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RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO SIGNS EXECUTIVE ORDER TO INCREASE LIVING WAGE AND EXPAND IT TO THOUSANDS MORE WORKERS

Mayor de Blasio: Ladies and gentlemen, it is a great honor to present to you the United States Secretary of Labor Tom Perez.

U.S. Labor Secretary Thomas Perez: Good morning.

[Secretary Perez speaks in Spanish]

It is an honor to be here today with the mayor. I apologize for having a little raspy throat. I had a little throat surgery about ten days ago, and so I'm still recovering. But I want to make sure you know that my support for this mayor and the leadership of your speaker is absolutely full-throated.

[Laughter]

Because when it comes to making sure that everybody who works hard and working a full-time job should never have to live in poverty – that's what we're about as a nation. That's our value set as a nation.

[Applause]

And President Obama says, I am not only going to be advocating for fair wages at a federal level, but we are going to be working with every state and local leader across this country who is going to do the same – working together to make sure that we have middle class security, that we pay a fair wage for a fair day's work, and that we put our values into action.

So, I am here for one simple reason, which is to give, on behalf of President Obama, our unwavering support for the leadership of the mayor and the speaker and everybody around here who is moving forward on this living wage executive order.

It is so great to be back here, by the way.

[Secretary Perez speaks Spanish]

My parents moved to Buffalo because the weather was so similar. My mother grew up – Washington High School, graduated from George Washington High School and this was always home. New York City always provided that. And really, it is an honor to be here today with you, mayor, to celebrate your remarkable leadership, that is rewarding hard work and fair wages. And ensuring that fair wages exist for working people is really the centerpiece of President Obama's agenda to expand opportunity for all. He believes in building an economy that works for everyone, where prosperity is broadly shared and everyone has a chance to succeed. He believes that men and woman who work full-time in the wealthiest nation on earth should never have to live in

poverty. But yet, we see that. I speak to people who are making choices between a gallon of milk and a gallon of gas. I remember a guy I spoke to recently who said, you know, there is no dignity in work when you work a 40 and 50 hour week and you still have to get your food through a pantry. We can do better than that in America. And that's why the President –

[Applause]

That's why the President has been calling on Congress to raise the minimum wage from \$7.25 an hour to \$10.10 an hour. It's been more than five years since the minimum wage was raised. And the minimum wage is worth 20 percent less than it was in the early eighties. Can you imagine if you're going to take a job wherever – whether it's on Wall Street or whether it's on Main Street – and I told you, you got to take a 20 percent pay cut for what you were making when Ronald Reagan was president. You couldn't do it, because your bills haven't gone down 20 percent. And that's just not fair. That's not who we are as a nation. And that's why the President has been working so hard, because Americans deserve a raise. And it's not simply the right thing to do, it's the smart thing to do. I speak to businesses across this country and they tell me the same thing everywhere, raising the minimum wage is pro-business as well as pro-worker. I hear from business owner after business owner, who says to me, Tom, you know the most important thing I need in my business is customers. This is a consumption deprived recovery.

Mayor: That's right.

You know, a guy named Henry Ford about a hundred years ago figured that out. He doubled the wages of people on the assembly line. People thought he was nuts. He was really smart. And he did okay. And he doubled the wages because, you know what, he had attrition of over 300 percent. If you pay crappy wages, you're not going to keep your workers. That's pretty common sense. And he understood that – the people who make my product ought to be able to buy my product. And so, that is why he did that, and that is why so many other businesses are doing this.

But despite this strong public support for raising the minimum wage, regrettably, some in the Republican leadership in Congress haven't quite gotten the memo. And a minority of Republicans in the Senate have blocked votes on the minimum wage. Speaker Boehner – Leader Boehner refused to allow a vote. And I have no doubt, that if we had a vote on comprehensive immigration reform in the House, if we had a vote on the minimum wage, they would pass. But the leader is thwarting the will, not only of the majority of the body, but a majority of the American people.

And so, what do you do when that happens? Well you do exactly what people like the mayor and the speaker and the borough president and everybody around me is doing. You take matters into your own hands. That's what you're doing – because people can't afford to be patient while they're making choices, unconscionable choices, between a gallon of milk and a gallon of gas.

And that's why 13 states, over the last year, have raised the minimum wage after President Obama put the pedal to the metal. And over 20 local governments have been doing the same. Let's face it, New York leads – as it continues to do, under Mayor de Blasio's leadership – people across this country take notice. I know that because I travel this country. And they see what you're doing, Mayor, on paid leave. They see what you're doing on wage fairness. There is an absolute brush fire that's turned into a wild fire across this country – a wild fire of advocacy on behalf of workers – advocacy which stands for the notion that, you know what, we are a better country than this. We lead this world in so many different ways. We continue to be the strongest economy on the planet. We continue to be the strongest nation on the planet, but we must face the reality. We are not leading at the moment, as a nation, as a result of Republican intransigence in Congress on the issue of the minimum wage.

I just got back from Australia, where we had a meeting of G20 labor ministers. The United States had the third-lowest minimum wage of any of the industrialized countries. We can do better. And conservatives like David Cameron have raised the minimum wage. Conservatives – the government of Australia – the minimum wage is

over \$16 dollars an hour. And it's a conservative government. The government of Canada, other places, have put in place progressive policies because they recognize that it's the right thing to do, it's the smart thing to do. They put politics aside. They have put partisanship aside. And they have put people first. And we are not doing that in Washington as a result of the intransigence of a few Republicans in the Congress. And so, the President has never hesitated to lead with his pen and with his phone. And the pen is running out of ink, and the Department of Labor – so we made more pens – and the phone's ringing off the hook, and we continue to take those phones because it's all about fairness for workers. It's all about moving forward. And it's all about working with state and local governments who are indeed moving forward.

And so, Mayor, I am here to give our absolutely full-throated support for your efforts here. Because, I can tell you, your executive authorities make a difference in a huge way. Because this is really not simply about doing the right thing and everything else, this is about people like Chantel, to my right. This is why we get up out of bed in the morning. This is about making sure that Chantel and her family can have that basic covenant with America – that basic covenant which says, if you work hard and play by the rules, the sky is the limit. If you work hard and play by the rules, you're going to live a little better than your parents and your kids are going to be a little bit better off than you. That covenant has been called into question, but not under this mayor's leadership. We are moving forward under this president's leadership, under the partnership between the President, the mayor, and other governors and mayors and county executives across this country. We are moving forward. We're bringing America back. We're moving in the right direction. We have more work to do, and the mayor's executive order this morning does just that. And so, it is a great honor for me to turn the microphone over to Mayor de Blasio, a person who in less than a year in office, has been an absolute champion and vanguard in closing opportunity gaps, addressing income inequality, and making sure that better bargain for America is a bargain that we will continue to uphold.

[Secretary Perez speaks in Spanish]

Mi amigo, Mayor de Blasio.

[Applause]

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Man, I would like to hear what he's like when he hasn't had throat surgery. Mr. Secretary, first of all, on behalf of the people of New York City, I present you with this Ricola [Laughter] to speed your recovery. I felt for you, and I really want to say thank you. So many people here are excited that you're here with us. And the fact that you've been dealing with your throat problem, but it still mattered so much for you to be here and be a part of this, is a really – something very humbling for all of us. You have a whole country to think about. You've got work you need to do everywhere. You went out of your way to come here and support what we're doing today, and that is really above and beyond, and you make us proud – as New Yorkers, as Americans – because you're setting the kind of standard that we believe in. Let's thank Secretary Perez for all he's doing.

[Applause]

The fact is, a lot of people around me worked very hard to elect, and then reelect, President Obama. And when you hear the secretary's words, it reminds you just how different things are. We have a labor secretary who is going all over this country, pushing localities and businesses to go farther, using those international examples to indicate where we need to be. Secretary Perez is one of the driving forces in the decision of the Obama administration, to move for the \$10.10 minimum wage, which we need to achieve here, and we need to achieve all across this country, and it will be transcendent.

So, what I always remind people – and I think sometimes, in the challenges we face in our economy and public life, sometimes it's easy to get a little cynical – but I want to remind people, elections really do matter. And an election made this man the labor secretary, and he is doing great things for us every day. So, Secretary, thank you so much.

[Applause]

We're here in St. Mary's Park, and it's a reminder – we're in a beautiful setting, surrounded by a wonderful neighborhood full of hardworking people. You're going to hear from Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito in a moment. She has the honor of representing this district. And she knows, I know, these are good hardworking people, giving their all every day for their families. The challenge is, they're giving their all, and they're not getting far enough.

That's the state of affairs in this city, and all over the country right now, and it's not acceptable. People are struggling. They're working harder and harder, and yet, they're struggling to get by. The median household income, right where we're standing now, the median household income is roughly \$20,000 dollars a year. You do not need to be a math major to know that \$20,000 dollars a year doesn't cut it in New York City.

And people have to do better. And it's our job to take us forward. Increasing the minimum wage nationally would be the single best solution. We need to act everywhere we can. We have to push for national change, but as the secretary said so powerfully, when we don't see the movement we need because, unfortunately, of our congress – we act locally. We push the spectrum. We do what we can do for our people, and also send a message that we need something better for all of us. And we're going to work for that – not just nationally – we're going to work for that in our state capital in Albany, where the time is right for the change we need on minimum wage.

I want to acknowledge – please – you can clap for that –

[Applause]

We'll have more to say on that. I want to acknowledge the members of my administration who have really put immense energy into the question of using every tool we have to increase wages and benefits for people in this city. This is on the minds of the leaders of this administration literally every single day – led by our Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development Alicia Glen. I want to thank her. I want to thank Kyle Kimball, president of the Economic Development Corporation. You can keep clapping –

[Applause]

– Maria Torres-Springer, commissioner of Small Business Services; Julie Menin, commissioner of the Department of Consumer Affairs, which will be in charge of enforcement on this living wage executive order. We have leaders of labor, and advocates for these changes, who have been tireless. I want to thank Jill Furillo, the executive director of the New York State Nurses Association; Julie Kushner, director of United Automobile Workers Region 9A –

[Applause]

– and you're going to be hearing from a few other of these leaders in just a moment. We have a lot of elected officials who have joined us in support. This has been an area of real unity. Our elected officials believe we need these changes, and they're doing something about it. And I want to thank them. I want to thank Carmen Arroyo, Assembly Member – we're in her district, too. I want to thank my dear friend – and we work together constantly on issues like this – Assembly Member Luis Sepúlveda of the Bronx. I want to thank State Senator Dan Squadron of Brooklyn. We're glad he came to the Bronx to support this.

[Applause]

And Brooklyn is in the house today – Council Member Mathieu Eugene of Brooklyn, thank you for being here; Council Member Robert Cornegy, chair of the Small Business Committee. And council members from the Bronx are here, too. It's a Brooklyn-Bronx thing today. Andy King, council member from the Bronx, thank you;

Fernanda Cabrera, council member from the Bronx, yes; Daneek Miller, you're here too, from Queens. Okay, you ruined my symmetry, but I'm glad you're here.

Unknown: [inaudible] being cute.

Mayor: That's right. Me being cute.

And you're going to hear from some of our other elected leaders in just a moment who have been leaders in this effort. Today, we're doing something – I want to emphasize – we are doing something that takes effect today. We're doing something urgent that takes effect today. When I walk over to that desk, and sign the executive order, it takes immediate effect. It says the rules change today. Because people are struggling. They need help now. That's why it's so urgent. We have to act now.

[Applause]

Today I'm signing a sweeping expansion of the city's living wage standard. It's time to go farther. Effective immediately, we will raise wages through the living wage standard to \$13.13 per hour.

[Cheers]

[Applause]

\$13.13 for those without benefits, \$11.50 for those who have health insurance and other benefits. This applies to employers – excuse me, employees, I should say, of large groups of employers who do business with the city. Meaning, there's a lot of companies that do business with the city, that come to the city for subsidies. We think if you want a subsidy, you can prove the need for a subsidy – we want to help you achieve your goals, but we have a standard we hold. We need to make sure people are paid a living wage. That's a fair exchange for that subsidy. What it means – let me put this in real terms – what this means, is the difference between the \$8 an hour minimum wage right now, and the \$13.13 that will take effect immediately for those employees of companies that get subsidies going forward – that is a difference of over \$10,000 dollars in earnings a year. \$10,000.

[Applause]

Someone who would have made \$16,000 – not enough to get by – will now make over \$27,000 dollars a year. And that's a difference maker.

[Applause]

Any project that gets over a million dollars in city subsidies qualifies. We're going to reach the retail tenants, for example, of those projects. This is something that needed to be expanded and reached. We're doing that through this executive order. We are going to reach people who work in food services, in retail, in construction – there's a whole range of people who will be reached, and it will make a difference for them. 18,000 people, 18,000 families, will be reached by this executive order by the next five years. Over five years, our projection is 18,000 people will benefit, meaning 18,000 families will have a better standard of living. 4,000 of those will be in the food and retail sector, where there's long been a need to increase wages and benefits.

Now, this is one part of a bigger strategy. It's an important part, but it's one part of a bigger strategy. We have to move united from here, to Albany, New York, to raise the state minimum wage to \$10.10. We need to do that starting this January.

[Applause]

And with that, we need to secure indexing of the minimum wage, and with that, we need to secure a commitment that localities, within that state guideline, have the ability to go farther. Those are the crucial

building blocks of change and progress. It can happen in Albany. It will happen in Albany, if we take this momentum and we build upon it.

Secretary Perez made a crucial point – the facts are on our side. The Henry Ford example really needs to be looked at, because this was an example of what we should be doing – giving people a kind of wage they can live on, and they can purchase products with, which fuels a whole economy, as the secretary laid out. We've been moving away from that standard steadily over years. Over years, we've been falling farther and farther behind. In terms of buying power, the current \$8 dollar minimum wage in this state is lower than the minimum wage of 1964. So, you go back in time 50 years, the law was actually giving people more buying power. We keep falling behind, and this has got to be the breakpoint moment. We say we won't fall behind any longer.

I'll give you an example of what this minimum wage does to people. A single parent working full-time at minimum wage in New York City today makes just \$270 dollars above the poverty level. So, sadly, a minimum wage job means you're on the verge of poverty, even if you're working a full work week. That's unacceptable. We have to have a minimum wage standard that means something. And this action today is part of not only helping those 18,000 families but building momentum toward the next goal.

You heard the kind of choices – Secretary Perez laid out the kind of choices people make – you're going to hear, in a few moments, from someone who is such a powerful example, both of the challenge we face, but also of the willingness to fight for change. Chantel Walker Sylvester, we are so proud of you, and so glad you're here.

[Applause]

Yes, she is from Bed-Stuy Brooklyn. That is true.

Unknown: Brooklyn!

Mayor: Chantel is going to tell you her story, but I can tell you one thing – she's worked nonstop. She's worked, and she's worked for years, and still has made only \$8.50 an hour, and lives paycheck to paycheck, and has to consistently make those choices. Do you pay your rent, do you pay for a Metrocard, do you pay for food? This is the biggest, wealthiest city in the country, and a good hardworking woman has to make those choices every single month, and that's not what we came here to continue. We came here to change that. It has to change and it will change now.

[Applause]

A lot of people say, does any one of these actions change enough? The answer is no. All the actions have to move together – living wage, minimum wage, affordable housing plan, all the things we do to lighten the burdens of parents, like full-day pre-k and afterschool – all these pieces have to come together as a whole, to really start to affect the income inequality crisis and to really start to affect people's standard of living.

But we are devoted to moving on each and every front. You know, eight decades ago, the minimum wage was a new idea. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt – of New York, I am proud to say – passed the first minimum wage law through Congress. He put forward a simple notion at that time, he said passing the minimum wage would “extend the frontiers of social progress.” Think about that notion – something that was unheard of, but was needed, to respond to the crisis of people's lives. So, in the 1930s they had the vision and the energy and the inspiration and the boldness to say they were going to extend the frontiers of social progress. We need to be at least as good as our forbearers. We need to extend those frontiers a lot farther, and reach so many people who deserve it – so many hardworking people.

I want you to hear from some of my colleagues who have been central to this fight. I want you to hear from Chantel in a moment but let me just say a couple words in Spanish.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

[Applause]

And with that, someone who will offer you her vision – in both English and Spanish, with equal eloquence – our partner in all of the actions we are taking to address income inequality, and to lift up everyday New Yorkers, and I want to thank the speaker and the City Council for having set the pace that we are building upon today. But no one fights harder for these changes than Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito.

[Applause]

[Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito speaks]

[Mayor de Blasio introduces various elected officials; elected officials deliver remarks]

Mayor: Because of a time crunch, we're going to make another alteration, because we're very flexible. Friends in the media, if you have any questions for Secretary Perez, he's got a few minutes before he has to get to his flight, and we'll go to Chantel right after that. I want to just see if there's anything from the media for Secretary Perez before he has to go back to Washington, please.

Question: Mr. Secretary, you mentioned [inaudible] congress that [inaudible] here in New York we have a City Council [inaudible] in line with the mayor's position. What do you make of the fact that [inaudible] executive action, even though the City Council probably backs [inaudible]?

Secretary Perez: Well, I'll leave that for the mayor. I know the mayor and the City Council and the leaders all around us have been working very collaboratively on these issues, and they have assured interest in the following, which is making sure that when you give out city dollars, or there's subsidies, or what, that it's a privilege – it's not a right – to do business with the city government. And with that privilege comes responsibility. And what I observed, listening to the speaker, the mayor, the borough president, everyone, is a shared understanding of that, and a shared understanding of, how can do this as fast as possible – because for people like Chantel, we cannot afford to wait. We need help right now, and so, I applaud these efforts. I applaud the way in which they are working in a collaborative fashion to move forward, and if we had the level of collaboration in Washington, with the house leadership, that I see here in New York, we'd be a much better America.

[Cheers]

[Applause]

Mayor: Thank you. Any other – well done. Any other questions for the secretary before he has to go. Going once, twice.

Secretary Perez: Okay, thank you everyone.

[Applause]

Mayor: [inaudible]

I'll go back to our regular scheduled program. Chantel Walker Sylvester is someone who lives these issues every day, but she's also someone who fights for change. And it is very hard to keep working and keep working and keep working and not experience the fairness you should. Some people could get discouraged. Some people could not care any longer. Chantel cares, and is doing something about it. She is a model for us all. So, let me introduce you – Chantel Walker Sylvester.

[Chantel Walker Sylvester speaks]

[Applause]

Mayor: Chantel got the final word, and I think it was the right final word. All right, we're going to sign this executive order, and then we will come back and take questions on this topic. Please gather around, everyone.

[Commotion]

[Mayor de Blasio signs executive order]

Mayor: Okay, please. Thank you. Anyone wants to stick around for Q and A, feel free. All right, we're assembling here, ready? Everyone assembled? Okay. We will now take questions from the media. Yes, sir.

Question: Thanks Mr. Mayor. There are pockets of city workers, crossing workers, cafeteria workers, who aren't – who are earning less than this new requirement. Just wondering, is it fair to ask private companies to do something for their workers that the city is unwilling to do for its own workers?

Mayor: Well, a couple of things. First of all, when we subsidize a private company, we do expect the highest standards. You heard Secretary Perez's point about that. It's something I think, understood nationwide. So, this is a standard that we hold from this point on. Literally, as of the stroke of that pen, this is now the standard in New York City for any new developments that we subsidize. Second of all, we are moving for a higher minimum wage for all workers, public and private. We intend to aggressively approach that issue and achieve that change in Albany, coming up in January. That change will affect everything in the labor dynamics of this city. So, I think the fact is, we want to address that issue holistically, and we have the tools to do it now. And that's the best way to handle it – to change it for everyone.

Question: The city already has the power to pay its own workers more but chooses not to. Why do you have to wait for the –

Mayor: Again, I differentiate that a subsidy is a special act where you're providing a benefit and you expect something back for it. The way we want to handle our overall dynamics is by adjusting the laws for everyone. Other questions? Yes?

Question: Mr. Mayor, I'm wondering, you were in the City Council for a long time and you were a very vocal member. I'm wondering why you're not letting this go through the committee and the legislature process in the council so that members can voice their opinions on it and have a traditional hearing?

Mayor: This is a matter of urgency. And we believe it was right to put this into play immediately, because as we speak there are development deals coming together that this could affect, and we want to make sure that we have this new opportunity for working people. It's very consistent with the council's decision. I mean, I think it's a different dynamic when you see the council has already acted and shown its intent. We've been in regular conversation with the council leadership. We're all on the same page about where this needs to go. And it was important to act in a way that could get the most immediate effect.

[inaudible] before. Grace?

Question: Following up on that, I'm wondering if we could hear from the speaker on that. Since there is a lot of shared policy priorities between the council and the mayor, is this something going forward that we can expect that there won't be legislative hearings on significant changes to policy in the city? And why did you agree to this executive order? I mean, if the mayor is saying this is an urgent thing that they wanted to put in immediately, but if the mayor was talking about this during the campaign, couldn't this been introduced in the council months ago and enacted –

Speaker Mark-Viverito: There are legislative requests that are still in, and our process continues. I think I laid out the strong history that this council has, to be supportive of prevailing and living wage laws. So this is just along the same lines of the thinking, as the mayor has indicated. And so, we are excited because we are impacting thousands of workers moving forward. That is the end goal here. That is what we are about – about uplifting individuals. And the quickest way to get there, we will do that. It goes along the lines of our vision and our philosophy as a council and we're going to be supportive of this. But it doesn't take away from the pieces of legislation that are in. We're going to continue to have a follow-up process, take a look at it, see if there's ways that this could be expanded in other sectors and others ways. It doesn't take away from the role of the council moving forward.

Question: I was wondering, you said that it was a matter of urgency. Why didn't you try an executive order in January, February, or –

Mayor: Well, we obviously intended to, early on, and then we looked at some of the complexities, and we looked at some of the possibilities, and we decided that we, first of all, had to get it right, and second of all, had to go farther. The original intention had been to take the previous standards, previous wage standards, and apply them to more people. The deeper we got into our research, the more we decided those wage standards were outmoded, and we had to go farther. So, it took time to get it right. But we knew that the moment we got it right, it would have a big impact on thousands of families and it would take effect immediately. So, our goal was to get it right and reach as many people of the highest wage we could.

Question: Mayor, what's your message to small businesses, who might abhor the idea of paying workers more and who believe, in doing this, you're hurting them?

Mayor: First of all, we have seen over and over again, that when we act to improve people's wages and benefits, it leads to a more just society; it leads to more buying power for our citizens, which help our small businesses; and actually shows that there's great economic stability in making these actions. You know what is damning for our society, and for small business, is when everyone's falling behind. That's what we've been experiencing. But when people are actually economically strong, and able to spend, that's what's good for everyone. So, you know, we've gone down this road with paid sick leave, and so many other issues, where we heard that there would be so many negative outcomes. Every time we've taken these actions, things actually become better. We've seen it all around the country. Commissioner Julie Menin is here from consumer affairs. She's researched what's happened on paid sick leave around the country – she, by the way, in charge of enforcement on paid sick leave, also in charge now of enforcement on living wage – time and time again the naysayers were proven wrong. Economies – local economies – became stronger. Small businesses did well with these additional protections for their workers. Second point, I think everyone, as taxpayers – because small business owners are taxpayers, too – we want our money's worth. If we provide the subsidy, we want to make sure that we're getting fairness in return, and to ask, for example, a lot of big retail chains – which is in many cases the kind of stores you'll find in the developments that we have a subsidy arrangement with – to ask national retail chains to pay a decent wage to their workers, while they're receiving a subsidy from us, is imminently fair.

Yes.

Question: [inaudible]

Mayor: Okay, louder?

Question: [inaudible] that development, because of these requirements [inaudible]?

Mayor: No, I think there's a couple things going on. First of all, the desire of so many retailers to have a stronger presence in New York City is quite clear. You see it with your own eyes. You've seen huge changes over the last few years. This market is more and more desirable, and it's growing. I remind everyone here, part of what we're all doing together, over here, is preparing for a city that's going to have another half million people in the coming decades. So, this is an incredibly appealing place for retailers to want to be. The fact is,

there's a subsidy involved. There's an opportunity to be a part of a development, a new development that is subsidized – that's very appealing to a lot of developers, and a lot of retailers and other folks who would be tenants in those developments. So, I think there's going to be plenty of demand. And we just look at what's happened overall with our economy, and we're convinced that a lot of people will want to participate.

Question: Given that the governor put the kabash on your pre-k tax, are you still confident that he'll be on board with your move to raise the minimum wage?

Mayor: He said it himself. And I remind you, that we got to where we needed to get on pre-k with the governor's help. You know, there's different roads to an outcome. We got to the outcome we needed, and now we have over 51,000 kids in pre-k as we speak, right now, in New York City. I'm very satisfied with how that came out. The governor said very clearly this spring that he supports the minimum wage increase, he supports indexing, he supports local opportunity to adjust minimum wage within the context of the state law. He said it repeatedly. And I take him at his word, and I look forward to following through with a new Democratic senate.

Question: Can you talk a bit about the Hudson Yards, and that it [inaudible] exception for them?

Mayor: Well, going forward – and Alicia Glen and Kyle Kimball are here, and they can speak to details – but any new development in Hudson Yards would be covered. You want to fill in the blank?

EDC Chair Kyle Kimball: Sure, so, currently projects in Zone 3 of Hudson Yards were exempt from the living wage law, so it's really affecting projects in that specific zone, and there's a few projects in that zone that are yet to be induced, so that's the specific area, the geographic area, that it's being affected to. Of course, the mayor, early in the administration, with Alicia Glen, was able to get [inaudible] to voluntarily agree to pay living wage for its workers and its tenants in the buildings, so that was an early win in Hudson Yards, and this is just extending that idea.

Mayor: I think it was Zone [inaudible]

Kyle Kimball: I think it's down by 11th and 12th Street, between –

Mayor: Avenues.

Kyle Kimball: 11th and 12th Avenues, between the 31 and 34, so it's a small area.

Question: There's a lot of things [inaudible] but what happens when [inaudible] how are they going to be affected by it?

Mayor: I think that's a very important question. I'm someone who believes in the power of the union movement, and believes that organizing people in the unions, as the public advocate said, is foundational to creating a stronger society. But the great reality of living wage actions, and minimum wage actions, is that they allow you to reach people whether they're in a union or not, and they strengthen the buying power, they strengthen the earning power of the workforce. So, I'm very, very straightforward about the fact that I think every time someone gets organized into a union, it's good for our overall society – but in the meantime, this is lifting living standards for thousands of people.

Question: I'm curious whether the city charter sets any limits on the mayor's power when writing these executive orders, and are you sure that this –

Mayor: Yes, we are sure. [Laughter] Section 8, I believe it is, we'll have – the law department can hopefully show you, if you'd like. Yes, this is within the mandate given to the mayor under the city charter.

Question: Marginally on topic, but I think –

Mayor: Marginally. We're watching your margins.

Question: I thought you might want to respond to [inaudible] about the radio today?

Mayor: Sally's birthday? Is that true?

Question: It is!

Mayor: Happy birthday, Sally.

Question: Thank you.

Mayor: And that's the answer to your question.

[Laughter]

[Commotion]

Question: So –

Mayor: No. [Laughs]

Question: Dean Skelos, on the radio today, asked about your Albany agenda, as it relates to your attempt to turn the senate Democratic, and he [inaudible] and the worst thing that could happen [inaudible] and we'd just like your reaction to that –

Mayor: I think helping working people reach the middle class is what the state needs. So, if somehow, Senator Skelos thinks it's dangerous that people would get better wages and benefits, I don't understand that. I think we need to uplift our working people. They're struggling. And right now, we have an opportunity to act here in this city, so we're acting with every tool we have to help working families. We need to do that across the state of New York. And that's why we need a Democratic state senate majority. Thank you, everyone.

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