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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS ON MSNBC

Willie Geist: Joining us now that man right there, fresh off his re-election as the democratic Mayor of New York City – Mayor Bill de Blasio.

Mr. Mayor, welcome. Congratulations.

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Thank you very much, a good feeling.

Geist: So we were talking about the journey of your four years, your first term, first time obviously being elected a mayor of a major city, and there were some stumbles along the way. What did you learn over four years that allowed you to win by almost 40 points two nights ago?

Mayor: I'll tell you something, Willie. In this work, you better be learning every single day. And it's a humbling experience, and what I learned is go out to the people, go out to every neighborhood, including places where you're not popular, and talk about the changes you're making in people's lives that are tangible. I had 43 townhall meetings. You know, I have 8.5 million constituents, and I always say every single one of them has a strong opinion, and I heard a lot of those strong opinions. But it helps you grow to listen to what's on people's minds. So they wanted to hear very tangible change. We showed specific ways we were going to create more affordable housing, specific ways we were going to fix the schools and do things like give pre-K to all the kids in New York City, and when people actually saw those things starting to happen it opened their mind up to the direction we're going it. We reduced crime. We reduced stop-and-frisk at the same time. We showed police and community could come back together, and it worked.

But I'll tell you this is a message I would say to all democrats – get out of your office, go out into the community, talk to people, listen to their concerns, and show them they you can make a difference in their life that they can touch and feel because otherwise they're not going to be moved.

Geist: There were some moments in regards to the police department where, you know, at police officer's funerals some of the officers turned their back to you. But I think there was a dissonance, and I talked to leadership at the NYPD and they said – 'No, actually, we love the mayor. He's a great mayor to work for. He gives us what we need to do the job.' A lot of them

supported your ending stop-and-frisk. Talk a little if you can about your evolution with the police department over four years.

Mayor: Well, Willie, the police leadership in this town is amazing, and I was proud to support them and give them the resources. We added 2,000 more officers on patrol. We created neighborhood policing approach meant to bond police and community again, and literally get people on a first name basis knowing each other and having that mutual respect, and we created some of the strongest anti-terrorism tools we've ever had. We actually have the biggest anti-terrorism force of any police force in the country. So the police leadership knew I was in favor of investing in them. The union – look, it's not a shock the police union often stirred the pot. That's some of what they do all over the country. But I think a lot of the rank and file officers saw over time that I believe in making real investments in them – more training, better equipment, all the things that could make their lives better and safer. And over time I think it really helped to create a more positive atmosphere, and I've got to tell you also – look, what's happening around the country.

We need police and community to come together, and one of the ways to do that is to create a philosophy that says we're going to train our officers to deescalate conflicts, build personal relationships in the community, and get everyone feeling like 'hey, we are 100 percent on the same side here. We've got to help each other.' The community has to help police too to do their job, and we've seen that happened in New York City. Crimes gone down four years in a row, and we're the safest big city in America. I'm very, very proud of that.

Joe's got a question for you.

Mayor: Yes, Joe?

Joe Scarborough: Yes, I do. So Mr. Mayor, you are re-elected mayor of the biggest, greatest, baddest city in America and the world – we will all say. You are the first democrat re-elected since 1985. That's a pretty extraordinary achievement as well. You win by almost 40 percent. This is the landslide to end all landslides, and I've got to believe when you woke up the next morning the greatest thing in the world for you was to see you had finally won over the city's tabloids. Let's put those tabloids up right now.

Mayor: Come on.

[Laughter]

Scarborough: Come on, man! What do you have to do to get a little respect here? Come on!

Mayor: Joe, I was not surprised. I was not surprised. I was impressed by their creativity though. You know, you win a landslide victory you think 'what are they going to do with this?' but they found a way. You've got to give them credit for that.

[Laughter]

Scarborough: So what is the challenge moving forward? What is – and let's just talk about the one challenge. What is the one big challenge that you'd like to accomplish over the next four years?

Mayor: Look, I – the challenge of New York City, and I think it's a challenge all over the country, is still fighting income inequality and helping working-class and middle-class people to have an economic future they can believe in. And, you know, when I ran four years ago I said, look, what's happening here is the whole social fabric is being undermined because there are so many people working so hard, harder than ever, and they're not getting anywhere and they don't feel a lot of confidence in their economic future or their kid's economic future.

What we focused on is putting resources – literally putting resources back in people's hands. When we did pre-K for all the kids and we did after school for all middle school kids, those were free that took a financial burden off of families. Paid Sick Leave took a financial burden off of folks who were sick and were going to lose a day's pay if they went to the doctor. We took away that challenge. We worked to bring up the minimum wage. But there's so much more we got to do.

So, my goal right now is a huge affordable housing plan. It's going to reach 750,000 New Yorkers and they would pay no more than 30 percent of their income in rent going forward – again, take away the biggest expense in people's lives as a burden which is housing – and a plan to create 100,000 new, good-paying jobs in New York City.

This place has to remain affordable for working people. And one of the things we can do is create better paying jobs. I mean we have a great tech sector here in this city, for example. The film and TV industry is booming in this city. A lot of different pieces of our economy are working but they got to work for everyday people in all five boroughs and we got to get to them to the kind of job that they can live on for the long term. That's going to be a lot of the focus of these next four years.

Michael Barnicle: You know, Mr. Mayor, a lot has always been said and written when it comes to politics about the coastal elites – West Coast, East Coast – except when you go to Washington Heights or Astoria or Staten Island you see America –

Mayor: That's right.

Barnicle: Uniquely in this city, I think more so than any other place in America. And yet we live with this constant fear in the country – a lot of people do – of the other. What do we do about that?

Mayor: Well, first of all, the elites are part of the problem whether they're on the coast or any place else and we have to confront that. Anyone who looks down their nose at their fellow Americans or their fellow New Yorkers is part of the problem. And I get very upset when I hear people disdain everyday people and working people. You know, Joe has spoken powerfully about this, about the folks who go to the cocktail parties in Manhattan but have never been to

Staten Island. That, to me, shows a misunderstanding of the kind of society we have to have where everyone is respected.

And working people who make the society come together, who make it all function, deserve our respect. And this is a problem of the Democratic Party too.

To the previous conversation you guys had earlier, I think the Democratic Party's got to refocus on working people of all backgrounds, and what transcends the question of identity politics is economics.

There are people of all backgrounds who need a better economic reality, who need opportunity. We should be speaking to that and we should go to them, and we should go to places where people are doubting us and have the conversation because when you're talking to someone, you value them. If you go to someone, it means you value them and respect them.

And so that to me is part of overcoming this who concept of the elites because the elites are not comfortable with the notion of a society that actually serves working people. And that's a society I think we should be building.

Right here in this city, I think that what you saw on Tuesday was an affirmation that people want to believe their government is on their side and actually doing something tangible in their lives. We showed them enough for them to believe the government could work for them and they want more.

Heidi Przybyla: Pivoting off of that – what exactly is the lesson from Tuesday, more broadly from sea to shining sea, of these very different type of candidates who won. You have a candidate like Ralph Northam who is considered to be more like a centrist establishment Republican. Then you have, for example, at the House of Delegates level in Manassas, Virginia a woman who is part of the Democratic Socialists of America. I mean what is the lesson for Democrats about what their model should be to appeal particularly to moderates in these Republican leaning districts that are held by Republicans?

Mayor: Sure, and Northam is someone who I think understood working people's lives, understood the whole state. So even if he might be more moderate than some of us, I still think he went out to people and talked to them about a direction for the state. I think that's half the battle right there. And this is what democrats are used to be very good at and should be again a central message around people's economic needs showing that we could use government as a positive tool to improve their economic reality and that of their children ahead.

And then going out to people in every corner – this party started receding from whole swaths of the country and not contesting things, huge mistake in my view. You go everywhere, you contest every inch. And when you do some surprising things happen. People hear something they like and things start to move.

So look, I don't buy it was just a rejection of Trump at all. That kind of clean sweep, that blue wave is not just about Donald Trump. It's also about that fact that three million more Americans

vote for Hillary Clinton than Donald Trump. The country is becoming more progressive. Look across the board on Obama Care, the country now supports it – on immigration reform, comprehensive immigration reform. The American people would actually like to see that. You go down the list of issues there is an emerging progressive majority in this country. The problem is democrats have not been tapping into by contesting elections and going after the grassroots. So I think Tuesday was the beginning of that turn towards a new approach.

Geist: Mr. Mayor you already know you've heard this, but his will be amped up now since you're now a two term Mayor of New York City – that there are people who are going to want you to run for President in 2020.

Mayor: Willie that is the sweetest thing you've said to me.

Geist: No, I am not saying it. It's the people I have spoken to. But it's going to be a free-for-all. You know there are going to be all kinds of people who want to come in and run against Donald Trump. I understand you're 36 hours away from your re-election. But is that something you would consider if the party came to you and said we think that you're the guy who could take out Donald Trump. Would you consider running for higher office?

Mayor: My focus is New York City Willie. You know I've got four years and it's going to be four years of intense urgent action to do everything I want to do in the city. That's what I'm here to do.

Geist: I understand that, but if the party came to you. Would you at least listen? Would you consider it? If they said you are – we've looked at all the numbers; you're the guy that can beat Donald Trump.

Mayor: In Willie's rich fantasy land.

Geist: It's not my fantasy land, it's the party's.

Mayor: You're very kind, I want – look I'll tell you this much. I am ready to serve for the next four years as Mayor of New York City, but in the in meantime I want to help this party in every way I can to get back to reaching working people. And to come up with a clear progressive economic message, which had we had in 16' no question we would have won. So I want to be part of the solution but my job is here in New York City.

Barnicle: Would you favor any potential candidate for President of the United States as a democrat that one of the things that the candidate must do is ride the New York Subway?

Mayor: I think everyone.

Barnicle: That's America.

Mayor: That is America. When you go on that subway you see everyone. And yeah of course it's the example of being connected to people. It's just get out there where they are. Every

candidate should do that everywhere. But I'll tell you something, I think another big factor is going to be how this tax plan plays out. Because I think what's going to happen is more and more Americans are going to realize they're being bamboozled. It is a rip off of the middle class. And I know now as a result of the election that a lot of Republicans say "oh lets the rush the tax plan even more. We need it, we need an achievement." But the problem is people are going to realize all over the country it ends up being double taxation. It ends up being actually a tax increase for the middle class and a giveaway to the rich and corporations. That's the kind of thing that will dig the republican hole deeper. And they don't realize yet, if they try trickle-down economics again. It's going to back fire on them.

Geist: Now two time, two term Mayor Bill de Blasio. Congratulations sir, good to see you. I'll see you on the 1-Train uptown.

Mayor: There you go brother, there you go.

Geist: Thank you very much. Mr. Mayor.

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