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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Good morning, everybody. We're restarting this city. In the first few days we see a lot of energy, a lot of forward motion. People are ready to come back and move this city forward while we still fight every day against this disease. There's so much to do. We are learning every day, what we need to do, not only to fight the disease, but to bring our city back, to create a restart and a recovery, to make sure it is fair, to make sure it does not repeat the status quo we had before. And we know why that's so important because we saw in this crisis that everyone suffered in this city, but the suffering was pronounced. The suffering was particularly deep in some communities. Some communities carried a heavier burden. The virus, at first, we'd say, at the very beginning, this virus is affecting everyone. And then we learned it was not equal opportunity. The virus hit some communities harder. We saw that and we realized this virus does discriminate. And for the communities hardest hit, communities of color, immigrant communities, lower income communities, communities that have suffered for so long to begin with, communities deprived of health care for so long, it was so important to recognize those truths, to say them out loud, and then act on them. Because as we move forward, we have to go at those disparities with everything we have. Some neighborhoods lost more people than others. Some neighborhoods took a harder hit. Some neighborhoods, people lost their jobs more than other neighborhoods. Some neighborhoods, people are struggling to pay for food or medicine or rent more than other neighborhoods. So, we need to do everything we can to keep addressing the reality of neighborhoods in the city that are suffering the most right now. That is part of how we restart, but much more importantly, how we build a fair recovery.

I've heard from so many people in neighborhoods who are those who give us so much. And I mean our small business owners, people who, in many ways, create the identity of the neighborhood, the character neighborhood, because their businesses, to so many New Yorkers, really define a lot of what's special about the neighborhood. It's true for small businesses across the board. I can tell you that for so many people, the mom-and-pop store, the family business, the business that's been there, in some cases, for generations, it defined something so powerful. We feel that about a lot of small businesses in every neighborhood. In communities of color, in immigrant communities, small businesses represent something additionally powerful. They represent culture and identity. They represent perseverance. They represent a place where people know they can belong. And nowhere is that more true than with the community restaurants, the small businesses, the mom-and-pop restaurants that people go to and feel connected to everything they hold dear.

So, we know it goes a lot farther than the food. All New Yorkers love food, and we love the beautiful variety of food in the city, but in communities of color, a mom-and-pop restaurant, a

community-based restaurant is something much deeper than that. It's something precious. It's something that must be protected. These restaurants mean so much to the people of this city, but they have been dealing with immense challenges even before this pandemic. Small businesses across the board, and these mom-and-pop restaurants in particular, they were dealing with the rising rents. They were dealing with so many challenges that were making it harder and harder just to keep going each day. We talked about this months ago, before we ever expected to see a pandemic in our city, before we saw the shock to our system. Back in February, it seems a long time ago, in my State of the City, I talked about small business and particularly the extraordinary role that some places play in our community. So, when COVID came along, it hit them so hard. The question I kept hearing from so many community people, from so many small business people, elected officials – will these community-based restaurants survive? Will this thing we prize and cherish still be there for us? How can we do something about it? Well, our Task Force on Racial Inclusion and Equity is doing something about it. And to tell you about their new initiative, I turn to our First Lady, Chirlane McCray.

First Lady Chirlane McCray: Thank you, Bill. Good morning, everyone. As the Racial Inclusion and Equity Task Force takes further actions to meet the needs of our Black and Brown communities, I remind everyone that this task force is of, by, and for the communities it serves. It is made up of 70 members of the administration, many of whom are people of color who are born in or have lived or worked in these communities. And it is our job not only to listen, but to act, to respond to the needs of the people in these communities hit hardest over the past weeks and months by the COVID virus. Over the past week alone, we've brought fundamental changes to the NYPD including shifting money to youth programs and hiring community ambassadors within the department. We've laid out a plan to give health care to tens of thousands more New Yorkers by expanding NYC Care four months early, and provide more mental health support for the people in our hardest hit communities.

But, of course, we still have more to do. As we move closer to reopening the city's economy. We must tend to the small businesses at the heart and soul of our neighborhoods, especially our restaurants, these are familiar neighborhood places where personal histories have been written. When you are there, it feels like you're in your own kitchen. The Restaurant Revitalization Program will start with a \$3 million investment from the City, the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City, and our partner, One Fair Wage. We'll start by saving 100 restaurants. I'm going to say that again. We'll start by saving 100 restaurants, bringing back roughly a thousand displaced restaurant workers at \$20 per hour and providing 53,000 free meals for those communities hit hardest by COVID-19. Workers from the selected restaurants are also eligible for a one-time \$500 cash assistance from One Fair Wage. And now I introduce the Mayor's Fund Executive Director, Toya Williford, who will talk more about this initiative, the role of small donors, and how the Mayor's Fund is focused on a fair recovery – Toya.

Executive Director Toya Williford, Mayor's Fund to Advance NYC: Thank you, First Lady. We believe that small businesses are the backbone of our communities and serve as vital economic hubs. That is why the Mayor's Fund is investing \$1.4 million to help restaurants provide living wage jobs to New Yorkers who have lost work during COVID-19. In order to have a fair and just city we must invest in both businesses and workers. Owners who participate in the Restaurant Revitalization Program will commit to continue paying workers a living wage

on top of tips within five years of the program ending. We cannot go back to business as usual. Now is the time for change and this program helps us pave a path forward. Our dollars, which we raise with the help of thousands of grassroots donors from all around the country will help ensure workers earn a living wage both now and in the future. Thank you.

Mayor: Thank you. Thank you so much, Toya. Listen, I want to just say what the First Lady has done in the work with the task force and the Mayor's Fund, what Toya Williford and her team at the Mayor's Fund have done – and Toya thank you to you and thank you to everyone at the Mayor's Fund, and thank you to all the people who supported the Mayor's Fund. Because this work is so crucial, it's having an impact right now. And also thank you for the extraordinary work you're doing to help small businesses in the Bronx come back – businesses that were attacked a week ago. You're helping them right now with direct financial support so they can get back on their feet. So, I want to thank you for that great work as well.

Now it's important to recognize that the task force led by our First Lady and Deputy Mayors Thompson and Perea-Henze. This is comprised of 70 leaders of this administration from across a wide range of agencies, leaders of color, as Chirlane said, who understand our communities, understand changes that can and must be made. The task force was charged from day one, when I named the task force a month-and-a-half ago, the mission was to determine what we could do about disparities right now, of course, to work on the bigger changes, the bigger plans, but to determine what we can do right now. So, we are looking across all the issues affecting the city, all the issues brought up by this pandemic. And I'll tell you one that I hear so frequently and in such a heartfelt manner, wherever I go in the city, is concern for our young people. I've talked about it here many times. Our young people are going through something very difficult. There has been trauma after trauma in this pandemic for our young people, and we need to help them find a way forward. Imagine what it feels like if you're young and still trying to make sense of the world, to have come into this moment in history, to have been cooped up for months and not be able to do the things that you're used to that give you hope and inspiration.

We need to figure out a way forward for our young people. And as we fight back the disease, the doors are opening more and more to allow us to do more and more, to help young people who, of course, are the future of this city. Now, one of the most important initiatives we're going to talk about in the coming days, that's the Summer Youth Employment Program. This is a particularly important initiative to people all over the city. The City Council has raised important ideas, proposals, ways of addressing how we revitalize the Summer Youth Employment Program in the context of this pandemic. That is an ongoing conversation with the City Council. That will be part of our budget decision making with the City Council over the next two weeks or so. But in the meantime, the question before us and the question that the task force took on is, what can we do right now, right this moment to help ensure that we can support young people who are going through so much. So, I now turn to the co-chair of the task force for whom I know these issues are a matter of passion and deep, deep concern. And I want to thank him for his leadership – Deputy Mayor Phil Thompson.

Deputy Mayor Phillip Thompson, Strategic Initiatives: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I want to describe, quickly, three programs that are being initiated right now to help our young people this summer. The first is called NeON Summer – and NeON stands for Neighborhood Opportunity

Network. And this program will offer remote learning programs for teens and young adults from some of our hardest hit communities by COVID, including Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brownsville, East New York, Harlem, Jamaica, North Staten Island, and the South Bronx. And this program will connect 2,700 youth between the ages of 14 and 24 with paid learning opportunities, designed to build skills to succeed in the workplace, to strengthen community, as well as to help young people and their families during this pandemic. And the participants will be able to explore their career interests, develop work readiness skills, and also express themselves creatively through learning experiences designed to strengthen social and civic leadership. The young people will be between 14 and 24, as I said, but they will also – we're going to focus on recruiting young people who are under probation, supervision, or otherwise engaged with the family court. And so, this is really reaching at-risk young people. And the program will run for six to eight weeks with a total of 40 cohorts, broken out by age groups.

And the second program I want to announce is called Each One, Teach One, and this program will offer young people an opportunity to express themselves creatively by designing media campaigns to encourage other young people to do social distancing. And they will be mentored by media experts. And they will also receive stipends over a month's time to do this work. And this will reach 120 young people. The third program is called the Community Crisis Response Initiative, and this program provided \$10,000 to 22 local community-based youth-focused organizations to support and expand their existing relief efforts in communities, and engage 500 young people to develop their leadership skills in the course of helping their community through this pandemic. So, all told these programs will reach 3,300 youth. And as the Mayor said, this is before the Summer Youth Employment Program. This is right now.

Mayor: Thank you very much, Deputy Mayor. And I know for you – and we've known each other a long time – you understand how important it is to move right now while we're building this bigger framework. And these are initiatives that we're going to get to young people, that's going to make, I think, a profound impact on their lives. So, thank you so much for the work that you and your team have done. Now, another way we reach young people is by hearing their voices. And I think this is an area I can speak as an adult, I can speak as a parent. I think the First Lady would agree with me, this is an area where every adult can do better, to listen more deeply to what our young people are telling us. I don't think there's ever been a generation that is as aware, as informed, that's been put through as much as this particular generation. And they have a lot to say, and we would do well to understand better what they are telling us.

So, we want to use the opportunity to hear the voice of young people, to help us keep improving and changing the relationship between our young people and our police. This is something we've talked about in a lot of different ways, and something Commissioner Shea has talked about in terms of refocusing the energies of the NYPD on young people. It's something clearly that the task force has talked about in terms of shifting resources from the NYPD to young people. But here's another piece of the equation – listening to young people. And the format we want to use is town hall meetings. So, we will have town hall meetings where young people from the local community have a platform to express their concerns. NYPD officers will be there to hear the concerns and have a dialogue. Cure Violence Movement members will be there to help facilitate that conversation. We want an honest conversation. Look, the more we talk openly in this city, the better off we'll be. It's not always easy. Sometimes it's painful. Sometimes there'll be emotion

to say the least about the power of these issues, but the more we talk, the more we open it up, the more we air it out, the better off we'll be.

So, we want to address these issues head on. We don't want to sweep them under the rug. That will not help move us forward. We've got to bring them out in the open and have the conversation. The first town hall will be held in Harlem, and that will be as soon as we can actually have in-person gatherings. Hopefully that's only weeks away – still, of course, observing social distancing and all the proper protocols. But it's time to start gathering people together the right way. And this town hall in Harlem will be led by the organization that has done so much good in the Harlem community, Street Corner Resources. If you were watching a few days ago, you got introduced to the leader of that organization, Iesha Sekou, who is one of the great leaders of the Cure Violence Movement in the Crisis Management System here in New York City, devoted her life to reaching young people, to hearing young people, to uplifting them, to giving them a positive way forward. So, Iesha is the perfect person to kick off this series of town halls and moderate.

I think when you hear the true voices of our young people in a constructive, positive conversation – honest, but still forward-looking conversation – you're going to feel very good about the future of New York City, but it's also going to help us make the kinds of changes we need to make this city work in the future. And to really break the status quo that doesn't work in this city. We will start in Harlem. We will continue with neighborhoods that have dealt with some of the biggest challenges – East New York and Brownsville, Jamaica and Far Rockaway, South Bronx, and the North Shore of Staten Island. The town hall meetings, again, they will be honest and tough conversations, but I guarantee you, they will build trust. I think every one of us knows what it feels like when you air out your feelings and there's an actual exchange, it is actually the beginning of building trust. And that's what we look forward to with these town halls.

Okay, let me finish up by going over what we do every day, the status of our fight against the coronavirus and today, again, a good day in New York City and that is because of all of you. I'm always going to give you credit because you've worked so hard and you continue working so hard to get it right. So, here's our indicators. Number one, daily number of people admitted to hospitals for a suspected COVID-19, threshold of 200 – today's report, 69 patients. Daily number of people in Health + Hospitals ICUs, threshold of 375 – today's report, 337 patients. And the one that's the most important, the percentage of people tested citywide who are positive for COVID-19, threshold of 15 percent, and today only 3 percent testing positive. And that's as we do more and more and more testing. And it's a good opportunity for me to remind all New Yorkers, please, if you have not been tested yet, go get tested. It is fast. It is easy. It is free. You can call 3-1-1. You can get exactly where there's a location near you. Please take advantage of this opportunity. Few words in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, we will turn to our colleagues in the media and please let me know the name and outlet of each journalist.

Moderator: We'll now begin our Q-and-A. As a reminder, we're also joined by First Lady McCray, Deputy Mayor Phil Thompson, the Mayor's Fund Executive Director Toya Williford, and Commissioner Jonnel Doris. First question today goes to Andrew Siff from NBC.

Question: Mayor, good morning. Hope everyone's well. I've got two questions today. The first one is, Chancellor Carranza sent a letter to all the principals and educators, or rather administrators, essentially telling them we're going to have, most likely, a blended hybrid plan for this fall. You've previously said that there's an option-a and option-b and option-c. At this point is option-a, all the kids go back five days a week, like normal life? Has that option, realistically been eliminated? Do you want my second question now or after the answer?

Mayor: I'll speak to it, then we'll come right back to you. No, it has absolutely not been eliminated. Look, let's do it again. It's a great question, Andrew. I appreciate it. What I think the most important thing to understand from the Chancellor's letter – and he and I spoke about it in detail before he sent it – we have to understand we're going to be on a continuum and we don't know three months from today – that's when school opens up. And, again, I understand everyone's deep concern to get ready, ready, ready. And the work has to be done to get ready, but it is a quarter of a year from now. It's three months from today. So, we don't know, honestly, will there be a vaccine? I don't think there'll be a vaccine in three months, but I don't know. And I would love nothing more. I think we all would. Will the disease have receded greatly? Will the disease have reasserted? Will our efforts to contain the disease continue to succeed? You know, what – we don't know all of the issues that will face us. So, it's impossible, it's literally, Andrew, impossible to say, here's exactly what's going to happen on September 10th, 2020. But what we do know is our schools need to be able to move on a continuum. The better the health situation, the more parents are ready to have their kids come back, the more students we have to be ready to serve in person. On the other side of the spectrum, God forbid, we have a situation with the disease where we have to be ready to serve students more and more remotely. So, Andrew, the inaudible] letter to me was to say, hey everyone, this is going to be tough, but be ready to be someplace on a continuum.

It could be every single student back in school. It could be no students back in school. We have to be ready for all of that at any point. It could change literally month to month because of the realities we face, going up or down. I know that's not easy for anyone to hear, but it's true. So, what the Chancellor is saying to all the leaders of our schools – and I want to thank all of our principals, assistant principals, all the administrators, all the educators who are trying to make sense of this great unknown – is we have to be ready for any eventuality. Andrew, we also know there's going to be a certain number of parents that even if school was open to all in person, they're not going to be ready necessarily on September 10th to send their child back. And I think there's going to take time for parents in some cases to feel comfortable. Others, I think will be ready in the beginning. So, plan-a remains. We want the number – the greatest number of kids in person. Let me make it really clear, the plan-a is the greatest possible number of kids in person, in school buildings. It must be safe. It must be safe for kids, families, educators, folks who work in the school buildings, everyone. But we know that remote learning is not as good as in-person learning. So, if we can make it safe and we really believe we can – we have a lot of testing, we have a lot of precautions, the more kids in school being taught by a teacher in person the better. But some parents won't be ready. And so, we're going to have to have a remote element for

anyone who's not yet ready to send their child back. We understand this is an extraordinary moment in history. So, Andrew, plan-a remains – maximum number of kids in school, always have the remote option available for those who need it, and then we will adjust according to the realities. What's your next question?

Question: [Inaudible] to do with the incident involving the young man in Jahmel Leach in the Bronx. I know you spoke to the family yesterday, but my question is how quickly will there be some kind of an action taken involving the police in this case? You had vowed that one of the lessons learned in the wake of all these protests is much swifter action. So, how swift will the action be?

Mayor: Yeah. I want to see an investigation done in a matter of days. I'm not going to say exactly, you know, one day or another – but days. And I expect the model going forward to be one that focuses on speed and transparency. We have a great boost now on transparency now that the 50-a law has been changed. But what we've got to get to, and we will, is making sure that NYPD does these investigations promptly, comes back with results promptly, and we make them public promptly and then there's consequences, that they happen promptly. So, this one – I met the young man. I met his family. I'm very concerned. I want to make sure we get the truth and I want to make sure we follow through based on what the facts tell us. And we'll have more to say on that in the next few days.

Moderator: Next is Jillian from WBAI.

Question: Hi. Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: Hi, Jillian, how are you doing?

Question: I'm following up on – I'm okay. How are you?

Mayor: Good, thank you.

Question: Following up on last month, 42 civil rights and nonprofit groups [inaudible] Speaker Johnson, urging him to pass the Public Oversight and Surveillance Technology or POST Act, which has been languishing, creating a system of oversight over the use of military grade equipment, which tracks people and listens in on calls, things like that because the department hasn't released information about this equipment and how and where it's being used. So, this isn't about community policing [inaudible]. Do you support passage of the POST Act?

Mayor: So, I have to see the language, Jillian. Look, here's what I do support. I want maximum transparency within the context of dealing with real and very, very challenging security dynamics. Remember, we're very focused right now on the issues that are facing the city here and now, but that does not mean the challenges we faced for years and years in terms of terrorism have gone away. They just haven't. And that poses a real threat to the people of this city. So, we have to strike a balance as in all things. I want maximum transparency, but not transparency to the point that it undermines the valid need to keep people safe. We've got to figure out what that balance is. We obviously have tremendous legal oversight and proper legal

restrictions to make sure that that ability to gain information is handled appropriately. The other thing is you saw in the approach we took here in this city – I was adamant that we should not have the National Guard in New York City, we should not have military in New York City, we should not be using the kinds of techniques and equipment that some other cities have used – most notably and tragically years ago, Ferguson, but many others – the rubber bullets, the tear gas, the different equipment that just doesn't belong in a setting where we're trying to protect civilians' right to protest. And I'm very, very interested in making sure we understand, the public understands exactly what the NYPD has and doesn't have, again, within the context of appropriate security issues, because we don't want to fall into that situation where a police force that's meant to be about civilian work ever acts in a military fashion. I think this whole country, Jillian, was jolted by seeing the president try and bring the armed forces into a moment of civilian protest. I think people were repulsed by it. And it's a good moment for us all to take stock and say, we need to make sure our police forces are never militarized in their approach. So, I look forward to all of that being addressed, but as to legislation, I need to see the specifics before I can give you an answer.

Moderator: Next is Shant from the Daily News.

Question: Did you –

Mayor: Did she have a follow or not?

Moderator: I'm sorry, Jillian, did you have a follow-up?

Question: I had a second –

Mayor: Sorry, Jillian.

Question: Okay. Thanks. I'm surprised, from yesterday's briefing about your admitted lack of knowledge of the Cure Violence Movement since Mayor Dinkins was such a proponent of his Increase the Peace Corps, which was so effective and similar [inaudible] how are these two substantively different?

Mayor: Well, Jillian, I'm trying to be accurate in my memory, but I feel like it was – because you're talking about an administration that ended in 1993, and a lot of what I at least have experienced in terms of the Cure Violence Movement and the Crisis Management System really emerges in the city years after that. So, I – of course, Mayor Dinkins was trying to focus on youth programs. He was trying to focus on community empowerment and I was proud, and Chirlane was proud to be a part of all that. But I think I'm on firm ground saying that the modern approach to Cure Violence in this city emerged substantially later and that movement, as I got to know it, the more I experienced it, the more I believed that was the way forward. And you saw some of the leaders of that movement and the power of what they're doing. I think this is a great example that the City government needs to provide direct support, more and more, to the Cure Violence Movement and the Crisis Management System, empower communities, create community grassroots leadership. This is really the way forward. The more we do of that, the more effectively we do that, the more we change the reality of policing in this city. So, that's

where I'm going to be committed. But I think in the past there were very kindred approaches but I think this approach is more particular to recent years.

Moderator: Shant from Daily News.

Question: Good morning, everyone. If I could direct my questions to First Lady McCray – had one kind of policy question, one kind of politics. One, on the policy side, can you give details on how the restaurants are being selected for the \$3 million? And on the politics side, I noticed, I think this is the third time this week that you've appeared at a press conference with the Mayor. You're getting a very high-profile role in the City's coronavirus response, but critics out there say that this is essentially to help elevate your profile ahead of a possible run for Brooklyn Borough President next year. What would be your comment on that? Thank you.

Mayor: I'm going to just jump in procedurally, and then the First Lady will go, that on the first question, in addition to the First Lady, Toya Williford will talk about the details. And the second point, I'm just going to make a very, very broad statement of fact. And, Shant, I don't think you were covering City Hall in the beginning of administration. I remember in the first days of administration, when I said that my closest advisor was our First Lady and the person I turned to in making the most important decisions, the personnel decisions, the key policy decisions, and she was going to play a profoundly foundational role in this administration. We – she and I have built all of this together from day one, going back to when I ran for school board in Brooklyn in 1999. So, I don't think you necessarily saw and heard that all in real time, but that's been the reality from day one, the prominence of her role.

I think there's been critics from the beginning of people uncomfortable with that from the beginning. I don't know if they were uncomfortable because she was a woman. I don't know if they were uncomfortable just because she is an African American or because she is an African American woman or the notion that someone who has strong views and progressive views is playing such an important role. I don't know what was motivating the critics, but this has been the fact from day one, long before she even considered anything in terms of public office. So, I just want to set that record straight and with that turn to the First Lady.

First Lady McCray: Thank you, Bill. Shant, I don't know what the future holds for me. I'm a volunteer in this administration and everything that I do is because I care deeply about the people that we serve and I wanted to be a part of this administration in a way that would contribute to helping people live better lives. Again, I don't know what the future holds for me. I'm not someone who thrives in the limelight. I don't, like, need the attention of both being in front of the cameras. In fact, it's very difficult for me. I do what I do because I care about people. I care deeply about these Brown and Black communities that have been affected disproportionately by the COVID-19 virus. And I feel like it's my duty, it's my obligation as someone who has privilege, who has been given a lot to do what I can to make things better.

And that's why I get up every morning. You know, I asked myself this morning, like, why am I doing this? Bill can testify to that.

[Laughter]

Why am I doing this? And, you know, sitting here listening to Toya, listening to Deputy Mayor Thompson about, like, what we're doing [inaudible] these young people who need to have these opportunities, with these restaurant owners who are suffering so deeply – it really, it means the world to me. I sleep well at night knowing that we've done as much as we can to move the needle forward. And I get up every morning knowing that we've got to move it even more. So, I hope that answers your question –

Mayor: Toya, do you want to speak about the details?

Executive Director Williford: Absolutely. So, restaurant owners who want to apply and access this program, the Restaurant Revitalization Program, which will, again, start with 100 restaurants, this is a launchpad moving forward, that application can be found at nyc.gov/opportunity. All of the program details and the application can be accessed at that URL. This program will be overseen by the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity and will be administered in partnership with the Human Resources Administration, HRA.

Mayor: Thank you. Go ahead.

Moderator: The next is Kathleen from Patch.

Question: Hi, Mr. Mayor, can you hear me?

Mayor: Yes, Kathleen. How are you doing?

Question: I'm good, thank you. How are you?

Mayor: Good, thank you.

Question: So, I wanted to talk to you about NYCHA for a moment. Right now, there are 28 buildings and nearly 5,000 residents who don't have hot water today. It's not the first time in the past week. It's not the second. I wonder what you would say to those residents, many of whom live in high risk areas for COVID-19 and have been told the most important thing they can do to protect themselves is to wash their hands.

Mayor: Yeah, Kathleen, very saddened, really saddened anytime this happens. I mean, we are in a situation where we have got to do everything we possibly can to help the residents of public housing. And, you know, we've been doing a lot to specifically address health concerns, whether it's the repeated cleanings in the NYCHA buildings, the free face coverings, the air conditioners for older residents who might be endangered by the heat, obviously the food programs. There's so much we have to do to keep addressing the health needs of people in public housing and to keep addressing the overall challenge of how to fix our public housing buildings. And obviously, as we get through this pandemic, we're going to go right back to deepening that work. But every time the hot water is out, it personally drives me crazy because I feel for the residents who are going through that, and I know the buildings are in many cases, really – they've been without investment for decades and decades.

I know how hard it is for the folks who work at NYCHA to keep them going. But all I can say is, Kathleen, you know, we learned on the issue of heat that we could do a lot of things differently and that we could speed up the way we address heat. I'll find out today how quickly we can get the hot water back. And if there's anything we need to do structurally to stop these breakdowns from happening, or at least repair them more quickly because I don't want people going out without hot water ever, especially as you say in the middle of a pandemic. So, we'll have an update for you in the next few hours about how quickly we can fix that.

Moderator: Kathleen, you have a follow up?

Question: Oh yes. I wondered if you could respond to Sergeant McRorie's comment on why officers aren't wearing masks. She spoke to the New York Times and said suggesting – and she has suggested that 15 hours of wearing bulletproof vests, helmets, and masks while policing in summer heat was too much to demand.

Mayor: I think she is raising a real concern, but I don't think it negates the fact that we're in the middle of a pandemic and we need all public servants to wear face coverings to the maximum extent possible. Look, let's be fair. There are times when, if you're drinking water or you're giving an instruction to a group of people, there are times where it is appropriate to take off a mask, if you're not within six feet of anyone. There are definitely exceptions, but overwhelmingly people need to have face coverings on. Every single public servant that includes our police officers. The Commissioner has made it very, very clear in his directives to officers that they have to do this and that there are – it's a matter of discipline if people don't. Again, there are exceptions. I want to be fair about that. Yes, the sergeant is not wrong that it has been hot and long hours in difficult conditions. No one that I know enjoys wearing a face covering. But it is so important that the people of the city see the people they look to, to enforce the law, actually abiding by the same rules as the rest of us. And so that has to happen to the absolute maximum extent possible among our police officers as well.

Moderator: Next is Henry from Bloomberg

Question: Hello, Mr. Mayor. My question has to do with the budget. Yesterday, you announced this \$10 million Cure Violence campaign. And throughout the several weeks, you've talked about various programs that will cost several million here, several million there. Are these additive programs, additive to a budget that's already reeling from a fiscal crisis? Or are you going to be shifting money from one department into another department? And if so, why don't you explain to us how you're finding money for these programs and what's going on with the budget?

Mayor: Yeah, Henry obviously I'm going to start by explaining now. And then the ultimate explanation will come in just over two weeks when we put together with the Council, the final budget. We have two giant X factors. I'm just going to say for the sake of clarity, the stimulus and the potential of borrowing authority from Albany, both of those very open questions right now. What we're going to do is prioritize. We may well have to make some very, very difficult choices with the Council in the next few weeks. But we're saying that the things we are talking about, our priorities no matter what they are additive in the sense that they will be new directions

that the City government will take and they will be part of the budget, no matter what else is done in the budget. The — some of the cases that you heard today are paid for with other resources, whether they are existing funds being moved to these purposes because the previous initiatives couldn't happen in the context of the coronavirus.

So some is revitalization of existing funds. Some is outside money as you heard from Toya. But mostly what we will do is say, if something is a priority, like Cure Violence, we will make it a priority. We will find the money and we will have to make appropriate actions to take from the whole rest of the budget to make it happen. Because we regard it as that much of a priority. But in terms of how we're going to readjust the budget, we have to have an absolute answer on stimulus and borrowing to know if those pieces will have any role in the budget by the end of this month. And if they are not, then we have to construct a budget that is able to get us balanced while still leaving room for the possibility of that relief coming later. And in that scenario where there is no relief Henry, we're going to make very tough choices that literally every single agency will be affected. Every single agency will have to sacrifice in that environment. But we're still able to say there are some things we now have decided are so important that they're going to happen no matter what other sacrifices we have to make. Go ahead, Henry.

Question: Okay. I just want to follow up on this because as you know, I hope, you know, the Citizens Budget Commission put out a report where they had several recommendations treating the workforce was one of them, selling off some city assets was another idea, shifting some of the police responsibilities to civilian actions, which would possibly cost less. And they came up with, you know, something like I'm going to be generalizing, but about two and a half billion dollars in recurring savings that could help the budget in future years. Have you looked at this? Is this something you could do? It would require some very painstaking looks at agencies, internal operations. It would take some work, but it would save money in their view.

Mayor: Thank you, Henry. Henry, I respect the Citizens Budget Commission. I don't always agree with them, but I do respect them. I'm not someone who believes in an ideology of austerity. I want to make that very clear. I think that ideology has been negative, has been regressive whether it was tried in this city, in this country or all over the world. I come from an ideology that believes in the power of government investment, but I also believe in balancing budgets. So we always listened to the ideas from the Citizens Budget Commission, but we don't necessarily share their philosophical view. But the work you described, that painstaking work that's done every single day by Melanie Hartzog, our Budget Director and everyone at OMB. That's literally what they do all year round.

And we look at anything that we think could save money. You've seen billions saved in recent years because of that painstaking work. And we're going to look at anything and everything, I assure you in this budget process. Civilianization, one of the things you mentioned, I think is very, very powerful option. I have supported civilianization within the NYPD going back to when I was a City Council member, we've done a very substantial amount of civilianization. It has worked. I want to give a special shout out to Henry Garrido and everyone at DC37 that has asked me. They've been pushing civilianization of NYPD for probably about 20 years. They were right. We did a lot of it. It was fine. It worked well. We're going to look to see if we can do more.

But on the other issues, attrition, selling off assets, that is very much determined by what the real outcome would be. You sell off an asset that has a long-term impact on the city, you could be doing something that's penny wise and pound foolish. Attrition, too. What would be the impact of the attrition? What would be the impact on human lives when we are in the middle of a pandemic? It's not going to be a one size fits all Henry. But I can tell you one thing, within two weeks, we will have a balanced budget, no matter how tough the decisions are. I know how to make these decisions. I know how to make the tough decisions, the tough cuts. But it will reflect priorities and the need to invest where the need is greatest. And to address the disparities that we've seen in this crisis.

Moderator: The next is Gersh from Streetsblog.

Question: Hello, Mr. Mayor, how are you?

Mayor: Good Gersh, how you doing?

Question: Great. I have a question following up on yesterday, you were asked about getting the NYPD out of traffic enforcement. And you said you were talking about that, but today the executive directors of Transportation Alternatives and the Brooklyn Movement Center had a Gotham Gazette op-ed calling for the NYPD to get out of more than just traffic enforcement, to get police out of enforcing public space because of the NYPD statistically documented racial bias in public space enforcement. The op-ed actually said this, I'm quoting this, it's time to stop spending so much money on practices that harm people of color. So, what do you think about getting the NYPD out of public space enforcement as well as traffic enforcement?

Mayor: Well, I, you know, I think the whole concept Gersh of public space enforcement, I'm happy in your follow on, you can educate me more. But I would say you've just said a very, very broad category there. I don't want to see the NYPD involved in street vendor enforcement, for example, that's something that the task force recommended that we're putting into action immediately. And I think there's other areas where civilian efforts would be better. We made that decision on social distancing as well. We're going to keep looking at that. We're going to look at it with the Council as well, in the coming week or two.

Traffic enforcement, I would be — I just, I'm not sure I see the exact parallel. Traffic enforcement is something that we all need to keep this city safe, to keep this city moving. I think there, the question is going to be talking to the people that do the work, talking to their union. That's very important in this discussion. And determining what we think will make it work best. Then, you know, we can look at any and all other permutations. But the public space enforcement to me, maybe you can define it better? I think that could cover so many things that I'm not sure we're not forgetting the basic concept of policing done right. But what would you say Gersh, how would you define that?

Question: Well, obviously I'm talking about stories we've done about 90 percent, 99 percent of all jaywalking tickets, for example, going to people of color. Obviously, drivers of color are all twice, sometimes three times as likely to be pulled over as white drivers. There is a racial bias

that is statistically documented by the NYPD and other law enforcement officers. So, I'm just wondering why not move all of that into a possibly more equitable agency, such as the Department of Transportation?

Mayor: Yeah, again, I think the question would be, I don't accept any bias or disparity. The future of this city, the future of this nation, where we just, I think everyone sort of knows it, but I don't think people know it in their heart and soul. It's a city that's essentially two thirds people of color. This is a nation that will be a majority of people of color very, very soon. I think there's five states in the Union now that are majority people of color. The future of this city, the future of this country is just very different than the world that once was. And the way things were structured and the structural racism is, has got to be a thing of the past. It's been corrosive. So I think there is a different question here about how you weed out racism and bias and disparity versus also considering how you get the job done on these issues that matter so deeply. We have to do both at once. So we have to protect people's lives. We have to make sure that people are safe on the road. We have to make sure that any agency that takes on any mission feels able to do it effectively. And the people that do the work, their voices matter Gersh. That's why I say we keep having to talk to the people that do the work, talk to their unions and hear what they think will work as well.

I don't think it is as simple an equation as what you are putting forward. So, are we going to look at everything? Yes. I mean, a simple question is yes, we're going to look into everything. But what I hear in communities all over the city, Gersh is people want to be safe and they want an end to bias and discrimination and disparity. They want both, they need both. We have to figure out what gets us to both. And that's what these conversations in the next two weeks are going to be all about.

Moderator: Gersh, do you have a follow up?

Mayor: I think he had his follow up. Go ahead.

Moderator: We'll move on to Rich Lamb from WCBS 880.

Question: Hi there, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: Hey Rich. How you doing?

Question: I'm doing all right. I'm just wondering, former Mayor Bloomberg was named by the Governor as head of their tracing effort for the State. And since New York City's part of this state, I wonder whether or not you have been in touch with him or whether he has been in touch with you to help you out with your efforts in that regard?

Mayor: Rich as I said, I'm very appreciative that Mayor Bloomberg stepped forward and his foundation stepped forward, Johns Hopkins University stepped forward. And they've been tremendously helpful. In terms of day to day operations, the way things have been set up is that a lot of the work of course, is the responsibility of the locality. I mean, that's just the truth about government in general. Whether you're talking about the way the federal government does things

or the State government, they set a lot of the parameters and sometimes provide the funding. But the day to day work is done at the local level. So the Test and Trace Corps now thousands strong, on the ground, having an impact. That was done with the help for sure, of Bloomberg Philanthropies. But the day to day work is absolutely done at the local level. I haven't spoken to Mayor Bloomberg, but I am very, very appreciative for his contribution here. Go ahead, Rich.

Question: Okay. My second question is one that maybe [inaudible] ignorance on my part, but there was at one time, a controversy at Fort Hamilton over a street that was named after Robert E. Lee, when he served as an engineer there before the Civil War. And I'm wondering whether that, do you know anything about whether or not that street name has ever been changed? And what would you think about having it changed?

Mayor: If it hasn't been changed, it should be immediately. Rich, I will join you in not knowing enough about what's going on in Fort Hamilton. Obviously, the City doesn't run Fort Hamilton, the federal government does. But nothing should be named after Robert E. Lee at this point in history. And by the way, he's someone who was supposed to follow his oath to the United States of America and the United States military and didn't so, on top of his many other sins and on top of the racism that he stood for. So, no, of course anything named after him has to go in the city. I don't know if there still is one there, if there is, we'll appeal to the military to immediately remove it.

Deputy Mayor Thompson: Can I say something?

Mayor: Please, Deputy Mayor.

Deputy Mayor Thompson: I just wanted to say that my father's family, the Thompsons on both sides were enslaved on the plantation of Robert Lee's father, Henry Lee. And this — and one of my ancestors is named Sarah Lee. This issue is an emotional issue for many people like me. And it's really hard for us to really feel fully part of this country that celebrates our enslavement with names like that on military bases all across this country. So, I just want to say that, thank you for your statements.

Mayor: Thank you. And thank you — I hope everyone took in the fullness of what the Deputy Mayor just said. And I've known him for 30 years and have such admiration for him. He just said something that's kind of an American truth that needs to be understood. That more and more people are finding exactly where their ancestors were enslaved. And I'm just going to say something obvious to everyone whose ancestors weren't enslaved, and that includes my own. Imagine what that has done to families in this country, American families who went through that trauma and that trauma is felt to this very day, this very hour. So the notion of the man who used military might to try to protect enslavement, that we would in anywhere in this country and in our armed forces, our national government would in any way, elevate and respect a man who fought to protect slavery and harm fellow human beings, his name should be taken off everything in America, period.

Moderator: The next is Chris Robbins from Gothamist.

Question: Morning, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: Hey, how you doing?

Question: I'm alright. Two questions for you. First question is, yesterday the City Council held a public safety police oversight hearing and the Police Commissioner was not present and neither was anyone from the Mayor's Office. And given what's happened over the past two weeks in the city and given your renewed commitment to reform and transparency, why weren't those people there for that hearing? And what does it say that they weren't present? And I can give you the follow up question once you, once you address that.

Mayor: Chris, I honestly don't know how the decisions were made on who went to that hearing. My understanding – again there's been a lot of different hearings lately – my understanding is that was about specific pieces of legislation and that the representatives of the Police Department went [inaudible] explained the Police Department view and that we're all – you know, what's quite clear is, and I've made it clear, and, you know, ultimately this is what matters, is what happens right here in City Hall. We are working with the City Council on all those pieces of legislation. They're all the right thing to do and we're going to get done. So, I don't think if it's a matter of simply relaying the department's view on a matter of legislation, that, that necessarily requires one or another official, it just requires clarity. But I know the Commissioner was before the council recently, I believe, on the budget. And it's very important – I agree with you vehemently that we need to make sure that senior police officials respond to the City Council on a regular basis when there's issues that require the top officials to be there. So, I agree that that is the – that is consistent with the transparency we want at this moment.

Go ahead.

Question: And just to follow up on that, on Monday you told reporters that, you know, in no uncertain terms that you would not allow ICE officers into New York City. But at this hearing yesterday, the NYPD admitted what had already been documented on video, that there were in fact ICE agents deployed at NYPD precinct houses around the city. So, did you not know what was happening on Monday or what happened there? Why, why didn't you –

Mayor: No, I'm going to say to you, if you have it, or anyone has it, Freddi Goldstein is here in the room. If any member of the media has that video, I need to see it right away. I understand that – again, I think I spoke to this yesterday, the Department of Homeland Security officers who work with the NYPD on issues like human trafficking, not ICE that works on illegitimate immigration enforcement. And I'm someone who believes ICE should be abolished, repeal and replace ICE, start over and create an agency that actually does appropriate immigration enforcement and has an entirely different attitude and a humane attitude towards the people who tried to come to this country, who do come to this country. So, I have no use for ICE. ICE is not allowed on the city property, etcetera. Homeland Security does other things than ICE. If, in fact, anyone from ICE per se was involved, I need to know that exactly. That is unacceptable. There will be consequences for that. I need to know that. I have no evidence of that, Chris. If you have evidence, if anyone else has evidence, please bring it forward. I had this conversation – I did a conference call with the Black, Latino, Asian Caucus of the City Council last night, this concern

was raised. I said, there is a difference between the Homeland Security officers and ICE officers, but if anyone has video or photos or evidence of ICE officers being present at NYPD precincts, please provide it immediately so we can act on that. There will certainly be consequences if that was done. It's unacceptable to me.

Moderator: We have time for two more today. The next is Andrew Humm from Gay City News.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: Hey, Andrew. How are you doing?

Question: Well, I need a haircut, but that's the least of my worries.

Mayor: That's coming soon – coming soon, Andrew.

Question: I appreciate all the talk about listening more deeply. If you listen to any of the Rent Guidelines Board hearings last night, people are – tenants are pleased speeding for relief that only the Board can provide. Renters are getting no aid from Washington or Albany or the City Council, but your board has the power to reduce rents by three percent and help stem the homelessness crisis at a time when we're all supposed to shelter to survive. So, we've all done things in this crisis we've never done before. And I know you're for a freeze, but will you listen to the tenants and support a historic decrease in rents?

Mayor: Andrew, I appreciate the question. Not only is it heartfelt, but I know you, you know, forever – not only is it a heartfelt question, but I understand where it's coming from and you're saying it right to say we have done things we've never done before. When I did the first rent freeze with the Rent Guidelines Board that had never been done before in half a century. So, of course, sometimes we do things that are unprecedented, especially in a crisis of this magnitude. That said, I still believe the rent freeze is the right approach and I'll tell you why – because, from my point of view, remember, the actions of the Rent Guidelines Board affect all landlords of all sizes within the boundaries of what's covered by the Rent Guidelines Board – it's a million apartments. I think there's a lot of particularly smaller and medium sized landlords that they don't have money coming in and yet they have to keep the buildings up. You and I would both say it is imperative that they keep their buildings running properly, provide services to people for as long as it takes. And we know there's a lot of people who can't pay rent right now. And we know there haven't been evictions and I want to emphasize there should not be eviction. So, here's what I think would be the better way to solve it, Andrew. The State New York clearly setting the guideline, there should be no evictions in the City of New York until months have passed after the conclusion of this crisis, that would immediately clarify a big piece of what we're talking about here. And allowing everyone who cannot pay to be on a legitimate formal payment plan, that folks who have no income when they finally get income back, start paying, over time, back rent. I think that is the proper way to proceed. I think a rent freeze is exactly the right thing to do, but I still don't agree with the notion of ultimately creating a situation who are people are running the buildings don't have the resources to run buildings. I think that presumes they all have plenty of money to spend. I know they don't. I know they're losing it as the days go by. And I'm not

talking about the biggest landlords who I often have profound disagreements with, who tried to stop me from doing a rent freeze in court and we beat him. And I'm not talking about the bad landlords, and I have no use for them, and we go after them in so many ways – we're talk about every-day landlords who are actually trying to do their job. We have to strike a balance. So, I still believe in freeze, but I appreciate you raising the point and we're going to keep looking at the situation always to figure out what we can do to provide any and all relief. And I need the State to play a more aggressive role. Do you have a follow-up?

Question: Well, my follow-up is something I asked a couple of months ago and you said you were in favor of, but we still don't have – been asking for data on COVID and LGBT people and people with AIDS for a couple of months now and I've yet to see anything from the DOH and the HHC, even though this is required to be collected.

Mayor: And I don't know why that is the case. and I apologize for that. Andrew. I'm flummoxed by that. I would think that DOH, that would be something, given the history that they've worked on so many issues that matter to the LGBT community, that that is something that they should be able to do and must do. So, we will follow up on that today. I'll ask Deputy Mayor Henze say to get involved to address that issue and fix it.

Moderator: Last question for today, it goes to Reuvain from Hamodia.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor. You've been discussing equality a lot, and I'd like to ask you about another apparent inequality in the city. During the past week on multiple occasions, NYPD officers have expelled mothers and children from playgrounds in Brooklyn – well, just a few blocks away, on the same day there were protests with hundreds of people. How does it promote equality, Mr. Mayor, when protestors have already had nearly two weeks to be out in the street, are continually allowed together, while families many are large families living in very small apartments have been shut in for months and want to enjoy a hot summer day are being expelled.

Mayor: Look Reuvain, I appreciate the question. And this has been such a complex reality. I think, again, several have asked this question. I do think the moment that this city, this nation has gone through in the last two weeks or so is something very particular, very painful, very intense, very challenging, but also a moment where literally decades and centuries of the demand for change came forward, and real change is happening as a result. And I don't for a moment, Reuvain – I don't lack compassion for those parents. I know it must be extraordinarily tough. I know parents are so frustrated. Look, for Chirlane and I with two kids, we often felt really challenged even when we weren't cooped up in a pandemic. So, a family with four kids, six kids, seven kids, eight kids, nine kids, 10 kids – I can only imagine how tough that is for the parents. And I want nothing more than to get them back to those playgrounds, it was one of the areas where I really tried my best to keep the playgrounds open. And if it hadn't been for the growth of the pandemic we would have, but we had to, at the time, this is something we worked on with the State, we had to get to the point of saying, look, out of abundance of caution, the playgrounds just created too much of a risk to families of the spread of the disease. The day is coming, it's not here yet, but the day is coming we'll be able to open up them again. We don't have a timeline yet it. It will be absolutely connected to how we do at fighting back the disease, more to say on that

when the right time comes. But I hope I have given you some sense of why I think the demonstrations were something absolutely unexpected, absolute particular, but the ongoing effort to try and relieve the pressure of these families while still protecting against the resurgence of disease – and this is the punchline, this is what matters Reuvain – the last thing you want, or anyone wants, is a resurgence of this disease that then will lead to the restrictions being, once again, put back in place. We're finally in phase one, a lot of those small business owners that your publication, others have raised the concerns of are finally starting to get back to work. They're a few weeks away from getting back to normal work, for example, in retail stores. We have to hold the line as painful as it is to not allow the spread of this disease so we can get back to that. Do you have a follow-up?

Question: My follow-up is – I'd love to also get Commissioner Shea's answer on this, but I realize that he's not joined the call since there were rumors of his resigning. My question is, the Manhattan DA has said he's not going to prosecute those arrested for unlawful assembly or disorderly conduct. The Brooklyn DA's that he's not going to prosecute those arrested for unlawful assembly of violating curfew. We're talking about during the protest now. What is your reaction to that? Does it undermine your authority to establish a curfew and police to regulate the protest? And, by the way, about the Fort Hamilton thing, the army rejected a request from you and Brooklyn Borough President, and Representative Yvette Clarke and others in 2017, the street is still named there, although the church nearby removed the plaque from the tree that we planted.

Mayor: Well, thank you. You're knowledgeable guy. Well, then we will go right back at the military and I will today reach out. I've built relationships with some of the senior military in the context of the coronavirus crisis, and I will reach out to them and let them know how important it is to remove the name of Robert E. Lee not only at Fort Hamilton, but everywhere else. The DA's – look, it's a democracy. There are all sorts of checks and balances. District attorneys are elected independently. I sometimes agree with them, I sometimes don't agree with them. I think they need to be willing to act when someone violates the law. But no, I'm quite confident that what we needed to do with the curfew was achieved in the actions of the DA had no impact on that. The curfew was to address the attacks on property. It was to address what we saw that Monday – excuse me, that Sunday and Monday night, and particularly the extraordinary pain that I saw in the community in the Bronx that was so deeply affected – it was to make sure that that never happened again. Thank God, that never did happen again as a result of the curfew and other actions. Thank God, we kept the National Guard out of New York City. We got the city back to a peaceful place. Then, the second I was confident we were there, we removed the curfew. So, the actions of the DA had no impact on the ability to utilize a curfew and utilize it effectively. But we'll keep working with the DA's. Whether I always agree with them or not is not the point, we keep working with them and we need their help to keep the city safe. And there are more and more issues we're going to turn to in terms of safety once we get through, you know, this immediate, absolutely primary concern of fighting back this disease and addressing the disparities it's laid bare. We've got to also get back to the bigger issues of safety facing the city and we're going to need the DA's to play a bigger role in addressing the safety concerns, but that is a conversation for another day.

Let me finish here real quick with just a profound thanks to the First Lady, Deputy Mayor Thompson, Executive Director of the Mayor's Fund, Toya Williford, everyone in the task force on racial inclusion and equity. A lot of work happening very quickly, and it will make a difference in the here and now, and that's where I want to end. We are dealing with a crisis we have never seen in our lives. The biggest crisis, arguably, that's ever hit this city – health crisis, economic crisis, human crisis, disparity crisis, a crisis that cuts all across this city. The way we fight back is by leaning in to change, pushing back a status quo that was broken and doing things differently. That's happening right now, whether it's the support we talked about this week for the Cure Violence movement, whether it's creating opportunities for small businesses or helping young people, whatever it is, it is about right now, addressing those disparities sharply and redistributing resources to folks who have suffered unduly. That's what we're going to be doing today, tomorrow, all the way to the City budget, and then for a year and a half thereafter, relentlessly. And I am convinced we can refer very, very head-on address the broken status quo and get the city to a better place. And we can do that together. Thank you.

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