

THE CITY OF NEW YORK

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MAYOR ADAMS DELIVERS REMARKS AT U.S. CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

NEW YORK – New York City Mayor Eric Adams today delivered the following address, as prepared for delivery, to the United States Conference of Mayors’ opening plenary luncheon:

“Thank you, Mayor Suarez, and thank you to the conference of my fellow mayors.

“A year ago, I came before you to lay out an urban agenda and urge mayors to lead.

“Today, I am here to thank you for that leadership, and to ask you to support me in a national call to action on three of the most serious issues facing us as a nation: Gun violence, the fentanyl epidemic, and the asylum seeker crisis.

“These are issues that need a 50-state strategy, the leadership of our government, and the economic power of a united nation.

“The border crisis reminds us of this reality every day.

“Just a few days ago, I was in El Paso to see for myself how the asylum seeker crisis is affecting our border states and our entire nation.

“What I saw was not a state problem or a city problem. It is a national problem, driven by global forces, impacting regular people.

“Every attempt to deal with immigration on a national level through legislation has been sabotaged, mostly by right-wing opposition, and cities are bearing the brunt of this failure, which is why I ask all of you here today to join me and say: We must come together as Americans to solve an American problem.

“A true solution to this problem is going to come from the executive branch, and from bipartisan effort in our Senate and House. I want to thank the New York City congressional delegation, U.S. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, and U.S. House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries for their leadership in providing New York and other localities with federal funding to help cover a portion of these expenses.

“I also would like to thank the Biden-Harris Administration for supporting policies that will assist localities on the frontlines of the asylum seeker crisis gripping our nation. They have put forward a bold vision on immigration reform and requested billions of additional funding from Congress, but we are in need of more help.

“Today I am calling for a national response to the asylum seeker crisis, which includes six main points:

- 1. “A dedicated point-person whose sole focus is overseeing and coordinating our national asylum seeker response,*
- 2. “A decompression strategy at the border that establishes a plan for each migrant’s arrival — and creates a system to fairly distribute newcomers regionally,*
- 3. “Congressional funding for the Federal Emergency Management Agency to implement that strategy in the places of greatest need,*
- 4. “Expedited right to work options for asylum seekers who are allowed to enter the country,*
- 5. “Congressional legislation that provides a clear pathway to residency or citizenship for those who enter this country legally,*
- 6. “And nationwide leadership that takes an all-hands-on-deck approach by bringing together nonprofits, the faith-based community, and the private sector, alongside state and local government to meet this challenge.*

“We need a similar national response on gun violence. Last year, I testified before Congress on the urgency of this issue.

“We are facing a crisis that is killing more Americans than war. A crisis that is now the number one killer of our young people. I know firsthand as the co-chair of Everytown’s nonpartisan coalition on Mayors Against Illegal Guns.

“We have made some progress as a nation. I am proud that we have confirmed a new ATF director and passed the first new gun safety laws in a generation. Thank you to President Biden, Majority Leader Schumer, and the New York congressional delegation for getting this done.

“But we must do more.

“We need common-sense gun safety laws across this nation, including the Assault Weapons Ban and the Background Check Expansion Act. And we need to stop the flow of illegal guns across state lines.

“Federal agencies must work together with local and state law enforcement to track, stop, and prevent the interstate trafficking of illegal guns — and those systems and partnerships require funding and legal support. Any new DOJ/ATF funds targeting gun violence must require that federal databases and investigation details be shared within existing joint task forces.

“The federal government must also increase funding for community violence intervention and other local anti-violence initiatives.

“While the gun violence crisis continues to destroy families and communities, we are also seeing a rise in deaths from opioids, particularly fentanyl, which is cheaper, more powerful, and more dangerous.

“In New York City alone, we saw over 2,600 fatal fentanyl overdoses in 2021 — a 78 percent increase since 2019. Over 100,00 people are dying from opioid overdoses every year in America — almost one every 3 hours.

“Opioid use is a public health crisis that requires a federal response centered around education, prevention, and treatment. The federal government must declare a national emergency around our overdose crisis, citing the dangerous supply and increasing deaths.

“Next, the DEA, FBI, and state and local law enforcement must create a central database tracking the flow of fentanyl and the entire economic operation surrounding it. Coordinated seizures and building larger national cases on financial seizures may help disrupt supply.

“And we need more federal resources behind national awareness strategies, including the DEA’s ‘1 pill can kill!’ campaign. This is a message that will save lives and must reach the widest audience possible.

“The federal government must also act to authorize proven harm reduction strategies, including overdose prevention centers or safe consumption sites. We need more funding for programs that make using drugs safer even as they treat substance use issues. And we must expand the use of drug testing supplies, including fentanyl test strips, and medical interventions like naloxone.

“We also need expanded federal funding to create reliable nationwide infrastructure that will support treatment and recovery. Right now, there are not enough treatment facilities or funding to care for those who so desperately need help. Federal agencies must also expand coverage for substance use disorder treatment under Medicaid and Medicare, and require the same of private health insurers because this isn’t a ‘War on Drugs,’ this is a battle to save human lives.

“My fellow mayors: I’ve said it over and over again, this is our moment. Cities are not names on a map. They are the engines that power this nation; and those engines must be kept in good working order for our nation to prosper. Our cities and mayors have gotten us this far. Now it’s time for our entire government to support the work that will save so many lives, protect the American dream for generations to come, and show the might of a nation united.

“I thank you for the job you do every day.”

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