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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY**

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Good morning, everybody. So, the calendar keeps moving. Time keeps moving on – a lot of important things coming up ahead. And I want to take this opportunity to get everybody thinking about what we have to do as New Yorkers. So, obviously, most important thing for the city and the country is the most important election in our lives – 62 days away now. So, please, anyone who's not registered to vote, couldn't be more important to be involved with democratic process this time. But also, now, just 28 days away, the census deadline. And I remind everyone, the census deadline was supposed to be a month later and the President decided to move it earlier in the middle of a pandemic. We could comment all we want on that, but the fact is this is now our reality. Four weeks until the September 30 deadline. This could not be more important. So, we're going to have this countdown clock up every day until the last day for the census to be recorded. I like to give credit where credit is due, and often our colleagues in the media makes suggestions or raise issues that we need to follow up on, and I always appreciate that. So, I want to thank Jillian Jonas of WBAI, who said, hey, if you're going to have an election countdown, you should have a census countdown two, and now we do.

Now, what's going on now – census workers are out all over the city, knocking on doors, letting people know how important it is, making sure people are counted, just constant work, being done at the grassroots. We have put a huge amount of energy and resources into a vast grassroots network of organizations and individuals who are helping to make sure New Yorkers accounted. And I want to thank Julie Menin, and the whole team at the census effort – they're doing an amazing job. But I also want to remind everyone they're fighting very strong headwinds because there's a pandemic, because everyone's lives have been upended, because people are very careful about contact with other people. There's tremendous – at this point, a lack of information flow and concern because of the nature of what's happening in our society in general. So, we have a problem, and I think New Yorkers like to hear things bluntly. The blunt truth is we have a problem when it comes to the census countdown, we are running out of time and we've got a response rate that is too low – right now at 57.9 percent. That is not where we need to be. And, again, I understand everyone's lives have been put through so much. People are dealing with so many things, but it literally only takes a few minutes to fill out the census form and it makes a huge difference for our city. So, 57.9 percent for New York City right now at four weeks to go. Compared to the country, the national average is about 65 percent. We've got some catching up to do. And in some neighborhoods, that's particularly true – the lowest response rate in some New York City neighborhoods is around 43 percent. So, we can't have that. We can't have New York City go under-counted. Again, it means such serious ramifications for the future of the city. We're right now fighting a crisis today, but we've got to think ahead. If we have one or two fewer members of Congress from New York City, we're going to have that much less clout, that much

less ability to access resources. Our voices will not be heard the way they need to be. If we lose billions upon billions, potentially hundreds of billions of dollars in federal funding over years because we were undercounted, because the truth of this city wasn't recognized – that's absolutely unacceptable. And the whole approach to the census this year has been a problem on the federal level. I want to be clear, the President, the federal government have sent mixed messages, if you want to be polite – in many ways, have seem to try to undermine the census and try and get people not to participate, particularly immigrant New Yorkers and immigrants around the country, but we're not going to let that stop us, because we here locally have the opportunity to turn this around and four weeks is enough time to do it. So, everyone, please take that time to fill out the census. Tell your friends, tell your family. It's so important.

Now, in the meantime, as we are doing all these efforts at the grassroots, we have a very, very serious effort – we're also trying to help people understand how important it is by having a little fun with it too. So, we're having a little competition between neighborhoods and we're calling it the Census Subway Series. Last week, we talked about Jamaica, Queens versus Canarsie, Brooklyn – quite a matchup, two neighborhoods that needed to pump up their response rates. And people did respond to this competition and the numbers went up in both neighborhoods, but they went up even more in Jamaica, Queens. Congratulations, Jamaica. You are the winner of the first subway series for the census. And now to tell you about the next Census Subway Series and all the other outreach efforts going on as we speak, Census 2020 Field Director Kathleen Daniel. Welcome back, Kathleen.

**Field Director Kathleen Daniel, NYC Census:** Good morning. And so, congratulations to Jamaica, Queens in our match up against New York City royalty – the Kings had to bow to the Queens. Jamaica went from – got to 51.6 percent from 50.7. And Canarsie, round of applause for you, because you got to 49.2 percent from a 48.5 percent start. So, congratulations. Next up, County of Kings gets another shot at the gold. We have Midwood in Brooklyn, the county of kings, versus the Upper East Side and moneymaking Manhattan. Let's see who gets the gold. And this competition is going to go through September 6th. So, ready, set, start counting – looking forward to this. And every New Yorker who participates in completing the census from August 17th to September 21st – that's a Monday to a Monday – then you are eligible to win some great prizes. We have 10 New Yorkers who have already won a \$1,000 gift card from Seamless.com. And six more will win. We've had winners from all across the city. We will also have 25 New Yorkers win a one-year membership to the Museum of Modern Art and MoMA PS1, and that can start at your convenience. So, you can wait until post-pandemic era to begin that annual membership or begin a digital membership as soon as you win. We also will have 100 New Yorkers who will win a \$50 voucher from Lyft.com and a one-year membership for Citi Bike. So, take the car when you need to, and then get off some pandemic pounds with cycling and take your Citi Bike across town.

I want to talk to you about my experience as an enumerator. In 2000, I was an enumerator for the federal Census Bureau, was knocking on doors. And in 2010, I was a supervisor for the federal Census Bureau. It's a tough job. We have people knocking on doors that are from your community. These are New Yorkers and they're your neighbors. So, it's okay to talk to them. We're getting a lot of inquiries asking, why are they knocking at my door? I already did the census. And there's some real legitimate reasons why they might be knocking at your door. One

– you may not have actually done the census. There were other surveys conducted by the federal Census Bureau that just go to a sampling of people in the country that were going out at the same time as the mailers for the census, which is only 10 questions that will take you 10 minutes and will positively impact your community for the next 10 years. They may also be knocking at your door because you may be living in a one or two-family unit, but that it's listed in the census list or the census database as a three or four family unit. And so, maybe one or two of those are vacant, or 10 years ago it was used as such, and so they're coming, looking for those units that may or may not exist. It's okay to talk to them. They're wearing ID, check their ID. And then, just in case, they are saying that you did not do the census or they have not received it. You may have completed the census right before the door knockers came out and their lists were already done. It's okay to do it again. The federal Census Bureau has a de-duplication process that ensues after the door knockers come to your door. So, make sure that you get counted. Make sure that it's an accurate count. And we only have until September 30th to get this done – 28 days. Go to [my2020census.gov](https://my2020census.gov). Don't go online? Pick up the phone – 844-330-2020. Now, come on Upper East side; come on, Midwood in Brooklyn. It is fall – don't let the numbers fall. We can get this done, New York.

**Mayor:** Kathleen, I'm always moved and impressed by your extraordinary enthusiasm. No one loves the census more than you. Thank you for sharing that enthusiasm with all New Yorkers. Everyone, you get the message. Again, it's so simple. Look at what's on the screen – [my2020census.gov](https://my2020census.gov) or 844-330-2020. It takes 10 minutes and you can do so much for your city with those 10 minutes. So, please, everyone let's get involved. Let's get this census right.

Now, let's go back to what we're doing every day here in the city, which is the fact that we we've come so far in beating back the coronavirus and we've got more to do. And what we've learned in this crisis is nothing is more important than your health. We all kind of knew it before, but now we know it more than ever. If New York City is healthy, all things are possible. If our people are healthy, we can come back strong. We know – and this crisis has made it very, very clear – that there are profound disparities in terms of who gets a lot of health care, who gets a little bit of health care. There's even people who get almost no health care – that doesn't conform with the values of the city. We believe everyone deserves health care in New York City. We believe health care is a human right. And our task force, leaders of City government agencies, leaders of color in key agencies all over the City government, when they looked at the disparities that have been made clear by the coronavirus crisis and the mandate was, what can we do right now to start addressing those disparities? They came back with a clear mandate for this administration. They said, let's move up. Let's speed up our efforts at providing guaranteed health care for all New Yorkers. Now, we announced this a couple of years ago when we said that every single New Yorker, if they didn't have health insurance, we'd helped them get our City public option health insurance, if that was what worked for them. And if that didn't work for them, we'd give them an NYC Care card. We give them the ability to have a primary care doctor and a medical home and pay only that which they could pay regardless of documentation status, regardless of income. That's what NYC Care is all about. This is something that has never been done in this country, but it's happening right now. In fact, it's been sped up. So, today, we announced that the rollout of NYC Care to Manhattan and Queens, these were two boroughs that it was supposed to take several more months to reach, but the extraordinary team at NYC Care made it happen much quicker. As of today, we are ready to move forward with NYC Care throughout Manhattan

and Queens – all five boroughs will now have NYC Care four months ahead of schedule. So, it's extraordinary, and it's not only something to be proud of as a New Yorker, it's not only something that's available to you if you're one of those 600,000 people who hasn't had health insurance coverage in this city, it's also a cornerstone of our comeback as a city. Every New Yorker that has health care will be in a better position to stay healthy throughout this crisis and help us beat back the coronavirus. Health care for all is one of the ways you stop this pandemic and any pandemic.

So, for everyone, if you're out there and you don't have health insurance and you can't get health insurance, call 646-NYC-CARE – again, 646-NYC-CARE and you can sign up in all five boroughs as of today. Now, this is an amazing effort. I want to thank everyone that Health + Hospitals who made this possible, but particularly the team at NYC Care. And I want you to hear from the leader of that team, she has done this work with extraordinary passion and she's been doing it for years on the national level, brought her talents back to New York City from which she comes to make this the first city to guarantee health care for all – the Executive Director of NYC Care Marielle Kress.

Can you hear us? There you go.

**Executive Director Marielle Kress, NYC Care:** Thank you so much, Mr. Mayor. Yes. Hello. Hi, everyone. Thank you so much for the opportunity to speak. And thank you, Mr. Mayor, for your leadership on this issue. I am so proud to lead the team at Health + Hospitals of people who are implementing the largest program in the nation of its kind to guarantee health care access to all New Yorkers, regardless of where they were born, their immigration status, their ability to pay, their insurance status. I can't overstate the impact of the peace of mind that I've heard from people that I talk to that comes from knowing where to get care, knowing that you have someone to help you navigate the system, knowing that there's a primary care provider that's there who cares about you and all aspects of your life and health and the human impact that I've seen is so great.

I want to tell one quick story about a member that we have, who became a member in November, 2019 after coming to this country a number of months before and was a kidney transplant recipient in his country and came to this country, was receiving medications from his home country and didn't realize that he had access to guaranteed care here in New York, in the Bronx, where we started. He got connected with a primary care provider. And then, very unfortunately, contracted COVID-19. And when he got sick, he called his primary care provider and she encouraged him to go to the hospital where he was intubated at Bellevue Hospital for 21 days. And so, this story really shows that having this access, knowing who to call when you're sick, knowing where to go is the difference between life and death. And I am so incredibly proud to lead the team of folks who are implementing this at Health + Hospitals. I've seen the national effort to make access to health care easier for folks. And I just wish that all across the country in the future, we can have this model, because, unfortunately, we left out so many folks, so many hardworking, tax-paying Americans who do not have access to health care because of their documentation status. So, thank you, Mr. Mayor, for your leadership on this issue. I am so proud to say that it's available in all five boroughs and please call 646-NYC-CARE today – 646-692-2273 to get access today. Thank you so much.

**Mayor:** Excellent. Thank you so much, Marielle, to you and your team, something you should be very proud of. Again, first city in America now, in all five boroughs to guarantee health care for all. And this is needed more than ever with what we're dealing with the coronavirus. And when you think about NYC Care, this effort was put together over the last two years – unprecedented. Well, another effort that was put together, but only over the course of a few months, and also unprecedented, was the New York City Test and Trace Corps – extraordinary effort, the largest in the country, the most comprehensive, the most effective to make sure that, God forbid, if someone gets the coronavirus we're able to trace everyone in their life who might've been exposed and make sure everyone who needs support and needs to safely separate, needs medical care, gets it and gets it for free. So, test and trace continues to do amazing work, working closely with Health + Hospitals and our Health Department. And one of the new strategies they developed in the last weeks was what's called a hyper-local strategy to really go into a neighborhood where either we see an uptick in the disease, or we see low testing rates, or both, and address that rapidly and turn it around by really flooding the neighborhood with free testing and outreach in multiple languages and getting people the support they need. It works. It works. And we just saw this in Sunset Park. We told the people of this city a few weeks back, that there was an uptick in Sunset Park test. The trace and trace team went in intensely with folks who spoke multiple languages of the community, put up testing opportunities all over the community, including literally right in the middle of the park in Sunset Park. We saw in the week of August 12th, the positivity rate go up and it got at one point as high as 4.2 percent, but we were able to knock it down quickly with this rapid effort. And now, today, the latest measure from Sunset Park, 1.30 percent positivity rate in that community. So, that's an amazing example how quickly you can turn things around if you put the effort in the right place. So, right now, that effort is underway in Borough Park, Brooklyn. We have seen an uptick. We're addressing it rapidly with more testing, with more outreach, more free masks being provided, reminders to folks how important it is to get tested, reminders how important it is to practice social distancing and to limit gatherings. That effort is going on intensely as we speak and working with community leaders and community organizations who have really helped to lead the way. And a special thank you to the Hatzalah ambulance corps, which has been in the lead of this effort, educating members of the community and letting them know how important it is to pay attention to these crucial rules and get tested.

**Executive Director Ted Long, Test and Trace Corps:** Thank you, sir. Earlier in August 4.2 percent of Sunset Park residents getting tested, came back positive for the coronavirus. One of the highest rates across New York City. In response, what we did in Sunset Park was we did more than 10,000 tests. We knocked on more than 20,000 doors and we made more than 400,000 phone calls. Importantly, we did all of that with the community in Sunset Park. When we brought in our new community mobile testing units, we asked the community where should we put these? And that's where we did testing. And that's what made a difference. So working with the community in Sunset Park, as the Mayor said, we've been able to drive down that rate of positive tests from 4.2 percent to 1.3 percent. Working with Sunset Park we were able to cut it down by two thirds, which is a substantial accomplishment.

And now we're going to apply all of those principles to our next hyperlocal response, Soundview. This one's personal for me. I'm a primary care doctor in the neighboring community

at Morrisania in the Bronx. I know well from my patients that the Bronx is a diverse place. And I know well from my patients, that the way to make a difference in the Bronx is to know your community. And in particular, that starts with speaking the language of your community. Right now if you come today to Soundview in the Bronx, you can come get one of our rapid tests. You'll have your result back within 15 minutes. Then if it's positive, we have a group of tracers in-person there that speaks seven languages, that will talk to you in your language. Help you figure out what you need to get through this. And also in that same moment, ask you about contacts or people you may have exposed to the coronavirus when you were positive. Then that same day in Soundview we're going to call your contacts and we are going to bring them in for testing. The secret ingredient to our substantial success in Sunset Park has been keeping this a local effort. We will be working very closely with the community in Soundview and we will succeed together. Thank you.

**Mayor:** Thank you so much, Ted. And thank you to you and everyone at Test and Trace for the really extraordinary effort and going wherever the need is and getting there quickly. That's going to make all the difference. All right, it's time to talk about our daily indicators. Indicator number one, daily number of people admitted to New York City hospitals for suspected COVID-19, threshold is 200 patients, today's report 72. And the percent positive amongst those patients positive for COVID-19 is just about 13 percent. Number two, new reported cases on a seven day average, threshold 550 cases, today's report 244. And number three, percentage of the people testing positive citywide for COVID-19. This is the one we look at most carefully every day, threshold five percent, today's report 0.79 percent. Very good day for the city. And again, that's because of everything you are doing. And I thank you for that. A few words in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish:]

With that, we turn to our colleagues in the media. Please let me know the name and outlet of each journalist.

**Moderator:** With that, we'll now begin our Q and A. As a reminder we're joined today by Dr. Ted Long, Executive Director of the Test and Trace Corps. Kathleen Daniel, Census 2020 Field Director, Schools Chancellor Richard Carranza, Health Commissioner, Dr. Dave Chokshi, Senior Advisor Dr. Jay Varma, and Marielle Kress Executive Director of NYC Care. Our first question today goes to Juliet from 1010 WINS.

**Question:** Hi, good morning, Mr. Mayor, and to all on the call. Actually I have a question regarding crime stats that just came out this morning. On Monday, you said working with violence interrupters and Community Crisis Managers has been successful. So how do you quantify that at the same time the number and level of shootings remains high? For the month of August, there was a 166 percent increase in the number of shooting incidents as opposed to last year at this time, 166 percent increase.

**Mayor:** Yeah. So Juliet, we do believe profoundly in watching the numbers and using those measurements to tell us how we're doing. And obviously that's so much of what CompStat has been about over the last quarter century successfully. But we are dealing with a perfect storm and there's no doubt about it. We are dealing with a challenge we'd never seen in the city. It is thank

God, temporary Juliet. There will be a vaccine. There will be a turnaround. But we know that with the entire society on hold for months all sorts of things got set in motion that were truly unusual. We do see signs of progress now that are profound. The court system is starting to come back to life. That's going to help us immensely. As you saw in the statistics released the gun arrest levels are now at the same as they were last year. A credit to the men and women of the NYPD who are out there doing that important work and that dangerous work to get guns off the street.

But to your question about police and community, I have a different measure, Juliet that doesn't – it's not something that comes out immediately in the statistics. But it is a profound measure. I talk constantly to clergy members, to elected officials, to community leaders. And what I hear from them consistently is that over the last couple of months, the NYPD and community members are working more and more closely together to address violence. That people in neighborhoods all over the city that are afflicted by violence are focused on how to address it. And they know they need to do that with the NYPD and the NYPD knows that they have to do this work with the community. And the Cure Violence Movement and Crisis Management System has been expanding their efforts. And we've seen stunning success in the past. We know it will take root here again. But everyone is still trying to come back from a massive disruption. We're not going to see an overnight turnaround. We do see more and more of that key collaboration and work at the local level. That's going to make a difference for the long haul. Go ahead.

**Question:** Okay. Thank you. Wanted to check back with you on the layoff situation? Where that's at? And also the MTA has borrowed from the Federal Reserve to help shore up its finances. The State of Illinois has done the same. Is that something you would do or to consider to help the city's financial recovery?

**Mayor:** I'll talk about borrowing in general. I think it's important that people understand. The Federal Reserve option is short-term borrowing. It needs to be paid back quickly. It really in some ways is robbing Peter to pay Paul. It just forestalls the inevitable for a short period of time. What we need is long-term borrowing. And only Albany can authorize that. Now to your question, how are we doing? I see some progress, Juliet. Not enough to give you a definitive answer, but I know that labor leaders are having intense discussions with the Legislative leaders in Albany. They understand that the layoff clock – I'm very sorry to say this Juliet, but it could start at any time, depending on what the situation is in Albany. So the labor leaders asked, the Municipal Labor Council asked for, you know, some time to get Albany to definitively come back to address long-term borrowing. We're waiting for a resolution of that. And if it's a positive resolution and Albany declares that they're coming back to address this issue, we'll continue to hold off on layoffs. And if it turns out that we can't get such a declaration from Albany, unfortunately we will have to move ahead with the notices.

**Moderator:** Next up is Courtney from NY1.

**Question:** Hi, Mr. Mayor, how are you?

**Mayor:** Good Courtney. How are you doing?

**Question:** I'm good. I want to follow up on that question about the borrowing. Do you have, I mean, there's been this October 1st deadline for layoffs. But you know, we're on September 2nd. Is there a concrete deadline that you need to hear from Albany about whether they're coming back and how much money potentially – has that number changed at all of how much money you would like to borrow at all?

**Mayor:** So it's a good question, Courtney. I want to say two things to you. One when we say we're going to hold on a day to day basis, you know, a few days is manageable. The longer a delay goes, it means either you get the borrowing to stop layoffs, or God forbid you don't get the borrowing. It will ultimately mean more layoffs if we have to delay much longer. Again, a few days, either way, not decisive. But if you start talking about weeks and you don't get the borrowing? Unfortunately, tragically for this city, it means even more layoffs. So obviously we want to avoid that. So we're waiting to hear more from folks in Albany to give us a clear picture so we can make those decisions. Now Courtney. There was another piece to what you said, please remind me?

**Question:** This doesn't count as my second question, right?

**Mayor:** No, I'm asking you for clarification. It does not count.

**Question:** Okay. I asked how much – if the number has changed at all of how much you were looking to borrow?

**Mayor:** Well, the point there, Courtney is the billion dollars for this fiscal year is what we need to stop the layoffs. But then a reminder, the next fiscal year starts July 1st with the same billion dollar hole implicitly. Because that's just part of the permanent budget. So if you got a billion dollars and you stop the layoffs now, but you didn't have the billion dollars next year, then the layoffs would happen next year. So that means really practically you need \$2 billion to stop this year's layoff, stop layoffs from happening in the next fiscal year for that same group of people. Then there's the question of the State cuts. We don't know what's going to happen with the State of New York. We do know the State of New York is under tremendous fiscal stress and they didn't get and we didn't get the federal stimulus. When you think about that, that is probably immediately several billion more certainly between this fiscal year and next fiscal year. So the number we put forward, the \$5 billion, I wish I did not have to tell you that money would all be potentially needed. But it very well might be, especially if there's not a federal stimulus. I also want to affirm Courtney, I've said it for many times, but it's important to say again. We would only take as much of that borrowing authority and use it only as much as needed. If we got a federal stimulus, we would not want to borrow any more. Who wants to borrow if you don't need to borrow. Right? The fact is, and we have a great example. City of New York went to Albany right after 9/11, got \$2.5 million in borrowing authority. Long-term borrowing, 20 year plan, only ended up using \$2 billion of that authority. So granting us the ability gives us the ability to manage an ever changing situation. But our clear purpose here is only to borrow that which we need, not a single dollar more. Go ahead, Courtney.

**Question:** And then now on another topic I know about more than two weeks ago, we asked you about the homeless situation in certain parts of Manhattan, especially in Midtown and the Upper West Side. You said you were going to go visit those areas and that you were going to start the process of quote, immediately moving some homeless individuals back into shelters. Wondering if you have visited those areas we spoke about including Midtown and the Upper West Side to check out the situation for yourself? And whether you have any update on potentially moving homeless individuals back into congregate shelters?

**Mayor:** I did not say immediately. And it's really important. Because I made clear that we need the space in the shelter system. So what I said and I mean it, is this was always temporary. We moved folks into those hotels because there was a health care crisis, a pandemic that caused us to need to make sure that coronavirus did not spread through shelters with a lot of people in them. It was absolutely a temporary measure. We want – we don't want to be in hotels. We set that policy almost three years ago. We don't want to be in hotels. And the goal is in fact to get out of hotels everywhere. So what I said was we're going to start that process, but it requires having safe spaces in our shelter system to move people back to. As that becomes available, we will act on it. I've been to some places looking at the situation. I've talked to a lot of different people about what they're seeing, but I want to do some more of that. Over the next few days, I'll have more to say after that.

**Moderator:** Next up we have Marcia from WCBS.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor. This is question for both you and the Schools Chancellor. Now that you're reopening schools, I wonder what happens to the grab-and-go meal program, you know, that so many people need? And how adults who pick up the meals will be able to get them? And how kids who learn remotely will be able to get the meals that they're entitled to?

**Mayor:** A great question, Marcia. And we'll get further clarification out to people about how it's all going to work. But I think the simplest answer is this – we want to make food widely available as we have throughout this crisis. Anyone who needs food will have access to it. We've had the school-based food program. We've had the community-based food pantry, soup kitchens. We've had the delivery. We're going to continue a whole host of efforts to get people food. Obviously, any kid that comes to school can get the food they need for themselves and for their family. We're going to keep that going a variety of ways. But we'll get the details out to the public shortly because as school operations begin, we'll have to make some modifications. So we'll let everyone know how that's going to work. Go ahead.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, my second question has to do sort of tangentially with the census. You know, people that we've been doing stories and other news organizations have been doing stories about people who are moving out of the city. And people who move out of the city reduce the number of people who are in the population and could affect the number of people that – the number of elected officials we get into Congress. And it could affect the amount of money we get in federal and state aid. I wonder, are you concerned about the people who are fleeing? And are you concerned that that affects both our representation and our money? And are you concerned that the crime rate is driving people out as well?

**Mayor:** Marcia, first of all, much more crucial to that question is what we talked about earlier. There's 28 days to go, we've got literally millions of New Yorkers who should be filling out that census form. It takes 10 minutes and I'm talking about people who are not going anywhere. That is the central mission. So let's speak about this bigger reality. I do want to sort of throw a caution flag here, Marcia. I think many people, particularly in your line of work, are deeply focused on this question. And I honestly don't think the whole picture is being looked at. I will guarantee you that we've got eight million plus people who are not going anywhere. So what we're really talking about is a small number of people. I can't give you the exact number. But a small number of people who are choosing for now, to go someplace else. Now, there was an article the other day that talked about people leaving and then compared it to the number of people coming in. And there are still a lot of people coming in too. So we just got to stop this painting of a picture that's not true. The vast, vast majority of New Yorkers are standing and fighting. They are loyal to this city. They're going to stay here no matter what. I told you guys about – what I think a lot of you saw, the Jerry Seinfeld piece in the Times last week, which I thought said it beautifully. Some people will go away for a period of time and then come back. Some people may leave us permanently and they will, sooner or later, be replaced by other people who want to be here. So, the question around representation to me, the much more profound question, is people filling out the census because we have more than enough people, if they filled out the census, we could get our fair share of funding and representation. But I really think – I just think this meme is getting to be just inaccurate and unfair to the vast majority of people who are staying. In the 60s and 70s, people left in much, much greater numbers than anything that's being talked about now. And guess what a huge number of people came and replaced them and created the city we have today. So, we just got to give this some perspective. New York City will come back. There'll be a huge number of people who want to be in New York City, and we will be strong for the future.

**Moderator:** Next up we have Christina from Chalkbeat.

**Question:** Hi, this question is for the Mayor and Chancellor, thanks for taking it. Lots of people have called on the City to build a solid remote learning infrastructure because we know that most instruction is going to happen remotely, even if and when buildings reopen. So, why wasn't the City immediately prepared to start with all remote learning on September 10th instead of delaying the school year? What specific things have been done to make remote learning better?

**Mayor:** Okay. I would say, first of all, it's not if or when it's, when. We've made very, very clear that on a transitional basis, the first few days of remote instruction will start on September 16th and then in-person learning will start on September 21st. We're moving forward with that period. There's just no if to that, it's just very, very clear and it's happening now. The work that was done last year to create remote from scratch was miraculous. Work has been done throughout the spring and throughout the summer to improve it. There's no question that the remote learning kids will get this month is much better than what was available in the spring and it will continue to improve. So, I just think it's a misnomer to suggest that that work isn't happening every day, both on the system wide level and the work of individual educators who are constantly working together individually to improve their approach. Chancellor, jump in.

**Schools Chancellor Richard Carranza:** Yes, Sir. I would only add that – what you said is correct, but I would only add that part of why we needed some more time was that when teachers

report back on the 8th and then the nine days of professional development they'll have, part and parcel of that is additional training, additional orientation, new tools, new curriculum, new platforms. So, all of those things are what's been planned for and, obviously, to have more time to familiarize our teachers with that, and then also to orient our students to that remote learning protocols and the guidelines are also why that time is not only needed but will be very, very useful in making sure that we have a robust remote learning environment this year.

**Mayor:** Go ahead, Christina.

**Question:** My follow up question has to do with childcare. Many community organizations that were running recs have closed down, gearing up to reopen for September 10th. And I know the plan for Learning Bridges was to kick them off around the same time that school was starting. So, what's the start date now? When will people have childcare options?

**Mayor:** We're obviously orienting the childcare to the physical start of school. So, September 21st and we'll have more to say very shortly on the specific details and the application process, etcetera, but that's going to be key to the start of school physically on Monday, September 21st.

**Moderator:** Next up, we have Rich Lamb from WCBS Radio.

**Question:** Morning, Mr. Mayor, how are you doing?

**Mayor:** How are you doing, Rich?

**Question:** I'm doing okay. So, Mr. Mayor, do you think without the delay or the extension, whatever you want to call it, of the school year being moved a little bit farther down that if teachers walked out, what would have happened? Were you being told that that was a real possibility?

**Mayor:** Rich, look, I want us to move forward. I'll just state the obvious. We sat here yesterday in unity, the Chancellor and I, and the heads of three crucial unions representing the folks who work in schools. There are other unions as well, and I want to thank all of them for the work that they do, their members do on behalf of our kids. We're in a place of unity. I'll only say what I've said before, the laws of the State are clear that public employees cannot strike. But the more important point is that we all came together and addressed valid concerns and issues and got to something that made sense and allowed us to be unified. Go ahead.

**Question:** Okay. Another education question, if you will. So, it's kind of been asked before, but I'm wondering how many extra teachers have to be hired, how many have you located, do you have any idea, and how are you going to afford this given the state of the budget of the city?

**Mayor:** Yeah, Rich. It's a fair question all around. The answer is thousands and that begins with folks who work for the DOE right now and have not been in the classroom but are qualified to be in the classroom. There's thousands of them to begin with. There's thousands of substitute teachers that are used every year. We'll peg the number shortly, but we're talking about two pools of multiple thousands of people that can be brought into play here. Yes, it will cost some money.

But, look, as we have moved forward, we have to make sense of a very challenging situation. But it really comes down to our priorities. And I think educating our kids properly, keeping them safe, moving them forward, helping families that need to get back to work, helping restart our economy – there are so many reasons why the investment that we'll make to get schools going is worth it. It has huge ramifications for what the City will need in the next few months. And like every other decision, we'll have to make adjustments to achieve that outcome. But, you know, this is the right thing to do. Chancellor, do you want to add on the folks that we brought in to augment the school teams?

**Chancellor Carranza:** No, Sir. I think you covered it.

**Mayor:** All right, go ahead.

**Moderator:** Next step is Reuvain from Hamodia.

**Question:** Good morning, Mr. Mayor, I'd like to ask you about the indoor dining. Day after day, we hear how New York's getting better and better with the numbers and other states, some of whom we require quarantine from, so they're not doing as good as us, are allowing more and more dining. So, what is it about indoor dining that's just – it seems like there's no timetable, for no benchmark for?

**Mayor:** It's a fair question, but I think your question points out part of the problem. A number of states moved ahead with indoor dining and found that it contributed to their either ongoing problem or resurgence. So, unfortunately what we see around the country, what we see around the world is there's a direct connection. Now to be fair, it is more profound, even, if you're talking about indoor bars, indoor nightclubs, those are even more profound problems than indoor restaurants. And we are treating indoor restaurants separately. I know folks in the restaurant industry have asked this question, a very fair question. And the answer is, yeah, we see it as very different – indoor bars, indoor nightclubs have been particularly intense nexuses for resurgence around the country and around the world. Some of what we're seeing in Europe right now, that's a very big concern. Spain is a very big concern. It is being directly related back to those kinds of settings.

But indoor restaurants are still sensitive. They may not be as much of a challenge as bars and nightclubs, but they're still really sensitive and they have been linked to problems around the country, around the world. I think the answer that I want to give today is that we've been honest with the restaurant industry about the challenge, but I've also heard back that folks just want a final answer as soon as possible so they make their plans up or down. I think it's our responsibility to give them as clear an answer, in the month of September, as possible of where we're going. If there can be a timeline, if there can be a set of standards for reopening, we need to decide that in the next few weeks and announce it, whether it's good news or bad news. We're also working really closely with the State of New York. The State, like the City, both have – we've both taken a very cautious approach here. So, we'll keep looking at it. I think we owe the industry as clear an answer as humanly possible soon. But it's always going to be about health and safety first. That's why we've been so careful on this issue. Go ahead.

**Question:** And with the weddings, even those that keep to the guidelines of 50 people, it officially says that – I mean your office released this, that there can be no eating indoors. I mean, they're talking about most wedding halls, have a capacity of maybe 500, 600 people. If there are 50 people, there is a – what is the specific problem with the eating?

**Mayor:** So, let me turn to Dr. Dave Chokshi, our Health Commissioner, because his agency is leading the efforts to address weddings and catering halls. Go ahead, Dave.

**Commissioner Dave Chokshi, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene:** Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Thank you for the question. The issue with higher risk activities that occur indoors, I would say occur along, you know, two major dimensions. The first is the size of the gathering that's happening indoors, hence the limit of 50. And then the second is paying particular attention to when masks are not able to be worn for the entire duration of when someone is indoors. And so, that's why, you know, we're particularly concerned about weddings, other large events that combine those two things where you have both a challenge to maintain a distance and potentially a larger number of people as well as the possibility of masks not being used regularly.

**Mayor:** Thank you very much. Go ahead.

**Moderator:** Next up, we have Jake from Gothamist.

**Question:** Hey, good morning, Mr. Mayor –

**Mayor:** How are you doing, Jake?

**Question:** I'm doing all right. How are you? That meme you were talking about of people leaving the city, I kind of want to move past this, like, over blown discussion of whether New York City is dead. But there is like a lot of concern about the lack of vision or big ideas from your administration. So, can you name two or three big forward-looking initiatives that your administration has committed to that will help [inaudible] get back on its feet?

**Mayor:** Jake, respectfully, that's also an attempt at a meme. This is not how it works. The big idea is bringing New York City back safely. Right now, we're the envy of the nation that we have rebounded from being the epicenter, to being the safest place around in terms of the coronavirus. The big idea is bringing back our school system, largest in the country so we can take a major step towards functioning normally, and we can help our kids and families. Everything we're doing is to get this city back. And we already – we're at our all-time high in terms of economic strength. This February 2020, 4.6 million jobs. So, I truly believe that what we need to do now is reestablish the strength we had. And then we're going to be talking a lot, starting this month about how to bring back this city not only all the strength we had, an incredibly diverse and dynamic economy, a global economic powerhouse, but also going to do it in a way that is more fair and address the disparities on many, many levels. And so, what's a big idea? A big idea is guaranteeing health care for everyone. We announced this almost two years ago. We've now implemented fully. The fact that some people don't want to make it a major issue or focus on it, doesn't make it less important. It's a huge seismic idea to guarantee health

care for everyone and people who are receiving that health care know it. So, I think we're on the right track to bringing this city back with all these things we're doing. Go ahead.

**Question:** Okay. And I guess related, yesterday, a dozen members of your own Surface Transportation team put out an open letter, criticizing you for your failure to address transportation-related congestion, pollution, inequality, and traffic violence. The panel says they received neither feedback nor next steps from City Hall on the status of those recommendations, which included implementing 40 miles of emergency bus lanes and prioritizing new bike lanes in communities of color. Do you intend to implement those recommendations?

**Mayor:** Again, Jake, I think what we need is a dialogue about what's really happening. And if folks are disgruntled and they don't want to acknowledge what's really happening, well, I can't do much about that. I can only tell you what's happening. We said we needed to get Open Streets right, and we did and worked together with community folks all over the city. We have the biggest Open Streets initiative in the nation by far, it's been an extraordinary success. We're increasing the number of busways, an idea that only developed during this administration, starting with 14th Street. It worked, we made it permanent, we're adding more permanent busways. We're going to continue – we've obviously expanded bike lanes, massively, and Citi Bike massively. We're going to continue to do that again. I would say that's a lot of vision, obviously, NYC Ferry, which has come back really strong now. People are back in droves on the ferry. If you talk about a citywide ferry system that never existed in the last hundred years, if you talk about massive expansion of bike lanes and Citi Bike, more and more Select Bus Service, now busways as well, and Open Streets – that sounds like a lot to me. And we're going to keep doing that and more. Go ahead

**Moderator:** For our last question. We'll go to Rosa from The City.

**Moderator:** Thanks. Hi, Mr. Mayor. My question is about the Layleen Polanco settlement, the largest ever for a death in a City jail. She was in jail for months because of a 2017 incident in which an undercover cop at a hotel said she agreed to have oral sex with him for \$200. And upon arresting her, he found a drug pipe in her pants pocket. So, she was charged with drug possession, criminal possession of a controlled substance, as well as prostitution. You've said before that Polanco shouldn't have been in jail to begin with. So, should NYPD be making those kinds of arrests? Should they be at hotels arresting sex workers who agreed to engage in sex with them?

**Mayor:** Without going into the specifics of that case because I don't know all the facts, I mean, what happened was just horrible. And she never should have been in jail and she never should have been in solitary. And that, obviously, we have now changed those rules that anyone in the same situation, with the same health conditions will not be in solitary confinement in this city going forward. In fact, our goal is to end solitary confinement and that work is happening now. But to the question of whether sex workers should be arrested, my broad answer is no. The people who are organizing and profiting from that sex work are the people who should be arrested. The people are exploiting those women and, in many cases, men, anybody, anyone who's exploiting folks who do sex work, those are the people we should be arresting. So, we'll

continue to look at the NYPD's protocols, but I think we have to really go after the true criminals here. You there, Rosa?

**Question:** Yeah. Thanks, that's my – so, these undercover busts, you think maybe are something that could change in your tenure?

**Mayor:** Again, I want to be clear. I'm not speaking about that specific case because I don't know all the factors in that case and why that arrest happened. I do think, and I've seen it changing already within the NYPD, the focus is on those who profit from sex work, not those who do the sex work. That change has already been happening. We need to deepen that change and we'll have more to say on that.

So everyone, look, I'll just finished with this and I want you to know, I did an interview yesterday on CNN, and the same thing happened that I've heard on many interviews I've been a part of – the journalists, from the national perspective, asking, with a certain amount of amazement, how New York City has come this far, how we went from worst to first, from being the epicenter of the crisis to now one of the safest places in the country. And I always say it's because of all of you. It's because of the extraordinary discipline and strength and resiliency of New Yorkers. And I have to say, my fellow mayors have asked me the question as well, with a kind of an amazement in their voice – how is this possible? And what I like to tell people is, first of all, if you know New Yorkers, you understand this is part of who we are. There's just no crisis that truly overwhelms New Yorkers. We've come back from so much. I saw what we came back from in those tough times, the 80s and 90s, when we had the huge crime problems, the AIDS crisis. So, many things going on, we came back. We came back after 9/11, we came back after Superstorm Sandy, we came back after the Great Recession. You see it enough times, you know, it's just in our DNA.

But the amazing thing here is, it's the combination of individual actions that has led to this result. And so, every one of you, every time you put on a mask, you're doing something for the city and for everyone else, every time you practice social distancing, every little act has added up. And today we're reminding people that you can do something else great by filling out that census form. But what I know about New Yorkers is they always step up, New Yorkers are always there for each other, and it's going to happen again. So, I'll conclude with this, if you read articles or you go online, you go on TV, and you hear people saying it's over for New York City or people are leaving in droves and all, I hope a little smile will come across your face because the naysayers have said this for decades and decades, they've been wrong every single time, doubting Thomases. I don't know why people like to do it. I'd much rather talk about what's right when New York City than put New York City down. But I'll tell you one thing, the people putting us down, the people predicting our doom will be wrong again, and it will be because of all of you. Thank you.

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