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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS VIRTUAL PUBLIC HEARING AND  
SIGNS INTROS 1396-A AND 1415-A**

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Good afternoon, everyone. Okay, today we have a hearing on two bills, and these are really timely and important pieces of legislation given everything that is happening to people all over the city, given the challenges that so many working people have faced, the incredible stresses that people have gone through in the year 2020 that we're going to be fighting back through, all through 2021 as well. We've got to look out for working people. So, these two bills are absolutely crucial for protecting a group of working people who often have gotten the short end of the stick, our fast food workers and they're folks that we depend on in so many ways. We have to make sure they get fairness, and they are protected from unfair dismissal without just cause. So, two pieces of legislation today, Intro. 1396-A and Intro. 1415-A, and they're really about fairness and equity for folks who do much for the rest of us.

They work so hard. They don't get compensated a lot, literally crucial to feeding New Yorkers. And they've been crucial during this whole pandemic. And we got to be thinking about how we help people now. And we've got to think about the future. The future has to be a lot more fair, the future has to be a lot more focused on the needs of working people, not just the wealthy and the privileged. In the future we have to make sure there's a lot more protection for working people. And it starts with some of the workers who have really had the toughest conditions. And certainly that's our fast food workers. Look, they don't make a lot of money. They need the money that they have to pay rent, to support their families. They need to have job security, but they're amongst the most vulnerable. They can often right now, because there aren't enough legal protections, be dismissed, arbitrarily and unfairly. And think how devastating that would be anytime, but particularly in the middle of a pandemic.

So, these bills ensure that fast food workers will no longer have to live in fear. I mean, think about that. All the other problems and challenges, but on top of that, fast food workers have had to live in fear that maybe their job would be taken away from them for really no good reason. Now they won't have to live in fear. Now they'll have the security and knowing the law is on their side. So, this is about making sure people have decent standards, fair standards, and fair protections. Intro. 1396-A, this bill requires that when a fast food employer needs to terminate employees for economic reasons that such employer discharge employees in reverse order of seniority. So, those hired last would be discharged first, respecting the contributions of workers who've been on the job a long time. Intro. 1396-A also establishes arbitration proceedings as one of the ways employees can seek enforcement on the provisions of the law.

Intro. 1415-A prohibits fast food employers from terminating employment or reducing average hours by more than 15 percent without just cause. Just cause means there has to be a real reason, a fair reason. Now the prohibition does not include newly hired employees in their 30-day probationary period. But what it means for all the rest of the employees is before there can be a termination, they have to have utilized – the company, it has to utilize a progressive discipline process. That's crucial for making sure there's fairness and justice. Another key point in Intro. 1415-A establishes two more options for employees to seek enforcement via our City Department of Consumer and Worker Protection or via the private right of action.

I want to thank everyone who's worked on this important legislation. Our Commissioner of the Department of Consumer and Worker Protection Lorelei Salas, Speaker Corey Johnson of the City Council, Council Member Daneek Miller Chair of the Committee on Civil Service and Labor. And now I want you to hear from the two sponsors of the legislation. First, I want to thank her for all her hard work. I know how much she looks out for working people in her district and all over the city, Council Member Adrienne Adams, sponsor of Intro. 1396-A. Welcome, Council Member.

[...]

Thank you so much, Council Member. I want to join you in shouting out all those good folks who worked so hard for this day. And your hard work was worth it, everyone, because a lot of people, thousands and thousands of people, are going to have protections because of all of you. So, I thank you deeply. Next I want to turn to someone I've known for, wow, well over 20 years. And when I – way back when, when I was a council member and I left the City Council, he succeeded me and now represents my community. And I know he really cares deeply about these issues. My pleasure introduced the sponsor of Intro. 1415-A, Council Member Brad Lander.

[...]

Amen. Thank you, Brad, thank you, Adrienne for your good work. Also really appreciate you pointing out the Fight for 15 because we cannot focus enough on the victories of working people. SEIU, National Employment Law Project, Center for Popular Democracy, so many great allies, but I remember when the Fight for 15 was a very young, very new idea in Brooklyn. And the way, less than a decade ago, it was by many ridiculed and diminished and considered impossible. And yet working people fought for their rights and a lot of great people gathered today, fought on and I really want people to do well –

**Council Member Brad Lander:** Mr. Mayor, we should just remember John Kest briefly –

**Mayor:** Absolutely.

**Council Member Lander:** [Inaudible] his legacy in that fight.

**Mayor:** You took the words out of my mouth, Brad. I think about John. I'm glad you said it. I think about John Kest all the time, the incredible work. I miss him. He was a dear, dear friend, incredible work he did at Acorn. And he was one of the great innovators and creators who

brought this idea to the fore. And I wish he had lived to see city after city, state after state getting to fifteen dollars an hour. Because I remember when people told John he was crazy, but he was exactly right, and we miss him deeply. But to everyone who has carried on that fight, just a moment of appreciation. They said it couldn't be done. You went out and you did it. And he did it and place after place after place, red states, blue states. It's the shape of things to come in this country. And thank you to all who fought that battle.

And now talking about SEIU, we're going to hear from two of the great leaders of SEIU here in this city. Such appreciation, a dear old friend, we've been through so many good struggles together, side by side. And I know he cares deeply for the needs of our fast food workers. My pleasure introduced the President of 3BJ SEIU, Kyle Bragg. Happy New Year, Kyle.

[...]

Yeah, absolutely. Thank you so much, Kyle. I just love the passion with which you spoke and thank you. Working people are going to need you in this city in 2021 to help lead the way to a better and fairer city for working people. And I always say this a transformative moment, 2021 is not just a time where we're coming out of a crisis. It's a transformative moment. This is the kind of legislation we need to really make sure the society serves working people. So, thank you for your leadership, Kyle. And now great pleasure to introduce someone – I've talked about the Fight for 15 with her many times. I've been so moved by her leadership and we've talked about fast food workers a lot, and we've acted in a variety of ways together to support fast food workers. And I really appreciate the vision she's always had for fairness and justice for fast food workers, always believed it could be done. It's actually happening. So, congratulations, Mary Kay Henry. My pleasure to introduce you. International President of SEIU, Mary Kay Henry.

[...]

Thank you so much, Mary Kay. I love what you said. We're not going back to normal because normal never worked for us. That is such a true statement for so many working people in this country. And look, I think we all have to make very clear in 2021, it's the time to move forward boldly, not to take excuses or talk about what we can't do. I remember vividly in 2013, when I first ran for mayor, we were fighting for a paid sick leave for a million New York City workers to protect them and their family's health and their income. And some said that year, it was a tough year, we were still coming out of the Great Recession, some said, you know, when the economy is bad is not the time to give workers paid sick days. And I said, in fact, when the economy is bad is exactly when workers need paid sick days the most. We got to protect working people. So, 2021 is the year to protect working people, to double down on working people, to go farther than ever before. And there's more and more people are receptive to that all over this country. So, thank you. And I'm looking forward to great things from you and SEIU you in the year 2021.

All right, everyone. We've got two of the folks who we're all talking about today, the folks who do the hard work, the folks who, you know, really go through tough, tough conditions, but they're there for their families. They're there for so many New Yorkers. We want to hear from them what this means for them first, Jeremy Espinal.

[...]

All right. I like everything you said, Jeremy, especially the last part. So, hoping for good news today, but thank you. Thank you for very powerfully representing just what it means to working people to have these protections and why it's so important. And yes, we have a lot of reason to be proud of New York City today, as we move forward. I want to hear everyone from one of the folks at the frontline doing the work, who we all depend on, and her story is another one of the stories of why this legislation matters so much. My pleasure to introduce Akosua Abankwa. Welcome, Akosua.

[...]

Thank you so much, Akosua. And I really appreciate you speaking from the heart about why this matters so much. I also want to tell you on a personal note, you have one of my all-time favorite, first names, just a beautiful name. And thank you for what you're doing, standing up for working people. And you started your remarks with a happy new year. I want to say because of what everyone's doing today, it's going to be a happier new year for a lot of working folks in this city. But I also want to wish everyone a happy new year in general, because we've been through enough in 2020. Isn't it nice to be in a year with the number 2021 in it? Before I sign the legislation, a few words in Spanish, just a quick summary of what we're doing here today.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

That's what it is all about a just cause, everyone deserves that. And now it's time to sign this legislation.

[Mayor de Blasio signs Intro. 1396-A and Intro. 1415-A]

The first time I'm putting 2021 on a piece of legislation. I am very happy, much nicer year. All right, everyone, both bills have been signed. Now this legislation is law. Congratulations, everyone involved. Thank you, again. And that concludes this hearing. And, again, to everyone, a very happy 2021. Thanks, everyone.

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