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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR ERIC ADAMS, U.S. SENATOR KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND
TOUT CRIMINALIZATION OF GUN TRAFFICKING AS PART OF HISTORIC
BIPARTISAN SAFER COMMUNITIES ACT**

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand: Well, good afternoon, everybody. Yeah, why don't you guys come over here? So, when the mayor comes, he can just zip in. Oh, he's come here. He's walking. Here we go. Hi, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Eric Adams: How are you?

Senator Gillibrand: Thank you for coming. I appreciate it.

Mayor Adams: Thank you. Good stuff, good stuff.

Senator Gillibrand: I just met with your team. They're pretty impressive.

Mayor Adams: How are you? Good, good. Commissioner?

Senator Gillibrand: Commissioner's doing a great job.

Mayor Adams: You ain't got to tell me.

Senator Gillibrand: Well, thank you all for coming here. I really want to thank our mayor who has made the fight against gun violence a cornerstone of his mayoralty. I want to recognize our police commissioner, who I just got to meet with about some of the most urgent security issues in our city and I want to thank her for the great leadership she's providing. And I want to thank Michael-Sean Spence who is the Senior Director of Community Safety Initiatives for Everytown for Gun Safety who is here to speak on behalf of the advocacy community that has worked tirelessly for decades on these issues.

Senator Gillibrand: Last week, the Supreme Court overturned a New York law that restricted who gets concealed carry permits, meaning it will now be easier to carry concealed weapons in public in our state and others. The ruling was not just irresponsible, but it was downright dangerous, and it came at a time when our nation is in the middle of a gun violence epidemic that's taking the lives of thousands of innocent Americans.

Senator Gillibrand: One of those young lives was the life of Nyasia Pryear-Yard, a 17 year-old high school student on the verge of graduation, just out with her friends for an evening. A stray bullet hit her and killed her, and I've been working for the last 10 years to make sure that her life did not end in vain, that she in fact can lift up on behalf of other survivors and other victims to change the law.

Senator Gillibrand: And so we wrote a gun trafficking law in her name, and that piece of legislation was just included in the bipartisan gun reform that President Biden signed into law over the weekend. This law will include making gun trafficking a federal crime. It would hold accountable those who are straw purchasers, those who bring those weapons from out of state into this state up the iron pipeline directly into the hands of criminals.

Senator Gillibrand: I want to acknowledge that our mayor was someone who supported this legislation from the very beginning. The first press conference we actually had together was on this very bill before his election, and it really matters because this is something that will help New York. New York is one of the states where almost 90% of the guns used in crimes are coming in from out of state and more than half of them are illegal. And so what we have to do is fight back and that's what this new law will do.

Senator Gillibrand: Unfortunately, before now, law enforcement had to use patchwork of misdemeanor violations to hold traffickers accountable. And now they have the weight of the law where they can have sentences up to 20 years imposed for these kingpins and traffickers that are bringing these weapons into this state.

Senator Gillibrand: The bill that the president just signed also did some other meaningful reforms. It closed the boyfriend loophole, meaning that if someone is suffering from domestic violence and has fear for his or her life, that they can make sure firearms are removed from the assailant, even if they're not married. That's a really important loophole that had to close. We also clarified the definition of federal license firearm dealers to enhance who does the background checks and when, and it also expands some of our red flag laws to make sure that younger people who are minors, who have issues that should be retained for whether they can buy a weapon will be retained. It also improves some of the training and background check requirements for gun purchases under the age of 21.

Senator Gillibrand: This is the first time in nearly 30 years that our government has taken meaningful steps to address gun violence and this bipartisan gun bill represents the most important step forward in our fight against ending gun violence. But unfortunately, this bill does not address some of the issues that the Supreme Court continues to push out, including this change in New York's law that we could no longer protect our communities and ensure public safety by not allowing concealed carry of weapons, unless it has special circumstance. We have a very active legislature right now who is working very hard to fix this problem and they will be hopefully voting on a bill tomorrow, specifically about creating places where concealed carry is not allowed, places like schools, places where alcohol is served, places that are large gatherings, like concert venues. That legislation would go a very long way to allowing us to keep our public safety intact.

Senator Gillibrand: I know that it's been a very difficult time over the last couple of years because of the rise in gun violence, and I know that there's been some deeply, deeply hurting

communities, such as those in Brooklyn, and in the Bronx, and in Buffalo, that have received disproportionate amounts of gun death because of the lack of accountability. And so I hope that with the governor's efforts and her signing a comprehensive gun safety package earlier this month that strengthens our red flag laws, that we will move forward to keep our public safety on top of mind. We don't want to have more young children like Nyasia gunned down because they were hit by a stray bullet that's been trafficked from out of state and I think this is the beginning of being able to protect more people from that kind of gun crime. I'd now like to bring up our mayor.

Mayor Adams: Thank you. Thank you. Thank you, senator. And as we stand here in front of 11 MetroTech and FDNY Dispatch Center, as well, both of these entities have dealt with the trauma of gun violence over the years. Those at MetroTech receiving those 911 call, the PCTs, the family members, and those here at FDNY dispatching the ambulance and also first responders. This has had a crippling impact on city workers who have to deal with this violence that we are witnessing. And it's always crucial that we are holding this press conference here with our partners earlier today, that the police commission and I talked about the ghost guns, another river that feeds the sea of violence. Today, we're talking about the boyfriend loophole. We're talking about the red flag laws. These are all the rivers that we must dam because there is not one river approach.

Mayor Adams: This problem has become so systemic throughout history that we have normalized this level of violence in our city and in our country. And so we don't have a comprehensive approach to get the federal government to move at the right level. And I cannot thank you enough, Senator. I remember when we talked about some of this legislation, we need the federal government to approach this nationally, because what we're doing here on the state level, if we are up against the lax laws on the national level, then that river's going to not only flow guns here through the iron pipeline, but as we mentioned this morning, it's going to flow guns here through the plastic pipeline.

Mayor Adams: Bad guys are innovative about destroying our cities and that's why we are here today. This is an important river that we are damming today and we cannot say how important it is enough as we continue to dam these rivers. And our partnership with Everytown for Gun Safety, we want to thank you. This organization has been committed in saying every town in our country should be protected around gun safety. The Safe Communities Act that the President Biden has signed is a significant act. He came here to the city. He met with our crisis management. He met with our police personnel. He was clear to place this on his agenda, and I believe more than any other president we have had, he has been honest about the issues we're facing with gun violence in our country. It's horrific to think about it. These parents that we are meeting every other night, it appears, that are traumatized. It doesn't change. Every birthday, they think about it. Every time they hear a car backfire. Every time they see a television show that talks about someone was the victim of a crime. They relive this trauma, and that's why the commissioner and I are dedicated to doing our job on the streets.

Mayor Adams: The New York City Police Department has done this. We give you the numbers all the time. It's no longer just 3,000. It's 3,300 guns removed off our streets. 3,300 guns on the streets of the city of New York. And the Supreme Court is just going to aggravate that even more, making our job more challenging, but we will reach that challenge. And so the vision that

the senator has shown, and it really pushes this gun reform legislation and critical provision that I requested when I testified in Washington, DC and in my communications with the senator.

Mayor Adams: Thanks to this bill, gun dealers can be held accountable for selling guns to store purchases, gun traffickers, or people who intend to commit a felony. Over 30 years it took to make these common sense laws come into place, but that consistency and persistency that we have shown over those 30 years is going to tell gun traffickers that this city is not going to allow and its country's not going to allow that. Imagine, we needed a federal law to go after gun trafficking. That's unbelievable when you think about it. They are peddling metals of death that is taking and destroying lives. And no matter how hard the NYPD continues to do its job, the guns just keep coming. Never saw in the history of my career as a public servant, the easy accessibility of guns, the willingness to use guns and the lack of reprisals coming from the other arms of our criminal justice apparatus.

Mayor Adams: We all have to be together in this and the majority of American people support what we are doing. We need the federal government to continue to step up and today we're seeing that step take place. And so we are going to push back and organize around the Supreme Court decision to make sure that tomorrow, lawmakers are returning to Albany to match the urgency of the moment so that we can come up with ways of minimizing the danger that the Supreme Court has placed on the American people.

Mayor Adams: And so as co-chair of Everytown for Gun Safety, Mayors Against Illegal Guns, I'm bringing in a group of mayors to the city in the next few weeks where we are going to sit down together and map out a plan of how do we move our cities up into a safer place. And so I thank you again, Senator. And if I may want to bring on our partner in this fight to deal with gun violence, the commissioner of the New York City Police Department Commissioner Sewell. Commissioner?

Commissioner Keechant Sewell, Police Department: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Thank you, Senator. The availability of insufficiently-regulated guns in other states is directly responsible for much of the shootings and homicides throughout the country and right here in New York City. And so every day, NYPD officers perform incredibly dangerous work to prevent guns from getting into criminals' hands. The NYPD meets every single morning with our local state and federal colleagues to strategize about new ways to combat gun violence. So far this year, we're down 13% in shootings and murders, and your police officers are out there every day and night taking illegal firearms off our streets at a record setting pace. As the mayor said, over 33,000 guns so far this year.

Mayor Adams: 3,300.

Commissioner Sewell: Sorry!

Mayor Adams: Don't get that wrong. They're going to write about it.

Commissioner Sewell: 3,300. Sorry, he's right, he's right. We'll get to 33,000 if we have to. We're relentless.

Commissioner Sewell: Despite these tireless efforts, thousands of illegal guns each year continue to flow into our city from states without proper safeguards in place. Today, we are grateful, due to Senator Gillibrand's persistence, gun dealers, gun traffickers, and people who intend to commit a felony with a firearm can be held accountable. It is now a federal crime to act as a straw purchaser gun trafficking itself is now a federal crime. And the definition of who must register as a federal firearms dealer has been properly expanded. This is just the start, though. We still have so much more to do. We vow to continue to do everything we can to combat gun violence and to keep the people we serve safe today and tonight, the courageous women and men of the NYPD will be out there to fulfill that promise. Thank you, Senator. I'd like to bring up Everytown. How are you? Come on.

Michael-Sean Spence: Thank you very much, senator, Mayor Adams, Commissioner Sewell. My name is Michael-Sean Spence, Senior Director of Community Safety Initiatives at Everytown for Gun Safety, our nation's largest gun violence-prevention organization. It is an honor to be here as a son of New York City to celebrate the historic gun violence prevention package that President Biden signed this past Saturday in memory of the 110 lives lost and the hundreds more wounded every single day, as well as the too many lives that are impacted by gun violence. Make no mistake about it: this is a monumental moment for the gun violence prevention movement and our nation. As mass shootings in Buffalo, Uvalde, and right here in Brooklyn, as well as the countless other shootings that impact communities daily remind us of the necessity to respond to this urgent moment. Everytown and Moms Demand Action heeded that call and put everything on the line.

Spence: We drove over one million calls and messages to Congress, urging them to take action. We held three rallies on Capitol Hill, urging our lawmakers to take action and not look away from the gun violence epidemic persisting in our cities, and we lobbied senators in their home states and in Washington to do something. We refused to look away as gun violence continues to impact our cities nationwide and gun safety champions like Senator Gillibrand stood alongside us, working with her colleagues in Congress to break a 26-year log jam of inaction in Congress. That was 26 years of survivors mourning their loved ones. 26 years of preventable tragedies. 26 years of thoughts and prayers from lawmakers.

Spence: By passing the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, we have ended that deadly drought. This act takes a multifaceted approach to address one of our nation's most complex issues: a gun violence epidemic that takes 110 lives daily and wounds hundreds more. This bill represents a critical step forward by addressing the different types of gun violence that impacts our communities, including mass shootings, intimate partner violence, gun suicide, and community gun violence, which is concentrated in cities with just 127 of them accounting for more than half of the gun homicides that happen in our nation. And with cities nationwide experiencing a 37% jump in gun homicides in 2020 and persistent gun violence ever since.

Spence: Community-based violence intervention programs, like Not Another Child, LIFE Camp, Community Capacity Development, and their partners in the CMS network have been working in New York City and cities nationwide for decades, leveraging their earned trust and credibility to ensure public safety within their communities via evidence-informed strategies. Strategies like street outreach, hospital-based violence intervention programs, place-based strategies that create safe spaces for our youth, and other community-led and community-centered efforts. With the passage of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, there's finally a lifeline for these community-

based violence intervention programs to sustain and scale their life saving work across the nation to more communities in need at this urgent moment. It delivers 250 million in dedicated funding for evidence-informed community-based violence and intervention programs, working to reduce gun violence in our most vulnerable communities by also providing states with the necessary resources to implement common sense measures like red flag laws, increasing protections for survivors of intimate partner violence, enhancing background checks for buyers under the age of 21, cracking down on the unlicensed sale of firearms, investing in mental health and school safety and targeting gun traffickers.

Spence: Inspired by Senator Gillibrand's years-long effort to address the flood of firearms from states with lax gun laws into states with strong gun laws and our nation's patchwork of state laws, which have made holding traffickers accountable difficult. The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act finally gives us the tools we need to prosecute upstream before firearms enter our communities and to crack down on the trafficking rings that are fueling the pipelines that make gun trafficking such a critical issue and a necessity for us to address it now.

Spence: And now it's finally a federal crime, allowing law enforcement to go directly after those responsible for flooding firearms into our communities, while also centering those community led efforts that we know work. All necessary components of a comprehensive public health approach to reducing gun violence, an approach our nation deserves, an approach our communities need, and an approach that those who are closest to the hurt know best. Now is the time to fulfill our promise to support the healing we need to cover the wounds of darker days, to continue on this path to progress, to ensure a safer future for generations to come.

Spence: We still have a lot of work to do. We're just beginning, but this is a big step forward and a lot closer to dealing with the gun violence epidemic we have in this nation as the public health crisis it is by centering community-centered initiatives and giving states and our community safety leaders the resources they need. Thank you, Senator Gillibrand, for your leadership and inspiring this path forward. Thank you, Mayor and Commissioner, as well.

Senator Gillibrand: Thank you.

Commissioner Sewell: Thank you.

Senator Gillibrand: Thank you. Any on topic questions for any of us?

Question: Mr. Mayor, you mentioned that [inaudible] other mayors in other cities. What cities [inaudible]? Is there a one size fit all solution [inaudible] that you have in mind that you [inaudible] across all of those?

Mayor Adams: Yeah, good question. One, Chicago. We'd like to bring in Chicago, Atlanta, St. Louis., the areas where we're being hit the hardest were gun violence, and we're opening it up to all mayors that want to participate, but some of those largest cities are all dealing with the same problem. And what we want to learn is really at the heart of what your question was: what are they doing? What's successful? What success are they finding? What can we do together as cities to deal with the violence? Illinois is impacting Chicago, just as Georgia's impacting New York. And so the goal is to open it to any mayor that would like to attend, but we have some specific mayors in those large cities that are dealing with gun violence. Okay.

Senator Gillibrand: Thank you all for coming.

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