



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
NEW YORK, NY 10007

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** June 21, 2018  
**CONTACT:** [pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov](mailto:pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov), (212) 788-2958

**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON MSNBC**

**Cal Perry:** I'm joined by New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio. Sir, thank you very much for the time, I know you have come a long way. I want to start first with that video that we saw from New York about 24 hours ago, young girls being walked through East Harlem – what is your reaction to that and how does that happen without your knowledge?

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Cal, it's shocking. I mean we are talking about hundreds of kids who have been brought to New York City 2,000 miles from here with no sense of when they are ever going to see their parents again. There's no plan, there's no transparency. We, you know, we stumbled upon the information – it's the honest truth, because the folks who were trying to help these kids, the social service providers, were willing to tell us the truth but the [inaudible] is not telling us the truth. And I went into this center in East Harlem and I saw a classroom of 30 or 40 kids from Guatemala and they are right now – they are putting on a brave face but they have been put through a traumatic experience. These kids have been torn from their mothers, torn from their families, they are 2,000 miles away. Some of them are put there as a kid – nine-year-old boy from Honduras named Eddie who was put in a bus to go 2,000 miles to New York City with a federal escort and he has no idea when he's going to see his mom again. This is un-American if anything was.

**Perry:** The kids here are in a similar situation, they are trapped between the old new executive order and what happened yesterday and we don't know what's going to happen to them. I saw when you arrived you sort of walked the perimeter –

**Mayor:** Yes.

**Perry:** You took a look, what are your thoughts and what are you trying to accomplish today?

**Mayor:** We are going to demand access and in America public officials should be allowed to see something payed for with tax payer dollars. This is being done in our name, we deserve to see it, you deserve it to see it, the media, to tell the American people what's going on. The notion that this administration has turned away U.S. senators and Congress members who are just trying to do their legitimate constitutional oversight role, there's something really big here and a bigger problem of why will the government not tell us how many children are there? Where are they? When are they going to be back with their families? And if you care about democracy you should care about what's happening right here. But also from the New York City point of view,

hundreds of kids have been sent already, we need to make sure that they are taken care of and we need to make sure there is a plan to get them back together with their parents.

**Perry:** Hallie I know you wanted to jump in and ask the Mayor some questions before I let him run.

**Hallie Jackson:** Yes Mayor, thanks for coming on. It's Hallie Jackson up here in Washington, so let me ask you a couple of things. We learned in the last couple of minutes here that in McAllen, Texas, not too far from where you are, some families that had crossed the border illegally are now being held together. They are not being separated from their kids. Is that to you – I want your reaction, is that a sign of progress, do you believe, is that a signal that this executive order is doing what it was intended to do, reversing the President's policies and letting families stay together?

**Mayor:** Hallie, if they are letting families stay together, that's a step forward. Here's the problem, thousands of kids who are separated right now, no plan to get them back together and zero tolerance is still the policy. So folks seeking asylum – and this is an American tradition to let people fleeing oppression, a lot of whom were our grandparents, great grandparents – give them a chance to prove that they belong here. This zero tolerance policy does not allow for that so yes, maybe it's some small progress but we need much bigger answers here.

**Jackson:** Very quickly Mayor, of the children that you just talked about, the ones who are now in New York City that were brought to New York City in that shelter in East Harlem – how many were children that came across were unaccompanied minors when they came across, in other words they crossed the border alone versus kids that were actually separated after they crossed the border from their parents? Do you have that break down?

**Mayor:** I do Hallie and it shocked me. 239 kids separated under the new policy, this family separation policy just from the last couple of months, 239 who were with their parents last few weeks, were taken from their parents, sent to New York City. None of them were folks, you know kids who came up here on their own. They were all taken from their parents just because of this new policy and again they don't know when they are going to see their parents again.

**Jackson:** And Mayor, before I let you go, you talked about the importance you believe of public officials being able to come in and see these facilities for themselves. The Department of Homeland Security, others – there will be the criticism from those who say this is just a political stunt essentially. How do you respond to that criticism?

**Mayor:** Hallie, this is about basic democracy. The fact is – this is something that the American people care about, how are these children being treated? How is our money being spent? Is it being spent in a way that we would feel comfortable with or not? That's what public officials are supposed to ascertain. There's something eerie about a government agency saying we are not going to let the media in and we are not going to let public officials in. That would [inaudible] it, I'll tell you that much. New Yorkers would never stand for that, I don't think Americans anywhere would stand for that. So there's a bigger problem here. That's why we have a bipartisan group of mayors who have gathered here to say this needs to be solved, we need comprehensive immigration reform, that's the big solution. But on a bipartisan basis we are saying we cannot have our government withholding this information from the American people.

**Jackson:** What makes you think your message is actually going to be effective to the President of the United States? The New York of Mayor, you know your perception there in the White House, why do you think your voice is the one that is going to get through to the President?

**Mayor:** It's all of our voices Hallie. First of all, obviously the voices of people all over this country, including a lot of faith leaders and that's been a powerful piece of this – faith leaders, liberal and conservative alike speaking out clearly got through to the President but the fact that it's a bipartisan group here today, about 20 mayors, Republican and Democrat, all parts of the country saying this is an American consensus. By the way most Americans want these families reunified, most Americans want the DREAMers to stay, most Americans want comprehensive immigration reform. This is about actually bringing the voices of people forward. We are just the vessels but the fact that this is bipartisan should give the President some real pause.

**Jackson:** So to those who say hey, what's the Mayor of New York City doing on the border? You say?

**Mayor:** I say that we have to solve the problem. It's come home to New York City, as you just heard, hundreds of kids being sent to us. We don't know how many more to come. But because of what it means for the country as a whole – what the Trump administration is trying to do is obviously denigrate immigrants and denigrate people who have been historically part of this country are now being treated like the other, like something separate, something worse. From a New York point of view, we are the greatest city of immigrants. And we are proud of that and we think it's part of what has made New York strong and America strong. I'm here to stand up for those values and my fellow mayors are too. And Hallie, the big news to me is it's increasingly bipartisan, it's increasingly with those faith leaders, I think a bigger change is coming.

**Jackson:** Mayor Bill de Blasio of New York City thank you very much for joining us live on this show.

###