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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO CUTS RIBBON ON STATEN ISLAND'S NEW
NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER, EXPANDING
ACCESS TO PRIMARY CARE**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Thank you.

[Applause]

Thank you Dr. Spinelli and I am so glad you joined the team at Vanderbilt, and it speaks volumes about Dr. Spinelli that what she wanted to do was serve the most people who had the most need and be a part of this exciting new development. Let's give her a big round of applause.

[Applause]

And Dr. Spinelli, the story that you just relayed is way too common all over this city and all over this country and it's way too common here in Staten Island. The most recent estimate says there's at least 30,000 adults in Staten Island who do not have health insurance. Those Staten Islanders have, for a long, long time, had to make a lot of really bad choices. They've either had to go to an emergency room which we all know means it's already much later and too late in the problem sometimes compared to where it should be that we want people to more and more – to get care early, to identify problems at the very beginning so we can treat them.

When the only option you feel you have is an emergency room that's not good health care. There's also people who literally don't even get to the emergency room because of the depth of their problem.

So, the notion that in the greatest city in the world, that one borough alone – 30,000 adults who had no place to turn – that was unacceptable, and that's been unacceptable for decades.

I want to say to everyone here that you are part of a new wave. You are making a difference. You are part of something exciting. This is going to be a difference-maker for so many Staten

Islanders and you are the people who are making this idea come to life. So, give each other a round of applause.

[Applause]

Now, let's put this in the bigger perspective. There are many ways to think about the question of fairness and the question of equality. Health care is probably one of the sharpest prisms through which to look at this question. There's something particularly painful about the notion that some people have all the health care they need and the very best, and others literally have none. That does not reflect our values as New Yorkers.

We know the truth is your ZIP code. Where you live can determine how healthy you are. That's still the sad, cold reality we live with and what we have to overcome. There is literally the truth that New Yorkers who live as little as four miles apart in this city could have life-expectancy levels that are ten years different. That really speaks volumes about how much more we have to do.

Now, again, where is that more clear than here on Staten Island – 30,000 uninsured, literally didn't have any place to turn. Now, I do want to say our voluntary hospitals here have done a great job. I see one of the leaders here with us. Thank you so much for being with us. They provide a lot of service but they can't provide everything to folks who are uninsured. That's where a public facility makes a huge, huge difference. And we also know that this borough has some very particular needs.

And we know that State Island has been so deeply affected by the opioid epidemic and this facility is going to be part of the solution. I know Chirlane will speak about that among other things in a moment.

The fact is that for too many Staten Islanders, until now, if they couldn't afford treatment and if one of the other facilities could not make it available they had no choice but to go to another borough. Just think about that, they had to go to an entirely different borough to get some of the care they needed.

Everyone here probably has heard that our goal for the next four years is to make New York City the safest big city in America. Here's a really easy way to define that. People should be able to get the care they need in their own borough and this is why the Vanderbilt Clinic is going to make all the difference in the world.

We expect 40,000 visits a year. It is the first full-service public health clinic that's ever been here on Staten Island. So, this is a history-making moment. And the technology here – we'll let the experts speak to it but as Dr. Katz was explaining, when you build a brand new facility you get the latest technology. There is technology in this building that isn't even the norm is some of our finer health care institutions but it is the norm here at Vanderbilt and that's a great step forward and it's great to see Staten Island getting the cutting edge technology it deserves.

I want to make this very human. What does it mean to have a facility like this? It means for example if your sister is pregnant that she can get the checkup she needs throughout her pregnancy not just at the very end but on a regular basis to make sure that she and her baby are healthy. It means if your son has asthma, he can get the help he needs before the situation spirals out of control. It means if your grandma has diabetes, she can get the treatment she needs on a regular basis and avoid complications.

This is going to really change families' lives. Now, we know for a long time our Health + Hospitals system has been going through a lot of challenges but I want to give a lot of credit to the leadership today – Dr. Katz and his predecessor, Stan Brezenoff, for the work they have been doing to turn that situation around.

And I can tell you that this is a symbol of the resurgence of Health + Hospitals and that something new and exciting is being created. You'll hear from Mitch in a moment but I just want to say this is a really good day for New York City, to see Health + Hospitals on the comeback.

Congratulations to you. A few words in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

I'm going to turn to our First Lady now and I want to say I – besides loving her, I also admire her.

[Applause]

And I've gone around Staten Island, not only during this week of City Hall in Your Borough but other times, and there's a lot of appreciation for the work that Chirlane is doing because this borough has come to understand the horrible impact of stigma whether we're talking about the opioid crisis or whether we're talking about mental health challenges in general – very powerful in the roundtable yesterday particularly hearing from Michele Kunz who lost her son to opioids and told very dramatically and personally the story of going from someone who thought addiction represented some kind of character problem to understanding it is a disease.

That understanding, that teaching that we need to do to help people come to grips with this reality so they can get the help they need and the families can get the help they need. That's crucial to addressing this crisis. And I can safely say no one has done more in this city to breakdown that stigma than our First Lady, Chirlane McCray.

[Applause]

First Lady Chirlane McCray: Thank you so much, Bill. And thank you all for being here today. I'm really delighted to celebrate the opening of this new community center which is so needed here and will do so much good for all the families who live here.

In many ways this clinic represents the future of health care in our city – affordable, quality, and integrated health services in the communities where New Yorkers live, where they work, and raise their families.

As New Yorkers, we believe in taking care of one another. We believe people shouldn't have to empty their bank accounts when they get sick. They shouldn't have to hide in the shadows because of how they came to our country, miss checkups because the doctor's office is too far away, or avoid the treatment that they need because of stigma or shame.

That's why health care centers like this one are so important. And at a time when the opioid crisis is ravaging our communities, they're really urgently needed. Yesterday Bill and I spent the morning with Staten Islanders who have been personally affected by this epidemic and let me tell you, it's impossible to sit with parents who have lost their young people to this crisis and not be deeply, deeply moved.

There is nothing as painful as losing a child. Each one of them deeply understands the struggles and the pain of addiction and they all stress the same point that people who are struggling with opioid misuse need easier access to care. They need the most effective treatments available in their communities and not a long train or ferry ride away.

And with so many people who are still addicted and dying, they need it now. Opioid addiction is a treatable disease. From now on residents of the North Shore in need of treatment can get it right here at Vanderbilt.

Several doctors on staff are fully trained to prescribe buprenorphine. That's a medicine that helps people manage this disease by stopping the cravings for the damaging drugs that hurt people. This fall a staff nurse will come onboard to coordinate the buprenorphine program and ensure the best possible care for every patient. This program will save lives and help more people understand that addiction treatment is like treatment for any other illness.

Patients working with health care professionals – will work with health care professionals to manage the symptoms and get well. There's no reason for shame or fear or stigma, and of course opioid treatment is just one component of the holistic care Staten Islanders will receive here at Vanderbilt which includes early screening for depression and substance use disorders, overdose prevention, and a range of other health services that Dr. Katz will touch on.

With all of these services in one place – real one stop shopping – Vanderbilt is modelling the future of health care and Staten Islanders will take pride in this in the future.

Any New Yorker who is need of treatment for opioid addiction or any kind of mental health challenge can always call 1-888-NYC-Well to talk with a trained counselor and get connected to the care they need. I'm going to repeat that number again – 1-888-NYC-Well. Please, share this number with everyone you know. You may have friends, you may have family members who are too ashamed to ask for help or are afraid, living in pain and silence. Share the number with them. You never know when they might need it or maybe they'll pass it onto someone else who needs it.

The most powerful form of advertising is word of mouth so I'm really counting on everyone here to share that number. 1-888-NYC-Well. It is 100 percent confidential, 100 percent free.

In New York City, we want you to know there is always hope and there is always help. Thank you to everyone at Vanderbilt for bringing these important services to Staten Island's North Shore communities.

[Applause]

Mayor: Thank you. I'm going to turn to our Deputy Mayor, Dr. Palacio, and I want to give some credit where credit is due that this vision came to fruition with her leadership and the tremendous progress we're seeing at Health + Hospitals has coincided for good reason with her time as Deputy Mayor because she's been leading the way.

So, there is some good news in this world and I congratulate you Dr. Palacio.

[Applause]

Deputy Mayor Herminia Palacio, Health and Human Services: Thank you very much, Mayor.

[Applause]

Thank you, Mayor, and First Lady, Dr. Spinelli. It is really wonderful to be here. Thank you, Councilmember for your incredible advocacy to make sure that this work got us to where we are, and it's a pleasure.

[Applause]

I have the opportunity to be here when Vanderbilt was – for the groundbreaking ceremony on a rainy day when Vanderbilt was truly but a hole in the ground. And what a delight it is to come back today and to get a tour of this incredible state of the art facility, a facility that is for the community of the community here to serve the community with compassion, with incredibly quality care with innovate technology, and to not just with compassion, but with passion.

[Applause]

This is a great day for publicly financed health care systems not just here on Staten Island but as the Mayor said this is a signal of the resurgence of New York City Health + Hospitals. This is a signal of the Mayor's leadership that where others have retrenched from publicly financed health care system. This Mayor our Mayor has said not here. Our Mayor has said in New York City we will take care of everyone regardless of where they were born, regardless of what documentation they can produce or not produce, regardless of what language they speak, regardless of who they choose to love, regardless of what medical condition they have, regardless of how much money they have in their pockets. This Mayor had said here, everybody will get the care they need.

[Applause]

And this, this facility being a signal isn't in the only thing. I want everybody to stay tune because under Doctor Katz's leadership, somebody that I've had the distinct pleasure of working with over longer than either one of us would care to calculate.

Dr. Mitchel Katz, President and CEO, NYC Health and Hospitals: 30 years.

[Laughter]

Approximately.

Deputy Mayor Palacio: It's all in secret.

Mayor: That secret came out real quick.

[Laughter]

Deputy Mayor Palacio: I think you will see what mission can do when it is translated into organizational and operational realities. So we are very excited for Staten Island. We're very excited for New York City. I've often said that health doesn't happen in the four walls of a doctor's clinic. Health does have an effect where we live, learn, work, and play. But illness happens in life too. And having a health center like this one that can attend to illness as well as attend to health is so critically important and it's really a great, a tremendous honor to be here to share this groundbreaking, this opening rather.

[Applause]

Mayor: Thank you, you did the groundbreaking before. As I turn to Dr. Mitch Katz I want to express my appreciation. You know, first of all, Dr. Katz did absolutely outstanding work in Los Angeles, he was nationally recognized for what he did to turn around the public health care system there. And you know when I first spoke to him about a higher calling, which was come to New York City. One of the things that really moved him was the opportunity to serve his native town, and I love nothing more than when a New Yorker comes home to be a part of everything happening here. So, Mitch Katz is a proud son of Sheepshead Bay. And you know, Staten Islanders will agree that [inaudible] Brooklynite and we have a special relationship between Brooklyn, and Staten Island. So, if you can't be a Staten Islander at least be a Brooklynite, right. So, the – it is something wonderful that after a life time of service elsewhere Doctor Katz comes here to do his biggest job ever. And he is doing amazing things already. Again, tremendous credit to Stan Brezenoff for setting the foundation. But I met with Dr. Katz a week or two ago and was so impressed by how much is being done to strengthen Health + Hospitals in terms of quality care, in terms of the financial situation, in terms of the moral and the sense in the whole team of it being an operation that's moving forward and building and growing in a really exciting way for the people of this city. So, I am really glad you showed up.

President Katz: Thank you, Sir.

Mayor: And I am glad you came home.

President Katz: Thank you, Sir.

Mayor: Ladies and gentleman, Dr. Mitch Katz.

[Applause]

President Katz: Thank you. I am very honored Sir, to be serving you and New Yorkers back in my home world, it's been amazing. All I ever wanted to be was a primary care doctor. And it's still my favorite part of the week when I get to see primary care patients at Gouverneur and what makes me so happy to be here is the center like Gouverneur in Staten Island. A modern up to date place where people can get all of the primary care they need. And when I was listening to Dr. Spinelli and we were talking how, what an honor it is as a doctor to be able to take care of people regardless of who they are as they Mayor says, or ability to pay. So some of the patients I take care of have insurance, some of the patients I take care of have no insurance. I don't even know when I am functioning as their doctor. All I have to do is to deliver the best care. I don't have to run a business. I don't have to worry about who can pay, who can't pay. All I have to do when I am in my clinic room is be there as a doctor, you know that's a tremendous honor, and I am delighted to do it, and delighted to see this center in Staten Island. I want a special shout out to my Director of primary care, Dr. Ted Long.

[Applause]

Around him are all of the amazing staff people [inaudible] the clinics. What provides the care that Dr. Palacio is talking about, is the people in a health center. And this health center is filled with great people. The services that you can get here, pediatrics, and adolescent care, immunizations, women's health, and obstetrics and gynecology, prenatal care, family planning. As the First Lady was talking about, we have a full array of services for mental health counseling, for opioid treatment, asthma care, diabetes care. We have the most modern radiology equipment, a pediatric care, and optometry services starting in August. We're going to have walk in services, which is always one of the things that drives me most crazy about health care, and it's not H+H, it's the world, right. You can get care between 9:00 am - 5:00 pm Monday through Friday and Friday only till noon. I'm like, can you imagine if airlines were like that. That I want to fly to Los Angeles. Well you can fly Monday-Friday 9:00am to 5:00pm. You'd say what kind of airline is this, right. Well, health care needs to be open when people can go. And people have to work. Not everybody has paid sick leave. Not everybody can take off. So we're going to be running till 9:00 pm. And we're going to be running seven days a week out here. So that people don't have –

[Applause]

Don't have to go to the emergency room. I was delighted to meet our City Councilmember member. Debi Rose you are there at the end, I feel like we're already best friends.

Councilmember Deborah Rose: Yes, we are.

President Katz: Because I am so proud of you that over what a long period of time you have said this clinic has to open. You have been resolute in that goal and I think that's amazing. So I thank you for that. I just want to in closing say that there are other phenomenal services provided in Staten Island. Seaview is a five star nursing home, with an incredible nursing facility, with an incredibly proud historical history. I mean it's amazing for the work they do, but it's also amazing it was a tuberculosis hospital that actually founded some of the modern treatments that we use today for the treatment of tuberculosis, right. So Health+ Hospitals has been, and can continue to be a leader in care. We're still running or mariner's clinic for pediatrics and adults. And we have a growing enrollment in Metro Plus for people here who are out on Staten Island. So, with that again I want to thank you all for coming and say what an honor it is to be here at Health + Hospitals. Thank you so much.

Mayor: Thank you.

[...]

Mayor: We are going to turn to the media now for questions on this announcement today. After that I'm going to make a statement on another matter and then we will go to general questions. Let me see first if there is any questions on this facility and what's happening – we are doing media questions, just want to make sure. I don't know what that name tag says there, is that a media name tag or a different name tag, I want to – hospital, okay, media questions, any media questions of this announcement today. Alright, media going once, okay go ahead Rich.

Question: The Doctor mentioned a patient who is getting health care for \$20 a month. How is that possible?

Dr. Mary Spinelli: I believe her husband had retired and she was without health insurance and she was eligible for the MetroPlus, so –

President Katz: MetroPlus has a variety of products that would cost \$20 a month that are the essential plan or the exchange plan that are available through the ACA essentially, the Obamacare as some people know it which would provide the rest of the subsidy for the insurance itself.

Question: [Inaudible]

President Katz: It is but not –

Mayor: Yes, you're not crazy. Yes it is.

President Katz: It's not uncommon. The idea, well remember that part of why we needed the ACA is because there are a large number of people who are working poor who are living just

above the Medicaid poverty line but who could never afford \$600 a month for insurance. And so under the ACA they are able to get very affordable care under a MetroPlus.

Mayor: So, Rich, you know, I want to echo what one point that Dr. Katz made here – 1.6 million New Yorkers rely on the Affordable Care Act to get their insurance, just to give you a sense of the sheer magnitude – basically one in five of us. But that is an extraordinary low price. We need to get the word out there despite efforts in Washington to inhibit people from signing up for health insurance, we continue here on the ground to encourage people to sign up. There are still hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers who are eligible for health insurance and not signed up. We had a big campaign the last couple of years called Get Covered NYC that brought in tens of thousands more people. And H+H is now doing something long overdue and I give Dr. Katz credit and really focusing on making sure everyone signs up when they come in for treatment because a lot of people who are eligible come in because they got a specific problem and that's a chance to get them signed up for an insurance once and for all. So there's actually tremendous potential if we deepen our outreach to get a whole lot more New Yorkers the coverage they need. Okay on this, going to give one more chance, yes please.

Question: Staten Island is the only borough without a full service public hospital.

Mayor: Yes.

Question: So I think it's what we were all kind of referencing in terms of unfairness in history of Staten Island – I guess what happens when someone you know doesn't have insurance, they are coming to a place like this which obviously is a big help compared to what was the year before but they need the services of a hospital. Are they connected through you know, Vanderbilt? Can you guys connect them to other H+H properties outside of Staten Island? What's the methodology to get these people help?

Mayor: Let me have Dr. Katz speak to that and then I'll come back to sort of the bigger picture of the history you referred to.

President Katz: So yes people have choice as to where they want to be hospitalized. Vanderbilt can work directly with the two excellent hospitals that are on Staten Island. So get someone who wants to stay on the island and needs to be hospitalized. We can also work, especially if people need very specialized services. That may only be available in one of the other boroughs. Then we can arrange a transfer to Coney Island or one of the other Health + Hospitals. I would say that the part of why this center is so important is because there is reimbursement for uninsured patients in the hospital. There is no reimbursement for uninsured patients out of the hospital. And so while people in New York have always been able to access hospital services, accessing the kinds of services that are here has been a challenge because private doctor offices are not required to provide free care. But we as a public institution do.

Mayor: To the bigger point, you know of course health care is changing. So the emphasis is less and less on hospital stay and the need for more and more hospital beds. It's been established for quite a while there are too many hospital beds still in New York City and what the real focus needs to be is, and I'm speaking as the layman here, but it's preventative care, it's primary care,

it's the kind of care that happens in a facility like this. So you know, for the first time in decades, the City of New York has created a new facility for the people of Staten Island and we want to encourage people to get this kind of care. And we are going to watch how this goes. And if the demand exceeds what we have here we are ready to do more. Okay other questions on this. Going once, going twice, alright let me speak to another matter.

I'm kind of shocked here to even have to speak to you about this because this is now been going on for months, going all the way back to May. But I want to talk to you about the Trump Administration's family separation policy which continues because they have not to this day, the Trump Administration has not honored the court order requiring the Administration to reunite these children with their family and that is affecting people all over the country and it's certainly still affecting us in New York City and I want to give you an update on that. But let's be clear, today is the court mandated deadline, the final deadline for full reunification of all of the children with their parents. It's clear the Trump Administration will fail to meet that deadline. There's been throughout this whole crisis no real communication from the federal government with this city or any other city. There's been no plan, there's been no honesty about the problem. It became a political crisis for the Trump Administration so they tried to back away but they never accounted for the children and what would happen with them and that continues now. And I think very few things in recent years have brought up so much outrage from the American people. And I keep saying across the spectrum, when I was down in Tornillo, Texas, I was there with Republican and Democratic mayors. We've seen people across the ideological spectrum be absolutely, fundamentally upset that this could happen in our country and it is a dangerous sign that this could happen in our country and a lot of people take it that way.

You know for Chirlane and I, it's impossible not to think about this through the prism of our children. And if Chiara and Dante were in danger and we tried to take them some place where they were safe and because of that they were taken from us, the only thing we would be able to think about was how to get back to them. And I think part of why it's been so hurtful to so many Americans to watch this happen with our money, this is happening in our name as Americans and with our tax payer dollars. I think it is so hurtful because people are seeing it personally. And they understand those parents are trying to escape oppression and violence and the last thing you should do is take their kids from them. So this continues – the numbers now, the estimate and we think it's not necessarily the total picture. The estimate is 2,551 kids were taken at the border from their parents. That number could be in fact well over 3,000. The latest report is 1,187 were reunited with their parents or “discharged.” That's a grey area, that does not necessarily mean they got back to their parents. What we can say definitively is we've got over a 1,000 kids, over 1,000 kids who are not back with their parents, who have no idea when they will be back with their parents, who may not even be able to talk with their parents over the phone and certainly they haven't embraced their parents and felt the love of their parents for months, over a 1,000 kids still.

In New York City our estimate right now and it is not from the federal government, it's from the social service providers who are trying their best to help and be open with us but they don't make the final decisions. We believe something in the neighborhood of 200 kids who were here in New York City have been released in one form or another. But again that does not guarantee they are back with their parents. We also believe there is still over 100 kids here with no end in

sight for them. It is something that is offensive to New Yorkers. And I hear it from New Yorkers all the time, I'll tell you something you know, I go all over the city and people make their views known – very rarely have I heard such emotion on an issue as I've heard on this one. New Yorkers take this very personally and they believe it is a shame on this whole nation that these kids are not back with their parents.

I will finish by saying, I have continually said, if only President Trump would remember his hometown which is the ultimate city of immigrants. Look around this room, people of every background here together. This is what New York City is all about. It's very sad that a New Yorker is in the White House who does not represent New York values. But at least he can once and for all give people a real plan and a real timeline to get these kids back together with their parents. With that I want to open up to questions on that or anything else.

Yes, media questions?

Unknown: [Inaudible]

Mayor: I'm sorry. We're doing media questions, I apologize, this is the press conference section of it so, media questions. Yes, Gloria.

Question: On the children, you said there's been about 200 who you believe have been released. Does the 100 that you said are still here, are they still in those facilities? And I know you said the federal government hasn't been forthcoming with information but do you – have you gotten a sense of how many of the 200 have been reunited with their families or—

Mayor: No, this is where we only have partial information. The same facilities that we've been working with and, I want to say, they have really tried their best. Dr. Palacio and other members of the administration have engaged them; they've been very forthcoming, Cayuga Center, Lutheran Social Services, Catholic Charities, they continue to be the places that are working with these kids. But our best information is about 200, no longer here but again that does not necessarily mean they have gotten back to their kids. You remember for a while the number was around 300, based on everything we know that still leave 100 kids here. And New Yorkers – again really there's been not only the outrage but an outpouring of support, and a desire to help those kids, and help those organizations that are supporting the kids. But, I've sent letters to the Health and Human Services Secretary and the Homeland Security Secretary. Our team has followed up constantly with our offices, just asking for basic information. My fellow mayors have done the same. No one is getting any answers. Melissa.

Question: Sir, you and the first lady spoke a few weeks ago about raising money for these children. Can you give us an update on how much was raised and how it was used?

Mayor: I'll get you an update unless you happen to know of the top of your head – I don't know the number.

First Lady McCray: I know we've raised close to \$20,000, that's where we're continuing to – we've raised roughly \$20,000 and we're continuing to get donations, in-kind donations, and other resources to these children.

Mayor: The other thing I – before you continue to just to state the – the other thing I forgot to say earlier, that the legal services have been crucial to reuniting where there have been reunifications because a lot of times, of course, the federal government was dragging their feet. So one of the things we did to address it, and a lot of other localities did this too, was provide legal services to the children, wherever they were, and to the parents wherever they were, to the try and force the procedures involved to try and get this kids and parents back together. So that's something I just want to say a lot of people, not just here, but in other places, a lot of legal service organizations really stepped up, and a lot of private lawyers offered their time as well.

Question: Can you give us any breakdown on what happened with that money, how it was spent, how it's benefit the children—

First Lady McCray: We can get that information to you.

Mayor: Ok, yes?

Question: Mayor, in November, after you were reelected you said at that point you had no desire to create a federal pact and your exact words at the time were “At this point we're preparing for the second administration and the issues that are confronting New Yorkers and preparing for the next four years.” There's still obviously issues affecting—

Mayor: I think that was on Election Day if I remember, I remember, someone asked me that question on Election Day and that was certainly what I was thinking about on Election Day. Go ahead.

Question: Issues that obviously are confronting New Yorkers are many, obviously, so what's changed between then and now that—

Mayor: Well, respectfully you're taking that out of context. Sure I can because in December I put out an Op-Ed which many of you are familiar with explaining how I would approach the next four years. There are so many things that have to be done here, every single hour, every day, and that's my focus and that's what has been evident here throughout City Hall in Your Borough on Staten Island and will be throughout the four years. I've also said, and I ask anyone who is serious about understanding this, just look at the Op-Ed from December, I think it really explains it. We have a lot we have to get done for New York City; it cannot be done just here. There are things that New York City needs that happen in Albany, that happen in Washington that cannot happen with the current political status quo. And my job is to help New Yorkers, and I'm not going to do it in a way I think is ineffective or unrealistic. I know the changes we need have to come from the political process around the country, and if we could get a Democratic State Senate in Albany, here's what would change immediately: we would have speed cameras, which have now expired, I have no doubt a Democratic State Senate would approve speed cameras and an expansion of speed cameras to protect our kids. We would have stronger protections for

renters. We would have support for a millionaire's tax or some other type of long-term solution for the MTA. These things aren't happening in the current status quo. I don't even need to tell people that in the current status quo in Washington, there's no infrastructure plan that's helping New York City. There was tax legislation passed that explicitly hurt New York City. That needs to be repealed. But that can only happen through political change and I intend to be involved.

Question: I wanted to ask about the Inwood Rezoning. Speaker Johnson said on WNYC that if – they were – he would be there to vote for it because of some of the issues that have come up. Residents have called; it would be an ethnic cleansing of Inwood with the rezoning. What are your thoughts on that and what are your thoughts on pushing through this rezoning plan?

Mayor: People, I will refer to the junior historian Dante de Blasio, who reminds me all the time that people should be really careful about the phrases they use. Anyone who says ethnic cleansing is saying something incendiary and inappropriate and really doesn't know their history. This is an effort to create affordable housing, in a community that really needs affordable housing. The councilmember there, Ydonis Rodriguez, is one of the most progressive members of the council. He has told me, long before I was Mayor, one of his greatest frustrations is that there has been rising rents in community, but in the previous administration there wasn't any appreciable amount of new affordable housing created. We're going in to create an aggressive plan for affordable housing, for new affordable housing, preserving affordable apartments in place. Also for addressing a lot of other long standing community needs. That's what rezonings do and there is an extensive democratic process around it. So I believe we're going to get to a good place and I believe the outcomes are really going to help the people in the community. Yes?

Question: Mayor just two things, I understand that Eric Garner's mother last night had some things to ask you about. If you could, what is your message on how that is proceeding with the City and her complaint with the City is that the City is not acting quickly enough? And I have a second question.

Mayor: Sure. Let me start on that. I feel deeply for Ms. Carr, she is – I think she is a very honorable, decent person who has gone through a horrific tragedy and I wish obviously to the core of my being that had never happened to her son. What I said to her last night was we are moving immediately with the disciplinary process. I said to her straight forward there's two officers involved, that's a determination NYPD made early on and I respect that. There will be due process, there will be a public trial, and we can't prejudge the outcome. But that has to do with the occupational issue if you will.

The bigger issue is still what will the Justice Department do and the one thing that got very sharply clarified is the Justice Department telling us, proceed, it has no bearing on our case. That's great, we really appreciate that clarification, we're proceeding immediately, but now let's ask them the question, so when are you going decide? Up or down? For the good of everyone, just decide and move forward.

But I also said to her, and I believe it, that it's horrible when we lose someone in such a painful manner, but a lot of change started very, very soon after that tragedy and the most evident

example is the retraining of all of our police officers in de-escalation of encounters with civilians. I believe that's had a very big impact already in this City and that's just one example. We're doing implicit bias training. Obviously a lot is changing through neighborhood policing. I told her and I believe it, he did not die in vain because as a tragedy that also opened up a lot of eyes and led to a lot of change.

Question: [Inaudible]. Can you address the concern that some people have in this country, the David Brooks of the world who fear that the Democratic Party if it moves to the left it's going to hurt the party badly. Not just this fall but in the future and the Democratic Party from FDR until Bill Clinton has one when it's middle of the road not the left.

Mayor: Wow, I disagree with that. Democratic Party was at its progressive point during the administration of Franklin Roosevelt, who I think is the greatest president we ever had and collaborated with the greatest Mayor we ever had, who was Fiorello La Guardia. I think that was a heyday for the national Democratic Party for good reason. David Brooks – I respect him – I'm not sure if he has a party registration. He's certainly – I don't think of him as a Democrat, but it's all good.

The party of Franklin Roosevelt was really clear to the people of this country. I have firsthand witnesses who are a part of my life, very deeply, who I learned from. I was just up in Maine with my 91-year-old Aunt Jean who was born in 1927 and told me all about the Depression and World War II again and spoke with reverence what Franklin Roosevelt did for our family and I heard it from so many other people, I mean that not just about him, but the Democratic Party stood for in ensuring the people had jobs, ensuring that people had health care, insuring that government was on their side, and watching out for their needs with things like Social Security. I mean it just changed everything and for generations created a loyalty to the Democratic party because it was clear progressive values that people could relate too and was very much about economic values, economic populism of the progressive kind.

I look at that and I think it's a no brainer. If for decades we won everywhere by the way, urban, rural, east, west, north, south, because the message and the values were so clear. Why don't we try that again? So I think these – this sort of new wave of progressive Democratic leaders is exciting a lot of energy and interest. I think a lot of young people are getting involved and voting because of it. I think this new generation of women candidates are bringing more women out to vote. We certainly saw that back in Virginia in last November as one example. I think you're candidates of color and it represents the truth of our nation and the fullness of our nation.

I think a lot of really good things are happening and I think Mr. Brooks kind of has it backwards. The party that lost was the party that didn't stand for anything clear, or the party that flip-flopped, or the party that people didn't feel was on their side. Even 2016, let's be cold about it, a lot of people just didn't feel that the Democratic was on their side. And so I'm very, very hopeful about what this change is going to mean. Yeah, Willy?

Question: Related to that, you consider yourself part of the progressive wing of the Democratic Party and yet you get a lot of criticism from people further to the left within the Party for not delivering fully on some of your promises. You banned solitary confinement and then you ship

younger inmates upstate where they end up in solitary confinement. You – police reform advocates criticize you for not doing nearly enough to reform police disciplinary procedures. NYCHA residents say you neglect the failing boilers and there's the issue of the lead inspections. You haven't built the homeless shelters you promised to build. So the criticism from that side of the party is that you're not a true progressive and you're too cautious and too worried about the politics of radical outcomes. I want you to respond to that.

Mayor: I disagree fundamentally. I disagree with your litany to begin with. I'll just speak to that for a moment. I think that's kind of the world upside down the way you described it. Solitary confinement was the norm in this City and its part of why Kalief Browder is no longer here and that tragedy occurred. It was the norm for decades, this administration ended for juveniles and for young people up to 21.

I think progressives – I've spent my lifetime around progressives. They are smart, they are discerning, they can count, there may be a few advocates who see it differently but the vast majority of New Yorkers, you asked them, hey this guy ended solitary confinement for these many thousands of inmates versus all the people who tolerated it, what's more progressive? They would say what I did was progressive and tangible and affected thousands of thousands of peoples' lives.

Police discipline and police reform, you know, ending the broken policy of stop-and-frisk. Neighborhood policing, de-escalation training, implicit bias training, the body cameras on all of our officers by the end of this year, it's a pretty thorough and consistent record of police reform. And again the vast majority of New Yorker and progressives understand that and agree with it. On NYCHA \$3.9 billion in new investment, including for those boilers you mentioned where as in the previous administrations there was nothing resembling new investment.

Again, people can see the difference and the – what it means about priorities and how it's going to change people's lives and the shelters are probably my favorite example of what you just raised. I announced 90 new shelters at the beginning of an election. People don't typically do that, I did it because I believed it was the right thing, we're proceeding to do it. We are a little behind schedule, there is no question about that, but we believe that we will catch up and we will be on schedule ultimately. I believe the vast majority of progressives see what's happening here in New York City and it's the kind of the thing they want to see more of. Who else?

Question: Just to follow up on that – you do however, despite all you said in all of your accomplishments – get this consistent criticism from the left. Why do you think that is?

Mayor: Willie, respectfully, the left, which, I don't know if you have political views – I'm not saying that negatively, I'm saying a lot of journalists really try to not explicitly have political views, and I understand that. I am a progressive, I have been a progressive my whole life, I know a lot about the left. There is a small number of people – I believe it – who have that critique. I've talked to a whole lot of progressives about what we're doing – activists, elected officials, issue experts – and I have found a lot of agreement with our agenda. There are certainly people who want us to take additional steps, and we intend to. I just – I know the left real well and I think, again, the vast majority of people who consider themselves left agree with our approach.

Question: Mr. Mayor, I want to ask you about a letter that you sent when you were Public Advocate in July of 2013 to the NYCHA Chair at the time, raising some concerns about lead paint in NYCHA apartments. Obviously, a few months later, you became Mayor. I'm curious if there was any follow-up on that letter, either from your office or maybe what you heard back from NYCHA? And sort of, whether this was something on your mind when you came into office as Mayor? As we all kind of know, it took some time for your administration to realize the inspections had stopped. I'm curious whether it had been something you had been following up –

Mayor: Sure. Look, I've said – I appreciate the question – I've said many times, I don't know why when folks went in to take over NYCHA, and folks at City Hall, I don't know why we missed the fact that the Bloomberg administration stopped the inspections. I wish we had caught it. And the second we started to understand it, we started making the series of changes that continues to this day. But I can tell you that, one of the – in fact, it was six weeks or so into the administration – we announced the end of the payments by NYCHA for police services, explicitly so that money can go into repairs. When you look at that letter – and I have recently – it refers to the fact that the repairs were not being made or were not being made accurately, on a whole host of things. And the notion was, get money back into NYCHA to make repairs and speed up the repair timeline, which we proceeded to do. So, from my vantage point, we were actually doing the thing that we hoped to do when I was Public Advocate. But the fullness of the lead issue did not come forward until later.

Question: On speed cameras, we know that the legislation is expired, but they're staying on to collect data. What's going to happen with that data? And is there a possibility, even without fines, to do some kind of enforcement? Whether it's booting cars or sending drivers to some kind of educational program?

Mayor: I don't know of any specific approach like that. I mean, it's certainly worth looking at, but I think the central notion is the data still tells us something about what's happening in each intersection and how big the problems are. The solution is to get the State Senate back and just take a vote. I mean, again, the Assembly voted not only for an extension, but an expansion, to their great credit. The Governor said he's ready to sign the bill. The Senate is supposed to do its job, it's just real simple. It's a pending matter, just come back and finish it. We can all move forward. We also have 20 cameras that we will be using on a mobile basis for the next month that we're allowed to do by law. But again, that data is mainly for planning purposes at this point. The real thing we need is the reauthorization.

Question: I had a question about the future of NYCHA and if there was an update on a search for a permanent Chairperson. Yesterday, it sounded like Stanley Brezenoff seemed eager or interested in staying, or at least for the foreseeable future. Is it a possibility that he would no longer be an interim leader of the authority –

Mayor: Look, let me say this, I think he's doing an outstanding job. I really think Stan Brezenoff and Vito Mustaciolo are making big changes, very quickly. And they're very hands-on – both of them are pretty legendary for that. In fact, I was at the – you know, we had a resource fair on Tuesday, and a woman raised a set of concerns about the playground her development, and Vito

was there in person later on that day, which is not because it's Staten Island Week. Vito does that kind of thing all the time. He used to do it at HPD as well, which I think is fantastic. Stan is doing a great job. The focus right now – all of our focus is on immediate structural changes and there'll be a series of announcements coming up. I think we need to just stay focused on that right now and when we get a little bit deeper into the year we'll figure out what's next. I just want him to keep doing everything he's doing now and then there'll be a time coming up to talk to him about how long he feels like doing it. And, as long as he feels like doing it, that'll be our focus.

Question: Back to speed cameras – knowing the limitations the City has on how to enforce the speed cameras, would you call for more enforcement – like, police enforcement around speed cameras or anything like that?

Mayor: You know, the NYPD is going to – and I think they've put out some of their plans – are going to do the best they can in the coming weeks to enforce in every way available, but there's just no way that we can do the same thing with officers that we can do with speed cameras. We're talking about 100 cameras operating over many hours of the day, which works. I mean, this is the other thing I'm having trouble with – not with your question, but with the larger point. Here is – no one's challenged this – speeding is down 60 percent in the school zones that have the cameras. Fatalities are down 55 percent. It works. And then some people love to throw the revenue argument out – you know what, I keep saying, I've been in all these meetings, it's never been about revenue and we would love to make no revenue, because it means people aren't speeding. But think of how effective it is from a taxpayer point of view – you put up a camera, and if it works, you get no revenue, you just have to pay for the price of the camera and the kids are safe. That's what we'd like to do. So, NYPD will be taking additional measures for sure, and we'll get you details on that. And again, the 20 mobile cameras will be moving around. So, a message to motorists is, you don't know which schools those are going to be in front of, so how about you just don't speed? But we need the Senate to come back and act.

Question: The PBA has actually been against the speed camera legislation. Do you have any thoughts on why that would be?

Mayor: It's a classic stance by a union that is taking this issue and, I think, trying to use it to advantage. But I think I've seen what Mr. Lynch said and it just doesn't make sense to me. The speed cameras are protecting lives. They allow us to apply the time of our police officers to a whole host of other needs. We've added 2,000 more officers on patrol, and the City Council gets a lot of credit because they helped lead the charge on that – biggest police force we've had in about 15 years, and they're doing a stunning job. Crime continues to go down, but if we can achieve so much good with cameras and allow our officers to do the many other things, which – like, the town hall meetings and all sorts of other places I go – every town hall meeting – people have a host of things they'd like to see their officers focus on. Let the speed cameras stop speeding and let our officers do the other things that communities need.

Question: Citing declining ridership, the MTA says it's facing more and more of a fiscal problem and they're taking about a four-percent fare hike next year, followed by another four percent fare hike in '21, and they say the City and others ought to kick in more money.

Mayor: Well, look, let's start at the beginning, it's very simple – how about the MTA show us what they're doing with all of the money that they already have? And I respect the people of the MTA and I have a good working relationship with them. And I've said it to them – the legislature decided to require us to put money into the subway action plan, show us what you're doing with the money. There's no blank checks around here. New Yorkers have every right to see how that money is being used. And if you look at East Side Access, that's not a pretty picture. If you look at how long it took to do the Second Avenue Subway, that's not a pretty picture. So, before the MTA asks for something more from the City or riders, show us how you're using the money you already have. We keep having to try and fight back expenditures on non-essential things. Originally, you remember the lights on the bridges and there were all sorts of station amenities? I have talked to a lot of New Yorkers. When I'm on the subway, people don't say, jeez, I wish we had more lights on bridges or I wish we had a countdown clock as much as I want the train to show up. I'd rather the train show up and I didn't have a countdown clock than to have a countdown clock telling me the train's not here. So, the fact is, we want to make sure the MTA puts the money into the greatest areas of need – the signals and the equipment. We also need – everyone should stop kidding around, we need a longterm funding source. I believe in the millionaires' tax, so do about 70 percent of New Yorkers. But you want to talk about other things? That's great, but let's stop kidding ourselves, let's get to the essentials. So, I'll look at their proposal, but I think people would receive their proposal very differently if they had those other answers first.

Question: Mr. Mayor, between now and the midterm elections, how will you decide how much travel you'll be doing? What's a good amount of travel? And then there's the second –

Mayor: Sure. Well, if I'm counting right, there's about 100 days until the election. There's obviously many things I need to attend to here, so I'm going to try and figure it out according to how I can have the right impact. I don't have a particular amount for you. What I said in the interview yesterday is, we're going to decide in the coming days which candidates to support and how to support them, and then work from there. But I think we'll strike the balance. I think the fact is, you know, what happens in the next 100 days is going to have a huge impact on the future of New York City. And I can't – I don't have a crystal ball to tell you what 2020 is going to look like. I sure as hell know what 2018 is going to look like – there's a real chance to take back the State Senate. There's no one who disagrees with that statement. There's a real chance to take back the State Senate for Democrats – huge impact on New York City. Jump ball – House and Senate in Washington – would have a huge impact. I'll tell you, I like the sound of Majority Leader Chuck Schumer. I don't think there's any New Yorker who doubts that if it was majority leader Chuck Schumer, New York would benefit. The whole country would benefit in my view. So, I'm going to do everything I think will really have an impact, and I always have a lot of things I need to do.

Question: [Inaudible] excitement around some of the progressive candidates that are emerging. What about 2020? How satisfied are you at this point that there are candidates that are viable? And what do you say to those who will inevitably, after the news around this PAC today, question whether this is something you're still looking at potentially?

Mayor: I always understand that question and I always answer it the same way – I’m committed to filling out this term until December 31st, 2021. And I’ll tell you why, because this is a place where you can have more impact than almost any other public service job in America, and I’m so proud of what this team has achieved, and we’ve got a lot more we need to achieve, and we’re sprinting to the finish line. That’s my plan. In terms of 2020, look, I can only say this, I think people need to stay focused on 2018, is the first obvious answer. There are some folks out there, I guess, positioning themselves – I would urge all of them to put that aside and focus on the thing that’s actually going to affect people’s lives, which is the 2018 election. But I’ll tell you, I do see an ascendant progressive wing in the Democratic Party. I think you see it at the most local level, right on up to federal office. I think more and more progressives are coming forward. So, I like what I’m seeing, but it’s way too early to know who is going to actually run.

Question: Apologies if you’ve addressed this before because I had to step out briefly, but in terms of the fundraising for this PAC, where do you intend to do it? Is it from New York companies? Individuals? Are there any restrictions –

Mayor: The article today in Politico I think got it right. We’re following – it’s not governed by the Campaign Finance Rules of New York City, but we are mirroring it in a lot of ways – so, no corporate donations, no corporate PACS, no City lobbyists, no people on the doing-business list, \$5,000 limit. And as to where, we’re certainly going to do some of that fundraising right here in the City, but also as I’m supporting specific candidates. For example, if a candidate says, hey, can you come to my district or my state and be a part of a fundraiser there, if that will help get the job done I’m very open to that as well.

Final question –

Question: Earlier this summer, you said that you would look into the issue of removing dead deer from Staten Island – private property. As recently as Monday, we’re still seeing dead animals left on people’s lawns and City agencies telling them that there’s nothing they can do to remove it. What can they do?

Mayor: Okay – first of all, I don’t know if Dr. Palacio has an update that I don’t have. So, let’s – to be straightforward, I don’t have an update. Give me 24 hours and we’ll get you one. But I do want to say on the deer issue, because we talked about this a bit on Monday when we were addressing the tick issue, which is a deer issue, and a mouse issue, and a complex issue. Population went down eight percent last year. We expect a bigger reduction by the end of 2018, and then a bigger reduction also in 2019. So, job-one is to reduce the number of deer on Staten Island, and I think we’re seeing some real progress. And then, once reduced, I think we can keep the number low. But to your question, which is a good one, we need to get you a clearer answer. Give us a day and we’ll get that to you.

Thank you, everyone.

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