



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

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CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

**RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO AND NATIONAL PROGRESSIVE
LEADERS UNVEIL THE PROGRESSIVE AGENDA TO COMBAT INCOME
INEQUALITY**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Good afternoon, everyone. I'm New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio, and I want to thank my fellow progressives who are here – mayors, members of the House and Senate, activists, labor leaders, civil rights champions, progressives from every part of the country and progressives who have made a big difference in communities all over this country. Six weeks ago, I convened a small group of progressive leaders at Gracie Mansion. The idea was to discuss the central challenge of our times – income inequality – and to find a way to bring progressives together to make an impact like never before. We pledged to reach out all over the country to hundreds and hundreds of our fellow progressives and start a movement that would reach all the way here to Washington DC and make an impact, so we can finally address income inequality.

We knew it would take a bold set of solutions that no half-measures would do. So today, we're announcing and we're signing the Progressive Agenda to combat income inequality.

[Applause]

These 13 progressive ideas will make an enormous difference for families all over this country, for every day Americans. They are bold steps. They are clear steps like increase the minimum wage to \$15 dollars an hour; national – national paid sick leave and paid family leave laws; universal pre-k, and afterschool, and childcare; and closing the tax loopholes that hold us back – closing the loopholes that allow CEOs, and hedge fund managers, and billionaires to avoid paying their fair share in taxes. The only way we're going to turn this country around is if we have the resources we need to actually give people economic opportunity again, and that will take progressive taxation.

This is a beginning and there's more to come. I've talked to so many members of this extraordinary coalition. And the next chapter in this effort will add additional key planks. We're going to address issues like the expansion of Social Security. We're going to address debt-free college. We're going to find ways to make sure we're investing in schools, not jails. And – and to give people returning home from prison a second chance at an economic future so this country can be whole again. We look forward to working on these priorities in the days immediately ahead, and building this movement all over the country.

The Progressive Agenda comes down to a very simple concept – we need to reward work again. We need to reward work, not wealth – work. And that’s a change that will have a profound effect on this country. Something is happening in this country right now, and I have a lot of good witnesses right here. Something different is happening. It’s a movement from the grassroots. It’s an urgent call for change. We’re hearing the voices of people every day – people all over this country. Last month, we saw demonstrations in 200 cities across this country for a \$15 dollar minimum wage. Something is changing in America. It’s time to take that energy and crystalize it into an agenda that will make a difference. It’s time to put people ahead of profits – value work over wealth. It’s as simple as that.

We’ll be calling on leaders and candidates to address these issues, to stiffen their backbones, to be clear, and to champion these progressive policies. And we know that this cause will grow. People will join – everyday people will join it and we’re inviting everyday Americans to be a part of this. Sign up today at ProgressiveAgenda.us. And when you go on that website, you’re going to see what is, in effect, an invocation for this moment in history by one of the greatest of all Americans – a beautiful essay written by Toni Morrison, one of the founders of this effort who joined with us at Gracie Mansion – one of the greatest living Americans whose words inspire us. And she makes clear in the essay on the website today why it is time for a progressive agenda to change this country.

Now, it’s my honor to turn to someone who has shown us what it means to build progressive politics in this country, whose commitment to genuine grassroots action has literally transformed politics in this nation – former DNC Chairman and Governor Howard Dean.

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