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**RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO GIVES REMARKS AT THE ROCKAWAY'S ST.
PATRICK'S DAY PARADE**

Mayor: Thank you so much, Mike. Thank you. Let me tell you - first I want to thank Mike Benn - this is an amazing community leader. Let's thank him for everything he does and his family does for this community. Thank you, Mike.

The sun is shining today on this beautiful community and on the celebration - the first celebration of St. Patrick's Day in the whole city. The Rockaways kicks it off in an amazing way - this will be a month long celebration.

I want to talk about the meaning of Irish heritage to the city because it means so much, and I'll talk about that, and then I'll talk about the ferry for a moment.

[Applause]

But this city for now hundreds of years has been shaped by Irish immigrants by generation after generation - remember St. Patrick's Parade in Manhattan goes back 255 years - that's how deep the presence of the Irish community in the city has been. If you love New York City, you have to acknowledge and appreciate the contributions of the Irish community. It's as simple as that.

I want to thank all of the wonderful elected officials who are here today. I want to thank our Public Advocate Tish James; our comptroller, Scott Stringer; our Borough President, Melinda Katz; Congressman Greg Meeks; Senator Joe Addabbo; councilman Eric Ulrich. I want to thank all of those who are being honored today - the grand marshals, the deputy marshals - everyone who is being honored for their contributions to this community and this city. I particularly want to commend John J Murphy, Colleen Mathers, and Thomas Murphy. Let's give them all a big round of applause.

[Applause]

And I want to extend my special thanks because the Deputy Consul General for Ireland is here, Anna McGillicuddy - come on over, Anna, we want to thank you. Anna and the Consul General Barbara Jones have done so much to help bring people together in this city. We celebrated on Irish soil just a few days ago - at the Irish consulate - a coming together of people so we can move forward, so Anna thank you, and thank you to Barbara and thank you to the Irish government for all you do for us.

Now I just want to say it's important to recognize something else this year. This is the hundredth anniversary of the Easter rising in 1916, and that was an event of historic importance not just for the people of Ireland or for Irish-Americans - but for the entire globe. A rising up of people demanding their freedom against a colonial power that was Britain, and that fight has continued for years and years to be fully played out in the name of freedom - and that spirit, that spirit resides in Irish people all over the globe, so we will be celebrating that amazing historical event because it meant something to all of us.

And we're going to remember too that when Irishmen and Irishwomen came to these shores they were not welcome by those who were here. We remember that painful history - we talked about it at the consulate the other day. They were not welcome they had to fight to become established in the United States, and they had to fight for fairness and equality in this city, and I want to thank all the people who remember what the Irish went through and have stood up for a fairer society for all ever since. We need to remember that history, and Anna we will be celebrating with you at the consulate the incredible history of the Easter rising next month on the hundredth anniversary.

Finally as Mike noted, I think a couple people along the parade route were interested in the ferry, so I want to repeat what I said last year in my State of the City remark - I want to repeat it this year because we are adamant. I am pledging next year citywide ferry service in New York City. There'll be a stop in the Rockaways - there will be a shuttle bus in the Rockaways to the ferry stop. A ferry ride will cost the same as a subway ride - the same as you pay when you get your MetroCard. It will not just go to one place in the city it will go to multiple stops in Brooklyn, Queens, Manhattan - it will be a whole citywide system. So the people of the rockaways will be connected more deeply than ever to the city, and this is the most important point - this is not temporary ferry service. This is permanent ferry service starting next spring 2017, and we look forward to kicking it off here in the Rockaways.

Thank you everyone and a very happy St. Patrick's Day to all.

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