all the responsible landlords who have been making these programs work for thousands of individuals. But for, Shakira or for Jennifer, who have had difficulty in the – interacting with landlords, we're going to make sure that the law is enforced to the letter and so we give those children, those families an opportunity to make use of the mayor's investment in rental assistance, which has been a proven solution to homelessness over many years, and if we now find ourselves in a situation which some landlords are refusing to participate, we will hold them accountable.

Mayor: Do you want to add?

Quinn: I just want to take a moment to thank Ms. Brown, who I – and thank WNYC who really captured how hard Ms. Brown and her staff are working for Shakira. And I think there's really a couple of important points here. One is that the vouchers are critical. Without the vouchers, we have far less resources to connect our clients to be able to find apartments. So, no one should misunderstand the bumps in the road to mean the vouchers are not a good idea or a good program – they are and we need more of them for different communities.

Mayor: Amen. Amen.

Quinn: Let me be clear. Landlords who don't take them – and Jennifer told us that had happened to her – and our staff at WIN, sadly, hears it all the time – they are breaking the law. It's not the government that did anything wrong, it's not Shakira or Jennifer or WIN staff that did anything wrong – and I'm incredibly grateful to Steve and also to the Human Rights Commission and Attorney General Eric Schneiderman – his office is working with WIN and HRA now, and we're going to bring lawsuits forward, and make it perfectly clear to these bad landlords that if you think you can look a homeless family in the face and say there's no room at the inn for you, you're wrong and we will hold you accountable to the fullest extent of the law, today, tomorrow, and every day that there's a HRA and a WIN in this city. And I think once those lawsuits start rolling out, and people have found there's consequences – because, look, the truth is these landlords, they think can push WIN clients around. They think they say no to one of our clients, that our women are just going to go away, and not say anything to anybody, but that's not the truth, because they come back here, and they have great people like Ms. Brown who get in touch with myself and others, and we reach out to great officials like Steve, and we're going to hold these people accountable. And I think very soon, you're going to the number of landlords who think they can push homeless families around decrease, if not disappear in this city.

Mayor: Amen. And Steve I want you to come back up, because I want you to explain that part of how we address a situation when we catch a landlord doing the wrong thing is to get someone an apartment in the process.

Commissioner Banks: Right. Well, one of the remedies that's occurred in the past, in enforcing the law that the mayor sponsored and both Chris and the mayor supported is – one remedy is to provide an apartment to the person who's filed a complaint. There are other kinds of penalties for the landlords and we intend to pursue all the remedies in every case that was brought to our attention. We've distributed ten thousand fliers to families informing them of their rights – describing what is the definition of income discrimination – source of income discrimination – for example, we don't take programs, we don't do that. And we've got hotline numbers, you can call 3-1-1, and you can also call HRA as well, and we're working with providers to address this problem. Meanwhile, as I say, I want to, particularly at this holiday season, make it clear that we're going to continue to work with the many, many responsible landlords who've made it possible for 22,000 children and adults to move out of the shelter system, but we want to make sure that the irresponsible landlords cease that kind of conduct so that more families can move out of the shelter system.

Mayor: Yea, you can follow-up.

Question: I understand that the Human Right's Commission is going after 85 landlords, but the scale of the problem we're talking about is, you know, 60,000 people in shelters. So, are you doing enough? Is that enough of an aggressive stance for the city to be taking for such a small number of landlords?

Commissioner Banks: Stay tuned.

Mayor: Yes, and let me pick up – and I think Chris said it very powerfully – we are going to make examples of people. And, look, a landlord who thinks they can get away with it and then sees another landlords suddenly hit with a huge fine will wake up real quick. So, there's going to be a lot of enforcement. Carmelyn Malalis, our Chair of the Human Rights Commission, is a very tough customer, and there will be plenty of follow-up on this because the law is the law.

On this topic. Yes?

Question: Mr. Mayor, can you address the Comptroller's report about what he called deplorable conditions in homeless shelters for families?

Mayor: Yeah, we are very committed to addressing those conditions, I should say, and we have been since I came into office. Now, our Inspector General – I should our Commissioner of Investigations, my apology – our

Commissioner of Investigations, Mark Peters, at my request, went out and looked at these facilities – this was earlier in the year – found a series of problems. We put together a team to go out and address these problems. Since we started that effort earlier in the year, there have been 12,000 building violations that have been fixed and resolved. So it's an ongoing effort. Again, we, as everyone knows, have a lot of facilities that were not given the kind of investment they deserved for many years. It's not an acceptable situation. So that effort has continued since our own investigations commissioner did that report. We have continued constantly to make more and more repairs. But we'll redouble those efforts constantly. We have put a lot of resources in and we want to keep improving the conditions of the shelters. One of the other things is there's been real concern, of course, about safety in shelters. That's been an issue for many, many years. Under our administration, we've added 260 new peace officers at our homeless shelters to improve safety – and much greater coordination with the NYPD than used to exist. This is ongoing work. So I agree with the comptroller – there's more to be done – but I assure you we will put a lot into fixing these problems.

Yes, Grace.

Question: A question for Chris Quinn – I'm wondering, there's been a lot of focus in city government in the last two, three weeks in particular on addressing the homeless crisis in the city and, as someone who has been inside city government and now outside working in the area of homelessness, I'm wondering what you make of some of the proposals on the table – the top-to-bottom review of the Department of Homelessness, and the plan to address street homeless very aggressively with the outreach team – and any concerns that there's maybe too much focus on street homeless, not enough on the large shelter population?

Quinn: Well, first, I – I think the review that Commissioner Banks is undertaking to look at not just DHS, but HRA and all of the agencies and entities that relate to homelessness is obviously a great step, because, one, I've known – we realized before, we were chatting, Steve and I have known each other before the mayor and I knew each other – so I have great faith in Steve's ability to identify where things are not going right and come up with a plan that will fix them. So I think that will only be a step forward and I've already begun telling Steve exactly what I think he should be putting into that plan – and you can rest assured he'll find me highly annoying over the next 90 days until it's done – and you know, that's his cross to bear – one. Two, I think the HOME-STAT program is a very good program. And as the mayor said before, I particularly like the idea that it's not cookie-cutter, that each individual homeless person that the program interacts with is going to get a personalized program, just like we do here at WIN – and I think that's a very important philosophy that we need to make sure we're carrying through in all of our work with all of our different government agencies and all of our different not-for-profit agencies. Obviously at WIN, the vast majority of the work we do is around families. So I want to be clear – we cannot in this effort pit one group of homeless folks against the other. It's not, you know, single, street homeless are more important than families. We need to be doing it all together and making sure we're addressing all of the populations together – and I think that's what we're working on. And certainly we're going to be giving even more ideas about what can be done for families. We're lucky at this shelter – we have the DYCD commissioner here – last year, they started a program – after-school program – particularly for homeless middle-school children – SONIC – we have that here. We need more things like that, more support for our childcare, so we can make sure we have really, you know, highest-level head teachers, and those are the ideas we'll talk about over the next 90 days. But it's not one or the other. We have a big homeless population. They're diverse, even within families – there's mental health issues, substance abuse, domestic violence, economic issues. We need to do it all because that's what these New Yorkers deserve to be able to break the cycle of homelessness.

Mayor: Yes, Jillian.

Question: It seems like this is an issue that's created a certain level of tension in government between the state and the city. You and Chris Quinn were former rivals, obviously, in the mayoral race. Now you're here together discussing this issue. Is this, I guess, a sign that perhaps this is something that should, in your opinion, unite elected officials and something that you –

Mayor: It absolutely should unite people. And again, you know, Chris and I have known each other now well over 20 years, have worked on so many issues together in common cause, including, when I was the chair of the General Welfare Committee, we worked on a lot of homelessness issues. So I think there are a lot of people who share the value that we need to help people, particularly folks who have done everything right and find the economic reality not working for them anymore, who are ready to work, who we can help get a helping hand at better housing, to job training, to better job opportunities. So, yeah, I think there is a lot of consensus here. I think this is one area that can and should unite – and I’ve said, you know, about the state situation – the outpouring of support in terms of the members of the Assembly and Senate who care deeply about supportive housing – supportive housing is not the kind of issue you would think is kind of like the politically popular issue or a big quote-unquote “vote-getter” for local elected officials, but they feel it in their hearts. It’s a moral commitment, and it’s on both sides of the aisle. And the day we announced the supportive housing plan, one of the strongest voices was Senator Marty Golden, Republican from Bay Ridge. So I do think you’re right – this is something that can unite city and state, can unite people across parties. And – and this could be the beginning of a much greater effort to address this issue fundamentally, which it’s needed for man years, honestly.

On topic, anything else? Yes.

Question: I was wondering if you could tell us how this event came about? Did you reach out to the former Council Speaker – just in the –

Mayor: Well, I was – when Chris got named – I’ve obviously have known about Women In Need for quite a while and have admired them for a long time. And when Chris was named, you know, I said very publicly I thought it was a great choice for Women In Need and that she was going someplace where she could make a real impact. And since she took the job, we talked about, you know, an opportunity to do something together to really talk about the great work of women in need. And we looked at different options and we decided this was the right time of year to do it. So, no, it’s an extraordinary group, Chris is a great leader for this group, and this is an example – I think she said something very fundamental a moment ago – we’ve got to help New Yorkers understand what’s happening today – not their stereotype from 20 years ago of what homelessness was – what today’s homelessness is.

Question: This is actually I guess a question for you, Chris. Hi, how are you?

Quinn: Good, thank you.

Question: Good. So I’m just wondering – I know you were joking about giving Steve Banks an earful –

Quinn: No, I was not joking. I’d like that on the record. There was no joke – at all. No.

Mayor: She didn’t smile.

Quinn: No, no, no, no.

Question: So how closely will you be working with the de Blasio administration on this issue?

Quinn: You could not work more closely. Look, since I took this job seven weeks ago or so, I want to be very clear and thank the mayor, I’ve been given nothing but the highest level of access to every person that I need to talk to – and I think our COO Eric Rosenbaum is here – he would say the same thing. We’re getting immediate call backs – commissioners, deputy commissioners, deputy mayors – everything we need. Look, our job at WIN is to serve those 4,700 families, those 2,700 children. Our job is to make it so they’re not homeless anymore, and so we break that cycle and they don’t come back into a shelter. So I am going to work with everybody, and be pushier than you have ever seen me be pushy –

Mayor: That's a pledge.

Quinn: – that's a pledge and a high standard! Because Jennifer and the other women and children here deserve that. They're taking on so much in their lives and rising above all of it. We can all work together and fix it. And look, I've known a Steve a long, long time – even if I didn't have this job, I probably would call and tell him what I thought he should do, but now I actually have a platform from it. And the best type of government reform comes directly from people who are doing the work. So what Ms. Brown tells us women and children need, that's what Steve needs to implement, because she knows, because she's here every day with those 700 people – and that's my job – to make sure that reform and those faces and those realities get into the walls of every government in this country so we can break the cycle of homelessness for the homeless families in New York City, and hopefully be a model for all the other urban centers in America. So, pushy – somebody find a better word for it, you know? – but it's what my job is and I'm going to do it on overtime.

Mayor: Amen. Emily.

Question: The governor in a couple of weeks in his State of the State address is expected to address homelessness – homelessness [inaudible] programs that obviously will affect the city. Do you have any insight into what these might be? Have you been in communication with his office?

Mayor: No, obviously that's a few weeks away, so at gets closer I'm sure there'll be a dialogue about what it is. And look, we welcome a very positive role from the state. We certainly welcome resources – we've needed them in this city for quite a while. And I think we can do a lot of good together.

Question: [inaudible] Ms. Ashford spoke about a lawsuit that she's a part of – sounds like a Class Action lawsuit?

Mayor: That's about the discrimination against those wit Section 8 vouchers, yeah.

Yes, on topic.

Question: The number of homeless people in New York is growing since years – on a [inaudible]. Why did it take so long for the administration to make it a top priority?

Mayor: It's been a priority from the beginning. And look, the bottom line is a very big problem, very challenging problem – structural problem, let's be clear. Structural problem in that you go back to the Koch administration, when this crisis really emerged – no administration has cracked the code. No one has found the solution. And structural because now, unlike in the past, it is much more an economic problem – that's part of what shot those numbers of people in shelter up, was the Great Recession and the constant increase in the price of housing. That doesn't mean we don't have to work every hour of every day to fix it. It just means let's put some context onto how we got here. Now, since the beginning, our focus was the shelter dynamic. We got 22,000 people out of shelter. If you went back to when Rudy Giuliani became mayor, and you'd gotten 22,000 people out of shelter, there would be no one left in shelter. But today, sadly, the reality is new people come along who have fallen out of their economic, you know, stability and they take their place. We've got to get ahead of that. We've got to undermine that cycle, as Chris has said, which means producing a huge amount of affordable housing – that's what the 200,000-unit plan is – the biggest of any city in the history of this country; more supportive housing that we've ever done before – that's why we've committed to 15,000 apartments; we have to raise wages and benefits. We've done a lot that we could do at the city level. I know our brothers and sisters in the state legislature want to help us go much farther in terms of raising mandatory wages and benefits for working people in this city. We've got to do all of the above. But our focus in the beginning was getting folks out of shelter to housing; preventing people from ending up in shelter to begin with. By those metrics, we got a lot done, but it was not enough. What we didn't put as much attention into until recently is a whole new

approach to street homelessness. We had outreach, we had efforts to try and find solutions, but we realized that we needed a much different approach than had ever been employed before. So HOME-STAT is the most comprehensive approach to street outreach for homeless of any city in this country, and the commitment we've made to safe-haven beds, which are that – it's not traditional shelters – smaller, more intimate settings, often in houses of worship – that's the biggest commitment this city's ever made. And it will take time – it will be a long battle – but I believe all these pieces will add up and we will turn the tide.

On topic, yes.

Question: [inaudible] spoke to some formerly homeless individuals who raised some concern about your HOME-STAT program. They're concerned about police being involved, first of all. And second of all, they had some concerns about whether the case workers would actually be able to help them into housing – they said they've had some issues with the existing case workers, and one of the biggest problems is actually getting into a room that's not a shelter. So I'm just wondering if you've heard that and –

Mayor: Yeah, and let me speak to both, and Steve may want to talk to the second one as well. Look, another new approach under HOME-STAT – and this has been with great support from Commissioner Bratton and Chief O'Neill – is we're going to have about 100 officers specially trained on how to support the homeless, with mental health training – something, as you know, my wife has focused on – the need of, you know, making sure there's mental health training for all of our city workers who deal with folks with mental health needs. And the police will be getting that training, and it will help them in dealing with the homeless. So the element of this that has to do with the police – I think there's two ways of talking about it – if it's about someone in distress who needs help, not only is that what the job that the police perform every single day for all New Yorkers, but they will be specially trained at how to help a homeless New Yorker in particular. And the go-to police officers will be the ones from this newly-constituted unit, particularly if we're talking about Manhattan between Canal Street and 145th Street. But there are also situations where someone violates the law – and it doesn't matter if they're homeless or if they have a permanent address, if you violate the law and you violate quality-of-life laws, we will enforce – that's a very appropriate role for the police. But the – the HOME-STAT effort overall looks at everything people need. I reminded some of you, there was a very, very powerful article a few weeks back in the Times about the work we've done on the three-quarters houses – and I want to thank Steve Banks, because it extraordinary taking on something that had been, bluntly, ignored for a long time – I give credit to the media for helping to bring the issues to light – and in the process of going at these unacceptable conditions and getting people better solutions, a story of one man, young man, who had become entirely disconnected from his family because of mental health programs. In the process of these changes happening, he was reunited with his family. He now is living a normal life with his family with the support he needs. Sometimes it's as simple as reconnecting someone to their family. Sometimes it's as simple as getting them benefits – Social Security or other benefits – excuse me – that they deserved long ago and no one was there to be the helping hand. Sometimes it requires getting to supportive housing, which now will be produced on the biggest scale ever. But everyone has a pathway off the streets if we have the resources and the focus – and for the first time, we'll have that together.

Steve.

Commissioner Banks: As you know, I've represented homeless New Yorkers on the street and homeless families for many decades – three decades – before I became the HRA commissioner. And the path that led to the street is not an all-of-a-sudden path, and the path to get people off of the streets is not an all-of-a-sudden path. One of the challenges historically has been to make sure that police resources are deployed to address criminal conduct, and outreach resources are designed to give people a helping hand who need a helping hand. One of the key elements of HOME-STAT is actually just that, which is the deployment of city staff to be able to observe conditions in the street and deploy police resources for police matters and deploy outreach staff for outreach matters. Unfortunately, in the past, outreach workers didn't always have the tools that they needed to help someone on that pathway off the streets. And that's what the important commitment the mayor's made to

safe havens and to supportive housing – to create that pathway off of the streets. It's not going to happen overnight, as the mayor has said and we've said – it may take one, two, three, fifty encounters to give someone the hope to come in off the street, that they're going to be some place that's going to be safe and reconnect them to family, reconnect them to a life off the streets. But we're determined to make that effort. And with the other element of HOME-STAT, we're going to have a citywide approach, so they're not going to leave it to just the caseworkers – the street outreach workers – to have to connect to the different kinds of agencies. We'll have an overarching case-conferencing process, so that each person on the street will be working on a pathway off. Again, not going to happen overnight, but it's the kind of approach that will have the impact that we all want it to have – and it represents the most comprehensive approach to addressing people who are – who have given up hope and ending up the streets, to help bring them back in off the streets.

Mayor: On this topic – we're going to do last call on this topic. Going once, on topic. Going twice. Alright, we are now about to transition to off-topic.

Enjoy.

Quinn: Bye.

Mayor: Take care. Very merry Christmas.

Alright, we welcome off-topic questions, go ahead.

Question: What's your response to this report in Politico that the percentage of blacks and Hispanics being stopped by police is basically the same as the last quarter of the Bloomberg administration, even though stops are down?

Mayor: Stops are down greatly. And the reform we promised has occurred. The all-time high was about 700,000 stops in 2011. By the end of last year, we had it down under 50,000. This year we're going to be, looks like between 20,000 and 30,000. So this has been a sea change. And all the while the city has gotten safer. So, we proved that you could have a more fair approach and a safer approach simultaneously. In everything we do, in all of government, we insist on fairness towards people. So, one of the things you've seen with the stops is, as fewer have occurred, there's been a much greater propensity for those stops to be correlated to a specific need – in other words, a suspect description or some other very tangible and specific reason for a stop. When there is a suspect description, for example, and a police officer stops people who fit that description, that's them doing their work objectively and fairly. So, that's what you're seeing more and more. So I think the bottom line is we always are conscious of the need for fairness, and we need all those in public service to treat everyone equally, but both the quantity of stops going down and the quality of stops improving prove we're on the right track.

Yes?

Question: [inaudible] not only frustration but simply feel a little bit misled, because one of the reasons they got a New York City municipal ID card was to take advantage of one of the big benefits touted by the city – was to use those cards to open bank accounts – only to find out that big banks like Chase and CitiBank and Wells Fargo and Bank of America do not accept it as principal form of identity. Is misled a proper –

Mayor: No because there are many banks that do accept it. There are credit unions and lots of other organizations. And because IDNYC has had a big impact on everything else in people's lives, whether it is going for a lease, going for a library card, getting into their child's school when they have to show ID. I've heard very few complaints about it overall. But I can say this about those banks, we're certainly going to talk to them. And we're certainly going to help them to understand this ID card was created with the NYPD. It could not be more secure. In fact, the NYPD is one of the biggest backers of IDNYC, because they want every New Yorker on the streets to have an ID card. It greatly improves the works – the work of the NYPD if everyone has

identification. So, I think we can educate these banks about the fact it is both extraordinarily accurate ID, but it's the right thing to do for New York City.

Question: Have the banks given an explanation as to why?

Mayor: No, we're going to begin those conversations in earnest now, but I believe when they hear our reasoning it will make an impact.

Question: Today on the radio former Police Commissioner Ray Kelly said that the current NYPD is quote "redefining shootings in order to make crime look lower than it is" – cooking the books. Your thoughts on that?

Mayor: I don't know why he's saying it. I just don't. Look, Commissioner Bratton has once again – and I emphasize the words once again – shown he can drive down crime anywhere he goes. Two years and running, last year the lowest number of murders in 50 years in this city; this year, fewer shootings than last year, gun arrests up, overall crime down – and that's before the almost-2,000 more police, in terms of patrol strength, that we're going to have next year. I would think the response to that would be to say thank you, Commissioner Bratton. We're using the exact same metric system that Commissioner Kelly used. The fact is that shootings are down. It's something to celebrate.

Yes?

Question: Mr. Mayor, next Tuesday you're expected to sign by executive order the Parental Leave Act.

Mayor: I don't know what day it's going to be, but I'm going to sign it, yes.

[Laughter]

Question: I know it applies to non-union workers –

Mayor: Yes, 20,000.

Question: But you have 300,000 union workers that it does not apply to. In order to make New York sort of the role model for something like this, how do you begin the discussion with the unions to make it citywide?

Mayor: There's already a really great response from our municipal unions, led by two of the very biggest – the UFT and DC37, AFSCME – both of which are very interested in coming to the table to see if we can agree on this plan – and I think we will. Look, what we said at the beginning is this the shape of the things to come. Everyone knows the statistics. Any country comparable to the United States around the world has paid parental leave. A lot of countries that are much poorer than the United States have paid parental leave. There's that famous truism that the two countries that don't have paid parental leave are the United States of America and Papua New Guinea. So, it's quite clear a country as developed as us should have it. The best solution is federal legislation. My candidate for president believes in that – Hillary Clinton supports that. But until that day, as with so many other issues – paid sick leave and immigration reform and so many other issues – we will keep acting. So we could go ahead and reach those 20,000 workers right away, but we wanted to do it in a way that did not in any way affect the taxpayers. So we did it by adjusting the benefits – and we think it was a smart way of handling it, because this was a crying need. We hear it from our employees constantly – this is something that they need, that would fundamentally improve their lives. People do not want to have to leave their newborn child or their newly-adopted child, you know, within days of the child coming into their life. They want an opportunity to bond with that child, support that child. Recovery, especially in the case of pregnancy, is absolutely necessary. So, it's the right thing to do. I think the other unions will embrace it. I think they'll be willing to work with us on finding the savings to make it possible. And when the biggest city in the country does it on a grand scale, it will start to effect the larger discussion.

Grace?

Question: To follow up on that, [inaudible] the city was mandating that private businesses provide paid sick time. Are you planning to do something similar –

Mayor: We don't have that legal power. That has to be done at the state or federal level.

Question: You can't do something local here –

Mayor: No, no. Every piece of the benefit dynamic – for example, I would love to raise minimum wage, as we speak, as you know, I can only do that if I'm given the authority by Albany – same with paid parental leave, that for private sector employees has to be reached with either federal legislation or state legislation. We can reach our own employees, but we can't mandate it for those in collective-bargaining units. It has to be subject to the collective-bargaining process.

Yes?

Question: [Inaudible] in Washington Heights who asked about a cut in foreign language classes – that they should buy Rosetta Stone for their kids. The program cost about \$200, at least. Parents said they thought the remarks were stupid and rude. I'm just wondering if you think the chancellor's remarks were appropriate?

Mayor: Look, I think it was taken out of context. I know her very well, for almost 20 years. By the way, she was an English-language learner herself – her first language was Spanish. She learned English in our schools. She only has respect for English-language learners and their parents. And she's expanded our focus on English-language learners intensely – she named a new deputy chancellor to focus on that area, she's done 40 more dual-language programs. I think she spoke off the cuff and was giving, as she said, grandmotherly advice, but it was not meant, in any way, to be disrespectful to the folks involved.

Yes?

Question: This is about graffiti in the city. NYPD stats show it skyrocketing, in terms of complaints – 30 last year, 200 this year. And just wondering what's being done about graffiti? Are you seeing an increase?

Mayor: Yeah, I'm not seeing a lot because, remember, 30 versus 200 in a city of eight-and-a-half million people, thank God, is still a small number. We take it very seriously. We take all quality-of-life crimes seriously. And I remind everyone, I have some detractors out there on my view on the Broken Windows strategy, but I believe in it fundamentally, as does Commissioner Bratton. Graffiti is a classic example – you don't let graffiti go unaddressed. So, in any given week or month, you might see some statistical movement, but here's the big picture – we will very aggressively go after graffiti. We'll very aggressively go after all quality-of-life offenses, and now, because violent crime keeps going down, that frees up substantial time and energy for officers to go after quality-of-life offenses. Because they're not doing 700,000 stops – the vast majority of them unnecessary – that frees up time to go after quality-of-life offenses – and 2,000 more cops in terms of patrol strength in the next year. So, we take it very seriously, and we will be very focused on it.

Michael?

Question: We spent some time on Monday talking about year two of your administration. I wondered if you can give us a bit of a glimpse into year three. Are there any particular policy priorities that you're hoping to emphasize –

Mayor: Would I say that here? [Laughs] All in good time, Michael. No, look, we are – we’re going to, obviously, through the budget next month and the State of the City address and a number of other vehicles talk about our vision for 2016. What I can say with assurance is the big picture pieces that are underway are only going to deepen – obviously the affordable housing plan, the focus on the Equity and Excellence plan for our schools, the focus on driving down crime and addressing terror – all of that will continue, but I’ll have much more to say about that going forward.

Gloria?

Question: Mr. Mayor, the Quadrennial Commission came out with its report a couple of days – they agree that the elected officials are due for a raise. You’ve said you won’t take one for this term, but you’ve left the door open for the next term. Will you take a raise if you are re-elected? And, as a follow-up, the Council members are also asking for a raise, so I was wondering what – your opinion on whether or not your colleagues also deserve a raise.

Mayor: I, by law, have to give a formal response to that report by January 13th, which I will do. So, I’ll reserve detailed comments until then. I would say some obvious things – yes, I’ve made clear, I will not accept any raise in this term because I’m the person who named the commission. I think for other elected officials, it’s their choice of how they handle any ultimate decision but, again, we have the commission’s report, we don’t have my response yet, which will trigger the next step in the process. So, I don’t want to jump ahead of the situation. I do want to say, the commission was extraordinary. I had great, great faith in Fred Schwartz, and Jill Bright, and Paul Quintero, and I told them go and do what you think makes sense, and they did it, and they came back with, I think, an extraordinary effort because they looked at things that I think had not been looked at deeply enough in the past, like what is the economic condition of the people we serve and how does that relate to this question. So, I think it’s a great report, but I’ll have more to say in the next few weeks.

Question: Mr. Mayor, when you were on the teleconference with AARP yesterday, you issued a call to action to those seniors to reach out the City Council and ask them to advocate for your affordable housing plan. Do you plan to do more of that, and how are you going to engage constituencies, particularly since there’s been some opposition, you know, across the city to it?

Mayor: There’s definitely a mix of feelings, as with most issues in New York City, but there’s been a lot of support. AARP is a huge organization in this city – their support has been very positive and very intense. We’re thrilled to have the support of the Hotel Trades Council and 32BJ, and more and more – Gale Brewer came out in support the other day – very respected borough president of Manhattan. I think as people look at the details and look at the vision, we’re going to be picking up support. We’ve certainly got very good response from members of the Council – even if they have things they want to talk about tweaking, they believe in the basic vision. But what I will be doing for sure is going out to communities, talking about this – it’ll be – maybe it’ll be a tele-town hall meeting, maybe it’ll be a regular town hall meeting, maybe it’ll be a church or a synagogue – whatever it is, I’ll be out there talking about this vision and how this keeps New York City New York City. I think it’s as fundamental as that. If we don’t create affordable housing on an unprecedented level, it will not be the city we know and love in the future – it will not be a city for all.

Question: I have a Rich Lamb-esque question, since he’s not here.

Mayor: You know, Rich often gets the last question – you will play the role of Rich Lamb today. Final question, go ahead.

Question: Thank you. It’s been a very balmy winter. It will be a balmy Christmas.

Mayor: Balmy.

Question: Balmy?

Mayor: Balmy. Yes, I'm just playing with you. Okay, go ahead.

Question: You haven't had to shovel snow anyways, because you live at Gracie Mansion –

Mayor: That is a true statement.

Question: – but is that something you've been missing?

Mayor: I actually do miss shoveling snow – this is a true statement. I miss all the things that went with my previous life. So – now, waking up in the morning, coming out to shovel snow, not having had coffee, and meeting all of you was a special experience.

[Laughter]

And I underestimated the correlation between coffee and the possibility of given eloquent and complete answers. But, no, I love shoveling snow. It was great. It was good exercise, it was fun, fresh air, but, you know, life changes sometimes.

With that, I want to offer people a very, very merry Christmas, happy holidays, happy New Year to all, and we'll be seeing you again soon.

Take care, everyone.

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