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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR ADAMS, COMMISSIONER SEWELL, AND GOVERNOR
HOCHUL DELIVER REMARKS ON SUBWAY SAFETY AND HOMELESS
OUTREACH**

Governor Kathy Hochul: Good afternoon. It is so wonderful to be here, as we thank you.

[Applause]

Thank you.

[Applause]

As we herald what I call a new era for New York. And I'm delighted to be here with my partner, as we are sure in this new era for New York. And that is our new, incredible, energetic, and many times fun. Mayor of New York City, Eric Adams, want to give him a round of applause.

[Applause]

I also want to acknowledge some other individuals who are joining us to make some very significant announcements here today. We have a brand-new Commissioner for the New York City Police Department, Commissioner Sewell, who comes with an incredible amount of experience. And as I mentioned, a new era, I'm so excited about partnering the State and the City when it comes to deploying all the resources to make New Yorkers feel safe again, so thank you, Commissioner for being here as well. Someone who I've come to rely on incredibly since our first hours in office. Battling the rages of a hurricane. This is the person you want in the trenches with you and that is our State Operations Director, Kathryn Garcia. Also, we have representatives from the New York City Transit. That is Craig Cipriano. Also, Sarah Meyer, our Customer Service Officer at MTA. There's a lot on her hands. Thank you, Sara. And Pat Warren the Chief of Safety and Security right now at MTA. And of course, we know Jana Lever is our leader.

We're here today to address an issue that is on the minds of so many New York residents. And that is the issue of homelessness. So, we're going to talk about homelessness and public safety. And I want to talk about the fact that, as I mentioned in my State of the State yesterday, this truly is a humanitarian crisis. It's hard for people to walk past someone in need of help on our city sidewalks, whether they're coming to a subway station, a train station, or just walking to work. And roughly 4,000 people, our fellow citizens are homeless on the streets. These are the New Yorkers for whom the system has failed. And failure is not an option for us in government.

So, we're going to go back, we're going to assess the problem. And know that no New Yorkers should ever have to experience life on the streets. And in our state, we're going to deploy the tools that we have available to team up with the Mayor and tackle this issue head on, because our ultimate goal is to make sure that every New Yorker has a roof over their head and that they are safe. Again, New York City, new Era, new opportunity. And New York City is one of three cities where there actually is a guaranteed right to shelter. What does that mean? It is not a safe shelter to go to.

So yesterday, I announced a major initiative. The first time we're going to create teams of trained professionals, who will be embedded here, who develop relationships, develop trust, and allow us to face the issue of chronic street homelessness with a plan. We're going to get them the support they need, get them into shelter, and ultimately into housing. So, we're going to have what we call our State funded SOS teams, Safe Options Support. What does that mean? These are individuals who work hand in hand with New York City outreach teams, this is what has to happen. This is where you don't need to be siloed or have turf battles, you're teamed together. That's how it works. That's what's been missing. And today, to address this, I'm announcing that I'm signing an RFP to go out immediately to develop these teams to step up initial five batch of teams right now, each team what is this eight to 10 people are part of a team. These are medical professionals, their social workers, outreach people, socialists who understand the very deep human needs that lead people to need more help than they're getting. Because, as I said yesterday, I believe we can and will do better. It's that simple. We have no choice but to act. At the same time, I also mentioned that street homelessness only accounts for a fraction of people are housing insecure. Many people do live in shelters. Shelters can be a scary place for someone, especially during COVID and we tell people not to be in congregate settings. We're worried about that as they are as well.

So, we also need to talk about another issue and how to make sure that our streets and subways are safer. And I'm so glad that we're going to talk about a plan to do just that. But I mentioned we're just talking about the tip of the iceberg here. And that's why in conjunction with launching a very hands-on strategic approach to dealing with the people on the streets, I want them to have an option to go somewhere else that is safe and worthy of them. And that means we're going to continue focusing on what I announced yesterday 100,000, new affordable housing units, but not just affordable housing. This recognizes that people are homeless because they have unmet needs, unmet mental health needs, substance abuse issues, PTSD, if these are our veterans, they need our help. So, we'll also add 100,000 supportive housing units. And I have been to so many ribbon cuttings, at these types of facilities, and other times, and they are, it's like walking people home again, and saying this is your new life. It's beautiful how government can provide that to a

human being. It's powerful. And it's what we must continue to do. We're going to focus on also the most vulnerable populations, whether it's our runaway young people, LGBTQ youth who have nowhere to go, and formerly incarcerated individuals. And you heard me announced yesterday a bold plan to welcome them back into society and some might need to transition back because they've been out of the community for so long. Transitional helping to help them get on the feet, their feet as well. We also announced eviction prevention, legal assistance to help low-income individuals at risk of being evicted as well. So today, we turn yesterday's rhetoric into action. And it starts here right now, with an incredible partner, that I am so enthusiastic, and so ready to roll up our sleeves and get the job done for all New Yorkers. And with that, I'm proud to introduce the Mayor of New York City, Eric Adams.

[Applause]

Mayor Eric Adams: Thank you, Governor, as you move through the state with your swagger, you know, your thoughtfulness and thoughtfulness of how we must really have the partnership and people miss the fact that the coordination that's taking place in Albany and New York is allowing us to just get stuff done. And the communication we had even around the school openings, and how we talked about getting our children back into schools and moving supplies, you helped us get a million test kits, two million test kits down to the city so that we can deploy and get them into school. And all of those things are happening behind the scene. This is a homecoming for me. I was a transit cop in this station of almost 30 years ago. And I remember this station and I remember the challenges before they rebuilt the location. I remember riding these trains, I remember during the high crime period of high crime time when people were afraid to utilize our system. Graffiti was everywhere. And there was just a feeling that the system was out of control. Today, we are saying we are not going back there. But not only are we not going back, but we're going to utilize our police to do public safety and our mental health professionals to give people the services that they need. And so, this historical moment that many people may miss, but I acknowledged how important it is. Safe Option Support team plan is going to do just that. And as I look at Dr. Ashwin, who's here, how he talked about this so much during his work in the organization, he was affiliated with the group, went out and dealt with street homeless all the times and he understood it. And that was one of the leading reasons, we brought him on our team, the Deputy Mayor and I. Our city can take two of the biggest challenges I believe, and solve them. Helping and fight in homelessness that many of our brothers and sister New Yorkers are experiencing and public safety.

I said it over and over again that public safety and justice, is the prerequisite to prosperity. And I've seen it from both sides, both living on the verge of homelessness as a child and right in these subways to protect everyday New Yorkers as they went to and from their place of employment. I know what life was like in the system as a transit cop, and how important it is to give the perception of safety with the actual safety. But also know that New Yorkers care about the people that use the system, it breaks their hearts to walk past people that are living on a train, or experiencing a level of homelessness in the city. These new Safe Options Support teams will do just that by helping homeless New Yorkers access the services they need. Far too often, those critical periods when people have lost their jobs, lost their homes or, going through some form of health care crisis, if you don't reach them at that critical period, it will take a longer investment to turn their lives around. And we want to do so at that critical period with proven methods and

research. That's the team we're building. They understand this line of work, they are committed to getting it right and we're going to do that. This new plan also frees up our police officers to focus on crime and not be the street sweepers of sweeping men and women who are homeless of our system. Nowhere is that more important than the transit system.

Over the last year, New Yorkers have heard this for me again, and again, I talked about what the issue is in our subway system. Actual crime and the perception of crime and a perception of disorder leads to the crisis we are facing. But also, we can do a better job by addressing the public safety aspect. And we need to be clear here, we will not allow our police officers to have unnecessary engagement with homelessness individuals and those petty issues that will cause a negative encounters with our police officers and riders of the public. We want serious criminals, like the one that stabbed the individual the other day, yesterday, on the subway system, that is our focus, public safety. So, we are going to sustain and ensure that we don't continue to see a decline in ridership. We want to reduce the amount of people who no longer want to take our trains or invest in our city. We want to ensure that tourists and others are safe on our subway system, and that's why this important partner of assuring that our transit system is safe. So as we head into the new year with this recovery, we must restore public trust in our transportation system, and I will say it over and over again, that trust comes with public safety. We are going to add hundreds of daily visual inspections from existing police manpower. That's the goal, how do we better utilize our police force.

And those existing men and women on patrol will have an additional responsibility to go into the subway system and do visual inspections. Omnipresence brings about the level of security and safety. So, those precinct level offices, they will park, they will go into the subway system, and they will inspect the stations to determine if there are any law problems or any public safety problems that existed. And we're going to also have officers that are behind the desk. I said this on the command – on the campaign trail, too many officers who were hired for public safety are sitting behind the desk. We gave them that bulletproof vests, that badge, and that firearm to go on patrol and protect the public, not to protect computer screens. We want them on patrol where they're supposed to be, and by getting officers from behind the desk, we're going to beef up our manpower in a real way. In addition, transit officers on patrol will now do this, they're going to ride the trains. When the last time you saw an officer walk through the train, to see him there and engage with passengers. How are you? How was your day to rebuild that trust? That's the omnipresence that I knew as a rookie top. When you walk through that train and the public sees you, they feel the level of confidence that the system is a safe place to be. Subway riders will see our officers on that patrol and ready to respond if needed. And so I am really pleased with this moment, Governor, with your additional resources is going to allow us to get – receive the mental health professionals to help us on the ground and be proactive. And part of the role our police officers will play if they identify a homeless condition, they're going to communicate with our outreach workers so they can respond, not to have the offices engage, unless there is some criminal activity taking place that needs immediate attention. This is not a partnership where officers are going to be engaging, but mental health professionals building trust, giving people the resources they need, and giving them the dignity and respect they deserve to ensure they could have permanent housing or permanent resources.

So I'm proud of this moment, I'm proud of what the Governor has done for the City of New York, our largest transportation system, we receive hundreds of thousands of people that utilize this system every day, and if rebuild the trust, if we rebuild the reliability, and we rebuild the belief that our system is safe, people will utilize the system again, and we – it will become part of our overall recovery for the city. So, again, Governor, thank you so much, and if I could have the opportunity to introduce my amazing Police Commissioner and her real vision outlook for the City of New York, not only below ground, but above ground, and it's the coordination in partnership that we're looking forward to. Police Commissioner?

[Applause]

Police Commissioner Keechant Sewell: Good afternoon, everyone. It is my honor and privilege to stand here today with Governor Hochul and Mayor Adams, members of the Command Staff and our partners today to speak about the important work we're doing in the nation's largest subway system. It's an exciting day. Communities take many shapes and forms throughout New York City and not all of them are above ground. We see our subway station in lines as not just necessary rapid transit, but as neighborhoods themselves, and it's easy to understand why. In in each station on each platform, in each train car there are people, people who are going to work, to school, to their tourist destinations, and to home. These are all people who make New York City great by keeping it connected, one ride at a time. In fact, if you want to get a quick idea of just how diverse the most diverse city in the country actually is, ride the train. If you want to travel a dozen cultures and traditions and under 20 minutes, ride the train. If you want to see how people get the work of New York City done, ride the train. We know that these millions of riders take a deep sense of ownership in their line, in their station, because for the length of that ride, that's their neighborhood, and their fellows riders – excuse me – their fellow riders are their community. And just as they do above ground, they depend every single day on the NYPD and the MTA to keep them safe.

We take great pride in the part we do and our public safety partners play to keep this system running, and we're always looking for ways to improve what we do. As with everything else we do across the city when something works, we enhance. When something needs fixing, we fix it. These new NYPD measures mean that officers will be on targeted patrol in the subway system throughout each day, to reinforce what the mayor and the governor have said this plan. This vision for the subway system means that additional NYPD officers from the Transit Bureau, from Patrol Services Bureau, and from other special units will be will be reinvigorated to work in tandem for the same goal to deter crime and getting the assistance people need to them as quickly as possible. There will be hundreds of new visual inspections on the trains throughout each day and night. New Yorkers will witness uniformed officers presence in the transit system, both on platforms, in and out of trains, riding the trains to cover as much ground as possible.

So, today with our Governor and our Mayor, we're introducing our plan to make the system safer for everybody every day. We will have additional laser focused targeted trained deployments on the lines in subway stations that need them the most with innovative transportation initiatives. They will direct patrols from above ground precincts to integrate coverage of the transit station in their sectors on each tour every day. This will ensure more uniformed NYPD officers in stations and platforms system wide. We will use all of our Transit Bureau's available resources to

deter and prevent crime before it happens, and to bring swift justice to victims when and if it does. We will accomplish this by being present, alert, uniform, in uniform, and by proactively seeing all of those we serve. As the Mayor said, we're going to talk to them, say good morning, say, how are you? How's your day going? And actually listening for the answer and responding. If we see passengers sleeping in transit, for example, we will engage them because we know that sleeping passengers are among the most vulnerable victims in the subways. When we see those in need, we will make sure we make real time referrals to get them the social services and the mental health professionals that can assist them. This subway system is for everyone. It is the lifeblood of this city. It must be and it will be safe. That's our job, and we're getting it done. I'll turn it back over to the Governor.

[Applause]

Governor Hochul: Like I said, it's a whole new day New York. You just heard from our Commissioner who speaks with great confidence, and I'm looking forward to working with her as well as embedding her with our State forces as well. So we have a dynamic opportunity here to make a difference, and I do want to thank the Mayor for responding and delivering on something that we've talked about. I've been on the job 135 days, but early on, I also knew that we needed more of a visible presence in our subways and not up on the streets, not on the platforms, but in the subways. And I've had these conversations before, and now you've delivered on what we've been wanting to see happen to give people that confidence that when you get on our trains, you will safely get to your destination, and that our police will be deployed to do the rightful job of they have which is to protect the public, but also managing a situation again, I call it a humanitarian crisis, we need to take care of the people involved. So I want to thank everyone for participating.

Before I take question answers, I do have to give a public service announcement about our weather situation. To New Yorkers. I'm from Buffalo. I've got this.

[Laughter]

We will be already deploying resources up to Buffalo to Upstate, I know they're getting an enormous amount of snow right now even by Buffalo standards. And the Skyway is shut down. The state, and it's what Kathryn Garcia is also working on, is already deploying resources where we need them, but we also anticipate a major storm here hitting New York City and Long Island. And again, we're experienced, but you can never predict exactly what Mother Nature will do, so we're already getting crews out in advance. Working with utility companies, telling them that we expect any problems to be resolved very quickly, and so we're giving more storm updates as necessary, but I've managed more emergency operations centers with boots on and snow over my knees than anybody else probably in state government, so we're ready for this. With that I'll be happy to entertain any questions as well the Mayor.

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