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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON MSNBC'S MORNING JOE

President Donald Trump: Wonderful city for so many years, I loved it, it was vibrant. It's dying. Everyone's leaving New York.

Mika Brzezinski: Joining us now, the Mayor of New York City, Democrat Bill de Blasio. Mr. Mayor, we got a lot to talk about, but let's start right there. I've been to New York recently. It's not a ghost town, but people really are struggling. A lot of people are leaving. A lot of apartments are vacant. But the reason for that might be something that's lost on the president. Where do you say New York City stands now amid the challenges from the coronavirus, the economy, and how do we move forward?

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Thanks for the question, Mika. Look, New York City is fighting back. New Yorkers have been heroic during this crisis. And we were once the epicenter of the coronavirus crisis, we have fought the disease back. Our school system is open, 1,600 public schools open in New York City, 10,000 restaurants and outdoor dining jobs are coming back. It's going to be a long road, but New Yorkers are proving this vibrant city is going to come back strong. And the only ghost town I say – the only ghost town is going to be Mar-a-Lago after this election, when Donald Trump is forced into retirement there. I mean, this is just a pitiful attempt by the president to undermine the notion that everyday people are going to fight back this disease because he failed to. He's literally putting the burden – he's putting the onus on the people who are suffering, but are still fighting back, rather than acknowledging his responsibility because he wasn't here for us when we needed testing or when we needed a stimulus for our recovery. He's been missing and absent.

Brzezinski: You mentioned schools. Here's the president on reopening schools last night.

President Trump: I have a young son. He also tested positive. By the time I spoke to the doctor the second time, he was fine, it just went away. Young people, I guess it's their immune system... I want to open the schools. The transmittal rate to the teachers is very small, but I want to open the schools. We have to open our country. We're not going to have a country – you can't do this, we can't keep this country closed. This a massive country with a massive economy. People are losing their jobs. They're committing suicide, there's depression, alcohol, drugs at a level that nobody's ever seen before. There's abuse, tremendous abuse. We have to open our country. You know, I've said it often, the cure cannot be worse than the problem itself.

Brzezinski: Yeah. Mr. Mayor, New York City has been pretty successful as it pertains to opening schools so far. But something Joe Biden brought up in his response to that was that schools really need the financial support to put in safety measures. And that, that, you know, hasn't come from President Trump. How are New York City schools fairing in terms of being

able to have ventilation systems, social distancing guidelines? Are there protections in place for New York City teachers?

Mayor: Yes, absolutely, Mika. Look, I was a public school parent myself. So, I want to be clear, it was imperative to get it right in terms of health and safety. So, we looked around the world. We looked at every standard that worked, every rule that worked, and we took them all and combined them into a gold standard. So, every child, every adult wears a mask all the time. Kids don't go to the cafeteria for lunch. They eat in their classroom. A typical New York City classroom now has about ten kids in it. It used to have more like 25 kids in it. Social distancing crucial, ventilation absolutely. We make sure that every classroom is ventilated properly. If it can't be, we don't use it. Constant cleaning – when you layer all those measures on top of each other and then testing, testing, testing – we test constantly in our schools – we found an incredibly low rate of positive cases in our schools.

But you're right, Mika, that takes a lot of resources and we've made it a real priority in New York City – I thought bringing back our schools, our kids needed it. They had been suffering for so long. Our families needed it. Folks who need to get back to work, kids who have had the toughest time, families that have gone through the most pain need school the most. We have to fight those disparities in our society. Public education's part of that. But we had to do it safely. We didn't have the federal government helping us. And if we want schools back and our economy back, we need a stimulus. But here's the greatest fallacy of all, in what Donald Trump said, hasn't lifted a finger for a stimulus. He says, 'my old New York,' he hasn't helped New York. He hasn't helped any of the city or state in the country. If he called for a stimulus, the Republican Senate would have gone along. He never did the work that a president should have done in this crisis.

Willie Geist: Mayor de Blasio, it's Willie. Good to see you this morning. It's obviously not a ghost town. I live there. I worked there in New York City. I know. But if you walk around, there are a lot of empty storefronts. Your favorite diner might be closed, in our case. A lot of shops have been closing, apartment buildings half empty in some cases, and people have this sort of dread or this air of inevitability that we're going to kind of go back into where we were this winter, just because of the nature of the virus and flu season coming as well. So, what have you learned as mayor from March, April, May, let's call it, that you can apply this winter to hopefully get us through this better so some of those restaurants maybe can stay open?

Mayor: Yeah, Willie, such an important question. We learned the hard way. We went through so much pain. But New Yorkers really, out of that experience, found a lot of discipline and strength. And so, now you see in this city, people wear those masks. It's not perfect, but the vast majority wear those masks, practice the distancing, and we have tough rules. Look, we had a problem recently in some neighborhoods in Brooklyn and Queens. We worked with the State of New York. We put tough restrictions in place to stop that spread. And we've seen it work immediately. When you have to apply some restrictions, tactically, you can do it. But overall, the city is doing really well. One of the lowest positivity rates in the whole country. We've seen this sustained. It really comes down to the people. And I think this is another thing the president doesn't understand. Leaders are supposed to inform the people, educate, inspire the people to be their best selves. New Yorkers have responded by really showing the strength and the discipline and the people are who are sustaining us. So, no, we're not seeing a second wave in New York City and we are fighting back any indication that might suggest even the beginning of them.

We're going to – if we see even a beginning of a second wave, we hit hard at that. So, I'm feeling very good that we can get through this winter strong.

Brzezinski: And finally, Mr. Mayor, getting ready for Election Day, a lot of questions surrounding how that's going to go. You're setting up what's called the Election Observer Corps. Can you tell us about that?

Mayor: Mika, look, clearly President Trump has tried to discourage people from voting, suggested the election results will not be legitimate. Some of his followers clearly have been practicing intimidation tactics around this country. We cannot have this. So, for New York City – and I'd say this for every city and country, we have to have a voter protection program. On Election Day, we're going to have hundreds of lawyers, City officials, volunteers, all out there protecting the vote. If they see any instance of intimidation, any effort to stop people from voting – and we know where this is going to be targeted, it's where it's always been targeted, in lower income communities, in immigrant communities, where people of color live. That's where intimidation efforts have been over the years. We're going to have a strong voter protection effort because you cannot let this election be stolen by intimidation.

Brzezinski: Mayor Bill de Blasio, thank you for that. And thank you for coming on this morning. Good to see you.

Mayor: Good to see you, Mika.

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