

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 10, 2021, 10:00 AM
CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Good morning, everybody. Well, I keep talking about the Summer of New York City – it's going to be an extraordinary and memorable summer. So much is happening in this city, so much is coming back to life – restaurants, Open Streets, it's amazing to [inaudible] tourists coming back, outdoor cultural activities – it's going to be wonderful. The homecoming week, the homecoming concert in Central Park – but wait, there's more. I am happy to announce that America's biggest fireworks display is back – Macy's. Macy's 4th of July fireworks, back in New York City. And I am so appreciative to the folks at Macy's, they have been such good friends and partners to the City of New York. They are bringing back the full-scale firework show as we have loved it for decades and decades, back to New York City for all of us to enjoy. Now, this will be the biggest show yet. Literally, Macy's putting together the biggest fireworks display they ever have. And we know last year we had to do it in a very different way. It was great, but it wasn't that same extravaganza we're used to. This year, back, and literally better than ever. And because people have gotten vaccinated on such an extraordinary scale, it allows us to have many, many people in attendance. There's going to be dedicated areas for fully vaccinated folks, other areas for folks who are not vaccinated or want to join together with family who are not vaccinated. All will be managed by the NYPD to keep it safe. This is really great, a tremendous sign of the rebirth of New York City. And here to talk about it, the Executive Producer of this year's display. He's someone who loves this city and is going to give us a great show, my pleasure introduced from Macy's, Will Coss.

[...]

Mayor: Thank you so much, Will. I really appreciate the fact that you really know – as someone who enjoyed it as a kid, you know the magic of this firework show, what it means to all New Yorkers. But it's going to take on added meaning this year as a symbol of our rebirth, so we're really excited about it. Thank you, Will. Thank you to everyone at Macy's for making this happen. We really appreciate it.

Now, I said, but wait, there's more – but wait, there's more again. Another fireworks display coming back this year – Coney Island, an amazing place to celebrate our nation's birthday. And nothing says summer in New York City like the fireworks show at Coney Island. It's an amazing event each year. It will be back. It will start immediately after the Macy's show concludes, open to the public. You can watch from the boardwalk and have an authentic and wonderful New York City experience. So, this is part of the Summer of New York City, the rebirth of New York City. We are so excited about this. Why is it possible? Because you got vaccinated and the numbers keep coming in. This is just great. As of today, since the very beginning of the

vaccination effort, biggest effort in the history of New York City – 8,645,785 doses so far, growing all the time. Please, everyone, if you like the rebirth of New York City and you have not gotten vaccinated yet, this is the time to do it. Super-charge our comeback. Everyone can be a part of it.

Okay. Now, the Summer of New York City is going to be memorable. It's going to be once-in-a-lifetime and our job is, of course, to make it something everyone can enjoy and to make sure people are safe during this summer. And here in the city, extraordinary work is being done to prepare for the summer to keep everyone safe, working with communities. The great work of the NYPD, working with the federal government. And you heard earlier in the week, the partnership with the federal ATF that's so important to keeping people safe. I said earlier in the week, I'm reiterating now, we need help from our colleagues in Albany. There's been a very good dialogue over recent weeks on this. And what I'm particularly focused on is legislation to help change the way State parole is handled to help make sure that folks coming back from prison to our communities actually get support to be reintegrated properly into our society so that we can make sure that people are safe. That means healthcare, including mental health services. That means housing. That means transitional jobs. That means discharge planning. The fact is that parolees coming back from prison are four times more likely to be involved in gun violence than other folks who have had a connection to the criminal justice system – four times more likely to either be a victim or a perpetrator. But the way to answer that is to give people the services and support that point them towards a better life, that point them towards redemption. Right now, the State legislature has an opportunity to do something historic and make sure that the State of New York holds the same standards that the City does right now for ensuring that prisoners coming back, folks coming out of incarceration, returning citizens, whatever word you want to use, get the support they need.

I want to tell you, there's been amazing support in Albany. You heard earlier in the week from a number of Assembly Members, there's a lot of energy to get this done. This will be a historic reform. Also, happy to say, we've been reaching out to mayoral candidates – two of the mayoral candidates already, Maya Wiley and Eric Adams, have come out in support of this legislation. I'm urging all the candidates, a show of unity to help New York City move forward and help us get fairness from the State of New York, urging all the candidates to weigh in on this important matter today before the legislature in Albany. And I want you to hear from a member of the City Council who represents a community that's gone through over the years some tough times in terms of gun violence. She is a community organizer by background. She knows the neighborhood. She knows the people. And she knows how important it is to keep people safe. And she knows how important it is that when folks are returning from prisoner – from prison, that they get support. Returning citizens need support. Here to talk about why this is important for our communities, Council Member Darma Diaz.

[...]

Mayor: Thank you so much, Council Member. I love the passion with which you make the point, and this is something that really could help change things and make this city safer. So, thank you so much for your support.

All right. Now, I mentioned mayoral candidates – well, guess what? This election is really getting close. And I want to remind all New Yorkers that early voting starts on Saturday. And really important –so, we're getting used to early voting. That's a great thing. June primary, that's something that's newer for a lot of us, but it's really important that everyone pay attention because this is the decisive moment for the future of the city. I want to urge everyone come out and vote, whether it's early voting or on Election Day. But here's the other X-Factor – ranked choice voting. Something new, something really good, because it gives people more power. It means your vote takes on more meaning – that if your first-choice vote doesn't succeed, your second, third, fourth, fifth place vote still could have an impact. But people have to get used to it. So, we've launched a \$15 million effort using every tool there is – TV, radio, social media, community newspapers, subway ads, urging people to vote and urging people to fully utilize rank choice voting.

Now, we have an ad that is going up that's going to really emphasize why this is important. I want to give you a sneak peek at what you're going to be seeing soon on the airwaves of New York City.

[...]

Mayor: I think that says it so beautifully, so powerfully with lots of energy and passion how important it is to vote and to use ranked choice to the fullest. I want to illustrate how ranked choice voting works. I'm going to tell you my preferences right here, right now with this giant ballot. And, of course, the topic is not yet the mayoral election topic is the most important food in New York City – pizza.

Okay. Here is a sample ballot and it's about pizza toppings, okay? We're going to do a contest, starting today to see if New Yorkers vote with ranked choice voting for the favorite pizza toppings, which topping wins. This is going to be a good opportunity to practice ranked choice voting. Now, as you can see, we have a variety of choices here. I'm going to comment on every one, but I can tell you from the beginning – I'm actually going to move it this way, because I'm right-handed – I can tell you from the beginning, green peppers, ladies and gentlemen – right here, my number-one choice. Now, a lot of people don't appreciate green peppers enough. I have Southern Italian roots, roasted peppers are a very big, important part of our life – number-one in a big way for me, okay? I didn't even have to question what my number-one vote would be – green peppers.

Now, it gets a little more interesting here. Where do you go from here? Again, I'm going to lean into my heritage – number two, olives. Okay. This one's a little controversial. Usually, it's black olives, could be green olives. Some people think always belong on a pizza, some people are really against it, but I have had very good experiences with olives. Now, number three – okay, I'm looking at the choices here – and we're going to have a lot of discussion. Of course, there's going to be people who – you know, I respect carnivores, I respect vegans, vegetarians, everyone along the way. So, this is just one person's personal vote. It's good, whatever you choose, I respect you. You know, I look at this, I kind of am on the edge between sausage and mushrooms – obviously, very, very different. It depends, of course, on the quality of sausage. So, it is what I'd say – a really good Italian sausage, number three, clearly to me. Number three, Italian

sausage, but has to be good – really good. There's a place in Brooklyn, and also in the Village, Faicco's – incredible sausage, I'd recommend that. Now, mushrooms, therefore, since it was a tossup for me – three, four – mushrooms is going to get my fourth place right there. Congratulations, mushrooms – you're often maligned, you're misunderstood, but you still got on my ranking. Okay. The last one, I'm now going to be able to talk about some areas of disagreement that I have with some of the options. So, in a sense, by default, I'm going pepperoni fifth. Pepperoni – there's a lot of boring pepperoni in the world, there's some really good pepperoni, but I kind of always will say yes to pepperoni. So, it certainly belongs on my ballot.

Let me tell you what never, ever, ever should be voted for. This is ridiculous, okay? Pineapple doesn't belong on pizza. We're not in California. Okay? It is like – this is sacrilegious in Italy to put pineapple on a pizza. So, I'm just – totally, no way, never going to rank that. Vegan cheese, respect, okay? Respect vegan cheese, not ready myself for it yet. Really honor what the vegan cheese makers are doing, I think they're making a lot of progress, I'm just not there yet. Clams – we're not New Haven, okay? I respect a different way of life in New Haven, we don't do that here.

Okay. So, here is my sample ballot. As you can see, it was quite easy. Just speak from the heart, think from the heart – rank. And I don't know what's going to win when we're starting this contest. I want all New Yorkers to weigh in, I think this could be an important moment to clarify what New Yorkers really want for the future of pizza in the city. But as you can see, every one of these votes matters, can make a big impact.

Now, here's one way of voting – pizza, one thing to vote for. I want you to hear what would happen now when someone ranks their vote and how it plays out when, for example, we may be electing a mayor. Our Chief Democracy Officer Laura Wood is going to explain it to you.

Chief Democracy Officer Laura Wood, DemocracyNYC: Thank you, Mr. Mayor, for that great demo. And thank you for your investment in outreach and education about rank choice voting. Now, pizza is really important – I get that, as a native New Yorker. But even more important is our upcoming elections. And with so much at stake and the citywide rollout of ranked choice voting, public education is more important than ever, which is why DemocracyNYC and our partners at the CFB, BOE, Rank the Vote, NAACP, just to name a few of the many, many groups out there that are educating New Yorkers through multi-lingual workshops, get out the vote programming, community engagement, phone banking, tech tools, print, and digital media campaigns. And our efforts are making a difference. Through our campaign, we have already reached millions of New Yorkers in more than 20 languages about this new system of voting. As the Mayor said, ranked choice voting is new and it can empower New Yorkers, but only if enough New Yorkers actually rank multiple candidates.

So, back to the pizza toppings ballot, which I hope everyone will take the time to fill out. As you saw, it's quite easy. If your first choice is sausage, but it doesn't win, your vote goes to your next choice – let's say, pepperoni, and after that, cheese, for example, and on down the line until there's a winner. But if you only pick sausage and sausage gets eliminated, you have no more say in which topping wins. So, pick a few toppings that you kind of like, just like the Mayor did, to ensure you don't wind up with a topping you really don't like. If you hate onions, like I

personally do, don't rank onions. In fact, I hate them so much, I made sure they weren't even on the ballot.

Mayor: That is power, Laura.

[Laughter]

Chief Democracy Officer Wood: But, you know, there's plenty of – there's plenty of toppings that I like just fine. And so, I encourage you all to do your homework, both on the pizza toppings and, more importantly, of course, on the candidates for these local offices. You can find out more about them at voting.nyc. You can even practice filling out a real ballot there if you want. And please do help us spread the word. This campaign is really having an impact, but people talking to their friends, their family, their neighbors really will help us get the word out. And so, we really encourage you to do that. And if you're interested in learning more or getting more involved, there are lots of multi-lingual resources on our website. There are volunteer opportunities. Please go to nyc.gov/democracy for lots of information. And I do just want to give a shout out as well to our partners at Ranked Vote that created this awesome pizza ballot that you can all use, as well as other multi-lingual sample ballots.

So, please make your plan to vote. Remember, early voting is June 12th through the 20th. If you want to vote absentee, request your ballot by June 15th. And then, of course, you can always vote in person on June 22nd, Primary Day itself. Thank you so much, and back to you, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: Thank you, Laura. Okay. Now, we need all New Yorkers to get in on this, okay? This is a chance for us to practice and also answer an age-old question about which pizza we value most. So, this is the most pertinent place you're going to find on a government website this week, nyc.gov/votepizza. Yes, you heard me – nyc.gov/votepizza. Get in this – speak, New York City. Let's find out who the real winner is. And we'll announce the winner next week, right here from City Hall. Now I want you to hear from a City Council member who kind of pulls together everything we've been talking about. His district he lives in has great views of the Macy's fireworks. He is a tremendous pizza enthusiast and he believes in ranked choice voting as a democratic reform. I want you to hear from Council Member Keith Powers.

[...]

Thank you so much, Council Member. As we all know, there is only a good time of the day for pizza. There's no such thing as a bad time of the day for pizza. It can be hot. It can be cold. It's all good. Don't rank pineapple. That's the only thing I want to get across here. Okay. Lots of great choices. No pineapple. You with me?

City Council Member Keith Powers: I'm with you.

Mayor: Okay. Growing coalition. Okay. Now, everybody – thank you Council Member. Now everybody look, it's important to make your voting plan. We have this crucial City election coming up, mayor, citywide offices, boroughwide offices, City Council, a lot going on, make

your plan, find your polling place. If you don't know, you can go to find mypollsite.vote.nyc. Or you can go to voting.nyc for a variety of answers and a lot of information to make sure you are ready to vote. Early voting starts Saturday. Deadline to request an absentee ballot, June 15th. And of course, Election Day, Tuesday, June 22nd. So, time for everyone to focus.

Okay. And what we focus on every day are indicators. So, here we go. Number one, daily number of people admitted to New York City hospitals for suspected COVID-19. Today's report, 75 patients. Confirmed positivity level 9.33 percent. That is very good. Hospitalization rate 0.45 per 100,000. Number two, new reported cases on a seven-day average. Today's report 212 cases. And number three, percentage of people testing citywide positive for COVID-19, on a seven-day rolling average, 0.71 percent. Good, good numbers today. Keep getting vaccinated. Now a few words in Spanish, I'm going back to the elections and the importance of ranked choice voting.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that let's turn to our colleagues in the media and please let me know the name and outlet of each journalist.

Moderator: Good morning to everyone except people who eat pineapple on pizza.

Mayor: That was a strong and clear statement. Thank you, Angelene. The votes are just piling up now. It's becoming a landslide. Go ahead.

Moderator: We will now begin our Q and A. As a reminder, we are joined by Laura Wood, the Chief Democracy Officer of Democracy NYC. Dan Gross, the Executive Director of the Mayor's Office of Citywide Events, Geoff Brown, the Chief Information Security Officer for NYC Cyber Command, Dr. Mitch Katz, President and CEO of New York City Health + Hospitals, and Health Commissioner Dr. Dave Chokshi. Our first question goes to Andrew Siff from NBC.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor, and everyone on the call. We're tabulating your pizza votes here right now in the media, right now. And there's some controversy about the green peppers, number one, but we'll get back to that. I did wonder where you are on your votes for mayor? Are you going to announce your five choices before early voting begins on Saturday? Are you going to be voting early or are you waiting till primary day?

Mayor: Andrew, first of all, I have great faith in you as a fair vote counter. And I think you're going to find the green peppers have a lot more support than you think. So, I am going to vote on primary day, on June 22nd. I am going to think about how much I want to share with the people of the city. I think it's important to go into detail about what I'm feeling, I will. But I'm really going to watch, I want to see the next few days what the candidates say and do. So, that's a decision I'll make later on. But definitely planning on voting on June 22nd and planning on ranking five candidates for sure. Go ahead, Andrew.

Question: Mayor, to what degree do you think the questions about Eric Adams, his residency are important for voters to consider? And what degree of confidence do you have that Mr. Adams

has been truthful about Brooklyn and in particular Lafayette Avenue being his primary place of residence and not New Jersey?

Mayor: Yeah, Andrew, I've known Eric Adams for decades. He's clearly a – he's a Brooklynite. He's a New Yorker, he's served the city in many different capacities. I just don't see an issue here.

Moderator: Our next question goes to Katie Honan from the Wall Street Journal.

Question: Hey, good morning, Mayor de Blasio. It's nice to see you reclaiming pizza, which had been a very controversial topic for you in your two terms.

Mayor: Now Katie, wait a minute. Now, hold on, hold on. I didn't feel it was controversial. I, you know, I felt like I was living my truth. Okay. And there's some pizzas that should be eaten with a knife and fork and some that shouldn't. And I'm okay with that. So, if anyone wants to have that debate. I mean, that's right up there with the pineapple debate, obviously. But I'm ready for that. Bring it. That's my message. Bring it. Go ahead, Katie.

Question: Now I get it with all those green peppers and olives, you need a knife and fork.

Mayor: See, thank you, Katie. Thank you. Someone understands.

Question: My question is for serious, since Geoff Brown is on the call, I wanted to see if there was an update on the hacking? I know he'd said this week – I don't know where he got it from – that there were reports that there was ransom? No one seemed to report that. But there had been a comptroller's audit of the cybersecurity at the Law Department and some concerns about some of the issues there. So, could you speak to – could maybe Geoff speak to the update on the investigation and what's happening and any information he has?

Mayor: Absolutely. Geoff, please give us an update. Hold on. We're getting Geoff.

Chief Information Security Officer and Head of NYC Cyber Command Geoff Brown: Do you have me?

Mayor: There we go. Okay.

Chief Information Security Officer Brown: Terrific. Happy to do so, sir. And thank you for the question. So, you know, as stated earlier, there's still no evidence, that's no evidence of any damage to City systems from the attacker. No evidence of unauthorized encryption of City systems or data. And no evidence establishing data exfiltration. Also as said earlier this week, no ransom. So, that's the update. As of right now, the investigation is ongoing. Thank you for the question.

Mayor: Thank you very much. Go ahead, Katie.

Question: And I guess I know when you had announced the homecoming concert last week, you said that there would be more updates, particularly about what will be going on in the other boroughs. Do you have any updates to that?

Mayor: Look, that's going to be in August. We expect to have a lot to say in the coming weeks on it. Not yet. But it is definitely going to be a major, major series of activities, five-borough. And I'm excited about it. And I really want us to both celebrate all five boroughs and also celebrate the talent that has come out of this city. So, more to come on that.

Moderator: Our next question goes to Stacy from FOX-5.

Mayor: Stacy, Stacy? I'm not hearing Stacy. All right, we'll come back to Stacy.

Moderator: Our next question and goes to Mike Gartland from the Daily News.

Question: Okay. Can you guys hear me now?

Mayor: Oh, we got Stacy. Stacy's there.

Moderator: We're back to Stacy.

Mayor: Stacy.

Question: Oh, I am here. Okay. Thank you so much. Sorry about that, spotty area. My first question is actually about the Summer Rising Program, Mr. Mayor. We know it's just a couple of weeks now until the end of school and Summer Rising will be starting. And we're hearing from the principals' union that principals really are not getting information or details about what's going on. They don't know how many students are enrolled at each program at each school? More teachers need to be hired. When are more specific details going to come out about this program for both the principals, teachers, and parents, and students?

Mayor: Well for parents, thank you for the question, Stacy, For parents and students it's real clear. Every student will be accommodated, who wants to be a part of it. This is not summer school as we used to know it. Which was associated with kids who had had some challenges during the year and needed some extra time and catch up. This is for any kid, whatever their situation, different for different grade levels. Academics front and center, but also recreation opportunities, cultural opportunities. It's obviously free and it's available to all of our young people. So, that's so important because a lot of people were worried this summer, what would be a good option for their kids. And we wanted to give them something that would be really clear and straightforward. But in terms of any concerns that principals have, we'll follow up. We'll have the Chancellor and her team follow up and make sure that everyone knows the resources will be there. And we're going to accommodate all the kids who come forward. Go ahead, Stacy.

Question: Well, just one follow up to that would be, do you know how many kids have enrolled yet in the city? Do you have numbers on that? But my second question actually is about crime. There was another shooting last night, fatal shooting outside the Dream Hotel. 25-year-old shot

dead. And I'm wondering, you know, as we hear about more and more of these high-profile shootings, of course, Justin Wallace, how concerned are you that maybe it's discouraging people from coming back to the city to go out? Or tourists to come back to the city because there's this perception that violence is raging here?

Mayor: I do not see that. I think we have a fundamental challenge, Stacy. I want to separate the two points. We have a challenge for our own people and for people visiting to keep everyone safe. All over this country, since COVID there's been an uptick in gun violence and gun ownership. This is a challenge we have to overcome and we will, but it is something that before I worry about tourism, I'm first and foremost worried about the safety of all New Yorkers. But I also know we're fighting back. NYPD's doing more gun arrests than ever before. Communities are working more closely with NYPD again. We're going to turn this around. As for tourism, Stacy, you can see with your own eyes. Tourists are coming back and they're starting to come back in really big numbers. I talked about earlier in the week, this last weekend, we had 72 percent capacity in our hotels being filled. I did not expect in June to see our hotels at 72 percent full after what we had been through. I think you're going to see this grow rapidly. I keep talking about summer of New York city. I mean it. People want to be here. People are coming back energetically. And they know overwhelmingly it is a safe city and they know it is the best place on Earth to visit. So, they will be back.

Moderator: Our next question goes to Mike Gartland from the Daily News.

Question: Morning, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: Hey Michael. How are you doing?

Questions: No anchovies, no eggplant. What's going on here?

Mayor: You know, Michael has a point here. Let me comment. I did not assemble the ballot. Obviously, Laura Wood used her influence to keep onions off. I wasn't going to rank onions anyway. That's okay. But you make an excellent point. Anchovies, and I say it because some of my roots are Neapolitan, you know, anchovies, big deal to us. Not sure I would have ranked it, but it did deserve to be heard. But eggplant, that's a big one. That's a big one. I love eggplant. So, I'm you spoke up for eggplant, Michael. Now, what's your question?

Question: Well, I had to. I've got a couple of questions. So, on the question of, you know, Eric Adams's residency. You know, Andrew asked about this earlier. You know, there's been this discussion about whether this is kind of a conversation about his residency mounts to like a sort of birtherism? And I'm kind of wondering, you know, what your thoughts are on that? I mean about this just conversation in general? I mean, do you think it's a fair conversation to even be having or do you think it's not?

Mayor: Yeah. I just don't see any problem here at all. Here's a guy who, you know, born and raised in New York City. We know his personal story. He overcame adversity, became a police officer, served for 20 plus years, became an elected official, has served Brooklyn for a long time. I just don't see an issue here. Clearly a New Yorker, clearly a Brooklynite. Let's get back to

talking about the issues that actually affect New Yorkers and decide who's going to serve our city best going forward. That's what I'd say. Go ahead, Michael.

Question: Thanks Mr. Mayor. The second question I have is for Mr. Brown. Simple, pretty, pretty simple question. Just say yes or no question. Was the Law Department using multi-factor authentication prior to the hack?

Mayor: Go ahead, Geoff.

Chief Information Security Officer Brown: So, on that question, I just want to make it clear New York City Cyber Command did issue a directive, standard policy all associated with multi-factor authentication to all agencies. But at this time answering questions about the protection of City systems could give the attacker insight in the City's IT environment or insight into the ongoing investigation. I also want to make one more point here. There's a concept in cybersecurity in many different security disciplines, called defense in depth. This is an important point, defense in depth. And as I noted earlier, all the analysis today indicates that that defense in depth strategy worked. The analysis is still ongoing and the investigation is still ongoing. Thank you for that question.

Mayor: Thank you very much, Geoff. Go ahead.

Moderator: Our next question goes to Henry Goldman from Bloomberg.

Question: Hello, Mr. Mayor, how are you doing?

Mayor: I'm doing well. Henry, how are you?

Question: I'm good. I wanted to ask you about the City's vaccination program. The numbers continue to be pretty low compared to the excitement, et cetera, that started out. And when you look closely at the neighborhoods where vaccination participation is the lowest, they are all neighborhoods or most of them, that the city has been talking about since the beginning of the pandemic as disproportionately affected, disparately impacted. And there's been so much attention and resources put into these neighborhoods, and yet the participation rate is still disappointing? And what's the explanation for this? And what's the cure for this if anything?

Mayor: Henry, it's a very important question. But it is one we've talked about a lot, so I'm just going to summarize. There's hesitation in a number of parts of our city. And sadly, some of the strongest hesitations in some of the places hit hardest by COVID. The best way to answer it is with patient consistent work, constantly going out to communities, addressing concerns, bringing in voices that people trust – clergy, community leaders, doctors, pediatricians. This is how with time we overcome some of that hesitancy. We also have a lot of people who are not hesitant, but simply need it to be available, convenient, maybe an incentive to help them get interested. But these are also some of the people who are working very, very hard. These are a lot of New Yorkers with two jobs or, you know, a tough job and a family to deal with and everything else, for whom just finding the time to focus on it or get the last few questions answered is a big deal. This is about persistence. Look, we've got now 4.4 million people that received at least one dose

that's really good. 4.4 million people received one dose, that means they're almost all going to get a second dose. Every day, new people coming in. We are achieving the most important goal, which is driving down COVID, but we're going to just stick with it. As long as it takes, we'll stick with it. Go ahead, Henry.

Question: Well, I'm just going to follow up on this because it's just – the numbers are terrible. They're in the 30 percent range throughout all of these neighborhoods in South Queens, South Brooklyn, Harlem going into the Bronx, and to blame it on the residents as being hesitant or being nervous or being somehow unsophisticated about that –

Mayor: Henry, Henry. Dear friend, don't put words in my mouth. That's a foul. I did not say any of those things. I said, people are hesitant. We're out there talking to them and they have valid concerns that we're trying to answer. Let me have Dr. Chokshi and Dr. Katz give you a little more of the flavor of the dialogue that we're having all the time with people to help them get the answers they need. Dr. Chokshi, do you want to jump in?

Commissioner Dave Chokshi, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene: Yes, sir. Thank you, Mr. Mayor. And you described well, the spectrum of efforts that we have done over the last several months. But the important point is that we will keep on – we will be persistent because we know from other vaccination campaigns that the last miles of the campaign are often some of the hardest. But that means that we're bringing to bear the tactics that have worked in previous months, particularly lowering access barriers, making sure that as many places are able to accept walk-ins as possible. But also, to bring an empathetic ear to the conversations that need to happen. And often these are conversations that are happening with people that residents already trust, whether it's a family doctor or a faith leader. And so, we're going to continue to be out there in those neighborhoods where we do see lower vaccination rates to ensure that we're equipping people with the information that they need, but also bringing that spirit of persistence. The last thing I'll say is just, you know, as a doctor myself this is common in the clinical setting where sometimes a patient, you know, needs questions answered, not just at the first visit, not just even at the second visit, but at the third and fourth and fifth visit as well before they get comfortable with a particular intervention, like a vaccine. We have to do that at the community level, at the city level, and we're committed to doing so.

Mayor: Dr. Katz, you want to add?

President and CEO Mitchell Katz, NYC Health + Hospitals: I think you've done really well, both of you, that it's not surprising to me that given what these communities have undergone for the past decades of disenfranchisement, lack of investment, experiencing racism – it's not surprising that then when faced with a new intervention by the medical field, that people are wary. I take great pleasure in the fact that every day more people come and get vaccinated. People who could have gotten vaccinated five months ago are coming now. And what that says to me is that our approach is working. It may take a little bit longer, but we're going to get there. Thank you, sir.

Mayor: Thank you. Go ahead, Henry.

Question: Oh, that was my second question. Thank you very much.

Mayor: All right. Thank you.

Moderator: Our next question goes to Yoav from The City.

Question: Hi, Mr. Mayor. Apologies for sounding like a broken record, but I wanted to ask you about the 64 videos of alleged police misconduct that the New York Times assembled last – from last year's protest. I was able to get some of the outcomes. So, thank you and your office for that. However, the NYPD – there are nine cases where allegations of misconduct were substantiated against officers or partially substantiated. And the NYPD says it is not providing the names of those officers, even though they're allowed to under 50-a – with the repeal of 50-a. They essentially say they have a policy of not identifying officers if the misconduct is minor. And I should also add that they're not saying which allegations were confirmed in those cases. But I want to ask you about identification of officers against whom misconduct is confirmed, but the discipline is minor. Are you, I guess, is that the policy of the NYPD and your administration? And if not – well, if it is, could you just explain it please?

Mayor: Look, obviously, I believe strongly in the repeal of 50-a and thank God it happened because it was standing in the way of building a sense of trust between police and community, and a sense of accountability and transparency. So, I'm very, very glad 50-a was changed. We have been putting out a huge amount of information about discipline, current and past. I'll look at this, Yoav. I don't want to comment on the specifics until I hear what the concern is at the NYPD. I will say, just go look at the voluminous material that's been put out about police discipline, individual cases, real names, real facts. That's the way we want to go, but I will follow up to find out what the specifics are in this situation. Go ahead.

Question: Sure. And just one side note on that, the information that's been put up there only includes officers whose cases have gone to administrative trial. So, they're also excluding minor discipline from the online database as well. I guess my other question is about the detention of legal observers in last year's protests. The officers who made that arrest have been exonerated, but you were asked at the time about that, and you had a question about whether some of the – you know, whoever gave the instructions to make the arrest of legal observers, whether they might deserve some form of discipline. The records that I was provided do not make clear whether any supervisors were investigated or disciplined for making that order. Do you think there should be discipline for whoever made that order or do you know if there was any?

Mayor: I don't have the specifics. Look, again, it was an extremely complex environment. What I said very clearly and believe fundamentally, once it's clear someone is a legal observer, they must be respected. Their rights must be respected. They shouldn't be arrested, obviously, the same with media. We had a very complex ever-changing situation a year ago. I don't know if that has been resolved or what happened in that case and what the supervisor's role was. We will get you the facts on that. It certainly is important to get to a final resolution there. So, we'll get you the facts on that, for sure.

Moderator: We have time for two more questions today. Our next question goes to Abu from Bangla Patrika.

Question: Hi, Mayor, how are you?

Mayor: Good, Abu. How you been?

Question: Good. Having a [inaudible] Bangladesh-style tea and cookies.

Mayor: Okay. You know that – we're going to have to have other contests as well, Abu. But I will tell you, this is breaking news everyone, that over 500 people have already voted on the pizza ballot. I'm going to remind everyone, go to nyc.gov/votepizza. This is, like, the best, clearest name ever – nyc.gov/votepizza. But, Abu, you're right, we should consider other foods in the future too.

Question: Yes. However, the health condition, if someone eats pizza then –

Mayor: You know, we did not consult with Dr. Chokshi, but I am declaring pizza a health food. It has protein. It has vegetables. That's health food, we're done here. Okay, that's very clear –

Question: You're the leader of the city, millions of people that follow you all the time. Some of my other colleagues already asked you a direct question but let me ask you one question. Millions of New Yorker, New York City residents, they are waiting to vote as you appeal to them, but they want you to give them a direction, where are they supposed to go for a vote. They are your follower. They are your supporter. They always follow you. They are confused where they're supposed to go.

Mayor: Well, thank you, Abu. That's kind of you to put it that way. I am very, very proud over the years to have received the support of so many New Yorkers, you know, City Council and public advocate, now mayor. And I have incredible experience going out into communities and talking to people. And I know I'm listening to them and I'm always humbled when people are listening to my thoughts. It's something I'm considering right now, Abu. If I'd make the decision that I want to urge people in a certain direction or offer certain observations, there's certainly time to do that. But I want to watch this election a little bit longer. I want to hear more from the candidates and then I'll make a decision if it makes sense to do that. Go ahead, Abu.

Question: Any idea when you can make a decision? And the second question, let me just ask the second question, as everybody asking about the [inaudible] situation being a reporter, being a journalist, I visited many places like Church Avenue. It starts in McDonald Avenue in Brooklyn where most of the, you know, Bengali business reside. Then I went to Jackson Heights. I went to Jamaica, Hillside Avenue where – and then purchased another areas. And I found there is an uncertainty and fear of the people who opened – who used to open their store 24 hours a day. But nowadays after 12 o'clock, they are not comfortable to open the store. So, the City is – are you thinking about providing law enforcement or security, more security in that area where people can be comfortable to, you know, be like before?

Mayor: Yeah, it's a great question, Abu, thank you. Look, I do believe there's a direct interconnection of recovery and public safety. I think recovery, you can see with your own eyes so many elements of recovery are happening. Clearly jobs are coming back, economic activity, activity is coming back, street activity is coming back. That's going to help us improve public safety and vice versa. We need to keep doing more work on public safety to keep encouraging the recovery. My point is I think you're going to see over these next few months, New York City being more and more "normal," more and more back to what it was before. People are going to be out this summer. They're going to be out enjoying the city fully, including late at night. That's going to help make it safer. Absolutely a priority for the NYPD is to protect the store owners, to protect the whole way of life of this city, including in the overnight hours. So, we continue to make those adjustments, but I think we should also recognize coming out of a global pandemic, some of this will be achieved by just people getting back into the rhythms of their life before. And we absolutely see that happening.

Moderator: Our final question for today goes to Nolan Hicks from the Post.

Question: Hey, good morning everybody.

Mayor: Hey, Nolan. How are you doing?

Question: I'm all right, Mr. Mayor, just, you know, trying to understand how a man can make pizza selections that you've made, but I digress.

Mayor: Nolan. Wait a minute, Nolan. I'm going to ask you, you know, you have a right to an opinion. What would you rank first, Nolan?

Question: I'm a traditionalist. Of the options, I'd go with pepperoni.

Mayor: Okay. But pepperoni made my ballot. I mean, we have some common ground. You know, Nolan, this is a moment of Americans coming together. We have common ground here. There it is. It made my ballot.

Question: And if you ever get the chance, prosciutto on a pizza, it's actually quite lovely.

Mayor: That is – I have to give Nolan credit, authenticity points to Nolan, big deal in my ancestral homeland, prosciutto on a pizza. Yes, that's a thing. Point for Nolan.

Question: On a couple of different matters here. Firstly, you've been speaking for months about the importance of making more tweaks to the State's bail reform legislation, particularly concerning the release of people who have been convicted on crimes like robbery or burglary or with gun charges and that are subsequently let without – let go without any bail. The Legislature is closing today. It doesn't seem like there will be any tweaks to this law. What does it mean for the city? And what does it say about your standing and ability to influence things in Albany?

Mayor: The focus right now is on getting the parole issue right. This is something I've cared about for a long time. Criminal justice reformers have cared about, NYPD has cared about. This

is something that could really be a crucial moment for the city. We feel like there's a good chance of getting something done. The notion that the State of New York takes folks leaving prison and literally to this day, dumps them at New York City homeless shelters with no support, no job, no housing, no health services, no discharge planning, I mean, that's ludicrous, that's backwards. That's not fair to anyone. The State needs to own that responsibility for the good of all to make us safer and also to be more humane to people to help their rehabilitation. So, that's where I think we can make progress now. Nolan, on the other issues, there's been an ongoing dialogue over the last weeks with the Legislature. They weren't ready to do something yet, but I do think this dialogue will continue. I think the Legislature will be back in a relatively short time. They have some other important things I think there'll be dealing with. And we want to continue to talk about the discovery reform, which is a very good thing, but need some tweaks. We want to continue to talk about bail, which is a very good thing, but need some tweaks. But there will be, I'm quite convinced, another opportunity to do that. Go ahead, Nolan.

Question: Sure. And back to the matter of pizza and pizza toppings, which mayoral candidate is your pineapple?

Mayor: Oh, Nolan –

[Applause]

I need a cap, so I can tip my cap. Okay, breaking news over 1,000 ballots have been cast. This is the biggest thing happening right now. Let's just be clear. I have to keep telling the people, nyc.gov/votepizza. Get in this, people. Nolan, I appreciate the clever, thoughtful question. You took the moment, you went with it, but, again, I'm going to watch very carefully all of the candidates, and I'm going to make my own decisions personally. Of course, I'm going to be voting. I'm going to be doing five candidates. And I'm going to think about if, how, when to share my thoughts with the people of New York City. But we're just not there yet, but we are there on pizza. Okay. We're totally there on pizza. So, no pineapple. This is how I want to conclude today. No pineapple, bad pineapple. Let me just say – pineapple, I respect you greatly, just get the hell away from pizza. Okay. Live your own life. Go independent. Do your own thing. Get away from my pizza. Thank you, everybody.

###