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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON HOT 97

Ebro Darden: Jump right in.

Laura Stylez: Good morning, Mayor.

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Good morning. Thank you, Laura. That was very kind of you.

Darden: Hopefully you're having a good morning.

Mayor: I am having a good morning because people are voting already. The polls are open, and you can vote until 9:00 o'clock tonight, and that's a good feeling.

Darden: You got up very early today? Or did you vote already? Did you get to vote?

Mayor: I am going to vote after this.

Darden: After this, alright. So we're going to do some good talk. But first we've got to take a caller. Who do we have [inaudible] out there? Should we play a game Mayor?

Mayor: Yes.

Darden: See if people are smarter than DJ John. So they answer a question really fast.

DJ John: That's me.

Darden: This is DJ John.

Mayor: DJ John, I'm with you.

DJ John: Yeah.

Darden: Don't do that.

Mayor: I believe in you DJ John.

Darden: Don't, nah, nah, don't do that.

DJ John: I appreciate you.

Darden: No, you don't –

Mayor: He's a New Yorker; I am here to support him.

DJ John: God bless you.

Mayor: God bless you, brother.

Darden: Yeah, alright. Mike in Staten Island. Mike, what's going on?

Question: Yes, what's up?

Darden: Who are you voting for?

Question: Not much. I haven't, I actually haven't voted yet in my life. So, but –

Darden: Are you voting today?

Question: So I am going to register to vote today, yeah.

Darden: Wait, you can't register today. Alright, Mike you're finished. Next caller, give me another caller.

Stylez: Wow, alright [inaudible].

Darden: I am reserving the right to hang up on everybody.

DJ John: You cannot register to vote today, unfortunately.

Mayor: Unfortunately.

Darden: Muhammad – Hot 97, hello. What your name young lady?

Question: Hi, my name is [inaudible].

Darden: Hi, how are you today? Oh, man we lost her call. It's a mess today.

Stylez: Oh, no.

DJ John: It's alright, we're going to figure this out, have faith.

Darden: Hot 97, hello.

Question: What's up?

Darden: What's your name man? Turn your radio down please.

Question: It's down; I got my Alexa on in my truck.

Darden: Very nice, you voting today?

Question: Nah, I drive a truck, and I'm an ex-convict. They are not letting me vote.

Darden: They're not letting you vote?

DJ John: He's an ex-con, yeah that's tough.

Darden: How much time since you've been out?

Question: 12 years, I beat the odds.

Darden: 12 years?

Mayor: He may be able to vote.

Darden: I think you're eligible to vote now, man.

Mayor: Call 3-1-1 or go to voting.nyc. You may be eligible to vote.

Question: I'm going to have to look into that.

Darden: No, you have to look in to that.

Stylez: You have too.

Darden: New York State has laws where people who were convicted of a crime after certain time can definitely register to vote.

Mayor: That's right.

Darden: And vote. So I am going to give you a pass today man because you didn't know that. So we all learned something today.

Question: No, but I am actually driving to North Carolina right now.

Darden: Oh okay, so you could have done an absentee ballot. Like I said we're going to give you a pass today. And we appreciate you calling in.

Question: Thank you, thank you.

Darden: So Laura is going to ask you a question, answer super-fast to see if you're smarter than DJ John.

Stylez: Okay, here we go. You ready?

Question: Yes.

Stylez: Alright. What day of the week do we always vote on?

Question: Tuesday.

Darden: There you go.

DJ John: Okay, alright.

Stylez: Alright, four seconds. He's good.

Darden: I was giving John a lot of time.

DJ John: That was very nerve racking.

Darden: Alright, hang on bro. Laura, the question for question for DJ John. John always gets an easy question Mayor. Watch this –

Stylez: Very easy okay. Alright DJ John, can you tell you tell us how many electoral votes did Washington get in his first election?

Mayor: Oh.

DJ John: 20.

Darden: No.

Stylez: The correct answer is 69.

Darden: But the fact that you went with a low number says something.

Mayor: That was smart.

Darden: A lot of people know how many states.

Mayor: DJ John showed me something there. He understood that the country was young there were only a few states.

Darden: Mayor de Blasio.

[Laughter]

Mayor: This guy, this guy sees things. He understands.

Darden: Yo my man, you're getting the tickets, brother.

Stylez: You're going to Hot for the Holidays, congratulations – Trey Songz, Tory Lanez, Lil Baby, and Gunna, & Flipp Dinero, tickets are on sale at [Ticketmaster.com](https://www.ticketmaster.com). But we got you.

Darden: Now, get out there, and get out there registered to vote man. Alright, Mayor de Blasio time. Mayor –

Mayor: Can I tell you something?

Darden: Don't warm me up, don't try to –

Mayor: Florida.

Darden: Don't try to –

Mayor: Florida. Now this good, this is good. In Florida, they're voting not only hopefully to elect Andrew Gillum Governor, which would change things –

Darden: [Inaudible]

Mayor: But to open up the voting process for those who did serve time which would enfranchise over a million Floridians.

Darden: 1.5 million people.

Mayor: Unbelievable, people served their time, paid their debts to society. Now they have a chance to participate in their society again, which, by the way, sounds like rehabilitation and redemption to me. This is actually I think going to pass in Florida and it's also going to have a huge impact on this whole country and hopefully every state will choose to do that kind of thing and give people a chance to actually fully participate again.

Darden: Now, Mayor, you have – we're going to get to the things that we need to talk about today. Clearly voting, the polls are open till 9:00 o'clock here in the city. There's three things on the back of the ballot.

Mayor: Yes sir.

Darden: Three propositions.

Mayor: Yes sir.

Darden: One is about –

Stylez: Campaign finance.

Mayor: Campaign finance, thank you Laura Stylez.

Darden: Thank you, Laura. Two is about –

Stylez: Civic engagement.

Darden: And three is about term limits.

Mayor: For community boards, that's right.

Darden: For community boards.

Mayor: That's right.

Darden: I voted this morning, all of which I put yes for those.

Mayor: I thank you, I agree with you.

Darden: However, two – proposition two feels like there might some redundancy and bureaucracy. Can you talk to us about these Civic Engagement Boards and how you're going to be or whoever the mayor is at the time, because I think these go into effect in 2020? Is that the deal?

Mayor: Well that stuff goes into effect soon. But let me tell you why it so important. Because right now we know – I'll give you a scary number. There are a million New York City residents who are eligible to vote, eligible to register and not even registered. A million people who are not in the game, not involved, in any way shape or form. We have a crisis in this city, but in the whole country of a lack of participation. And that becomes more profound as you talk about younger people in particular or folks with lower income. We need to overcome that. So why we have that Civic Engagement Commission question two is we want to reinvigorate the process. Here is a couple of examples. One, if we want people to be able to vote on where their own money goes.

Darden: That's right.

Mayor: Right now you pay your taxes; you never get to decide specifically what should be done with that money. There is a movement that has been built, it's actually a global movement called

Community Participatory Budgeting and it says you take some of the money the government has and let the people decide directly. You literally choose will more go to schools to parks, to affordable housing, whatever it may be. This kind of direct democracy engages people, gets them involved in a way that they would not otherwise.

Darden: Right, it doesn't feel daunting, it doesn't – it feels like you actually got a hands on the situation.

Mayor: Yeah, and it's something different and basically look – we're not going to keep doing the same things with a democratic process and expect a different result. We've got to find new ways to engage people. And so this to me is powerful because people will want to vote on where their money goes. Also, that Civic Engagement Commission is going to do something we've desperately needed, translation services. There are so many New Yorkers whose first language is another language. And they want to know about the elections, they want to know where to vote, they want to know what's on the ballot. If you say hey guys, sorry, we only have it English, you're basically telling a lot of people they are not going to have an opportunity to be fully informed. So that's why I believe question two is so important and people should vote yes. It's all about engaging people and getting them in the game. So here is the three questions – just really quick. Question one is campaign finance reform, very powerful. Get big money out of politics, lower the amount of money that wealthy people can spend on politics in this city, and reward everyday people. When you, Ebro, give a \$25 donation under this plan, you would get it matched 8 to 1 from the City of New York.

Darden: From the City.

Mayor: 8 to 1.

Darden: But that candidate has to participate in the city funding process?

Mayor: They have to participate, and they have to abide by rules that are all about getting money out of the system and amplifying the voices of everyday people. So your \$25 turns into \$225. You become someone who amplifies your voice and we say that more and more what this will allow is for everyday people to run for office. Imagine if you wanted to run for office you just needed to talk to people in your own community. No one who happens to be wealthy and powerful. People in your own neighborhood, your own community, and they can fund your campaign. 75 percent of a campaign from this point on would be with public funds. Get the whole concept of the big donor and the influential big powerful person out of the process.

Darden: And it helps people who want – who are new in politics, who don't have rich friends, and don't have rich support compete with the people who do.

Stylez: Right.

Mayor: And this is what's so powerful. If we don't have a government that looks like New York City, looks like America we'll be making a huge mistake here. If we don't give younger people a chance to run and win office. We'll be making a huge mistake. I mean what happens, when you

see younger candidates come forward and win, it is super engaging. A great example in this city, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, 28-years-old wins a seat in Congress. That says to young people across the spectrum, wow that's something I could do too. That's why Alexandria is supporting question one, Bernie Sanders is supporting question one, in the Congress Hakeem Jeffries, and Ivette Clarke, and Nydia Velasquez are supporting question one. The New York Times is supporting question one. So that's Campaign Finance Reform. Question two we talked about civic participation.

Darden: Now, on question two. The reason I said it might be complicated and maybe create some bureaucracy is because opponents of question two say that there are already jobs in the government that are supposed to be handling what you're saying.

Mayor: Yeah, here's the problem.

Darden: So would there be redundancy?

Mayor: No, because – I get why people of good faith are say hey we have concerns. But I go with the reality. Right now it's really hard for example to get translation services for an election. It's really hard to figure out where your poll site is. And there's been a lot of confusion. That's because our Board of Elections is really in my humble opinion –

Darden: A sham, corrupt –

Mayor: No, I don't think it's even corrupt. I think it's a 20th Century vehicle for a 21st Century world. It is arcane, it doesn't communicate with people the way we communicate today and doesn't provide accurate information. So that basically causes a lot of people to check out. We need something more vibrant to help get the word out, and also that direct budging point – the community participatory budgeting. People never experienced that. I guarantee you when people get to see, oh I get to vote on where my own money goes. You're going to see a whole other level of participation. The last one, question three, term limits for community boards. Community boards is the most grassroots part of our democracy. But if you go to a meeting you'll notice a lot of people served on a board 20 years, 30 years even longer. God bless them, that's great. But we've got to get younger people a chance to get at that table too. We've got to make sure community boards represent the whole community not just for example what the community looked like 20 years or 30 years ago but today's community. That's why term limits are healthy. I've got term limits; City Council has got term limits. We think it's a healthy idea especially to encourage youth leadership.

Stylez: I support that also, because when I was doing some research on it, I saw people who oppose it. Well, like that puts season community board members in danger. People who actually been involved, and know what the community wants. But like, I'm like why don't you give other people who want to be involved a chance and maybe these people can be around to help the other ones make decisions, but I am for 100 percent.

Mayor: Laura Stylez, ladies and gentlemen.

Darden: And it feels like those seasoned board members would be if they were smart once these term limits come in they would standing next to –

Stylez: Of course.

Darden: - the next board members that could keep going forward.

Rosenberg: In theory yes.

Mayor: Yes. It's all about – look, it's about striking a balance. If a long time – the political system was about seniority alone, right? So like wait your turn, wait your turn. What we've seen more and more is that folks aren't accepting that anymore. They don't think if you are in the political system, you're in the community board, you're in the congress, it's like a private club. It's supposed to be an open situation where anyone has a chance to participate and if someone's bringing new ideas and new perspective, they should get a chance too. And part of why people checked out of the political process is they didn't see a response to their concerns, they didn't see representatives who understood them and could relate to them.

Darden: That and we was high off of Obama. Honestly, in 2010 and 2014 we botched it.

Rosenberg: Everyone felt like they already did it. Like, oh we did it, we made it.

Mayor: That's right.

Darden: And there was ignorance.

Mayor: And we've learned a valuable lesson.

Darden: And it also was just ignorance on the local level and how the process works. I think people are more engaged than ever. Our access to information is higher than ever, transparency as far as you know – I mean it's hard to discern what's real and what's fake.

Mayor: Yes.

Darden: But, you know, there is a way if you want to participate and go learn what's happening out here. It's much easier now in the digital age.

Mayor: It is and the energy and focus levels – look I think history is going to show – obviously I'm deeply troubled by a lot of what Donald Trump has done. But Donald Trump also inadvertently put a sharp, sharp point on the reality of our democracy –

Darden: Woke us up.

Mayor: Right, yes a lot of people woke up as a result. And for example, Georgia, three times as many people voted in early voting as four years previous. Now some of that is extraordinary

energy around Stacey Abrams. Imagine the power of the first African American woman being elected governor of [inaudible].

Darden: In a red state.

Mayor: In a red state. But I think there's something much deeper going on than just one election. I think people are recognizing that when they, when they turned away, their interests got absolutely run over. And you have to have a sense of ownership. You have to feel like it's your society and you can make an impact – every year, not just every four years, but every year, locally in your neighborhood. Donald Trump in one form or another caused people to suddenly realize that if they don't participate, really bad things, really, things that really violate our values start to happen. And now the question is what we do with that, now that that awareness is out there, you're right, much more information is out there – are we going to turn that into a truly democratic culture where people participate constantly? We do that it's a whole, different, better country. There's never been a lack of people who wanted to go in a progressive direction. There's always been a progressive majority, for a long time. I mean that literally. If you look at election after election in this country, you see if the whole populous came out to vote, we would be moving in a much more inclusive, progressive direction. It's always been about those who stay home and feel it's not for them, feel like they can't make a difference. A lot of those folks are saying wait a minute, I have got to get in this now.

Rosenberg: Also I want to mention that we are live on YouTube if people want to watch on the HOT 97 YouTube channel you can watch us as well. Mayor, one concern we've had the last few days is that if they election doesn't go the way it is expected to go for the Republicans and they are disappointed. And it goes the way that a lot of progressive people hope it does – that they will do anything and everything to freak out, discount the vote and somehow cheat us in certain places. Does that concern you?

Mayor: Yes, I think Georgia, I am fully expecting.

Stylez: Especially Georgia.

Mayor: Because the guy who is running against Stacey Abrams is in charge of the election process because he's secretary of state.

Darden: He's the secretary of state.

Mayor: And he's already tried to undermine early voting. He's already tried to disqualify people from voting who were eligible. I think you are going to see what you say in Florida in 2000 with Gore and Bush. So I believe Stacey Abrams has a majority in Georgia and mysterious, do not be surprised if at the end of the first vote count, the other guy is winning. But I think we have to, if we see something like that, if we see something that looks like an attempt to steal an election. There has to be a much stronger response than what we say in the year 2000. Because I don't have any doubt in my mind that Al Gore won Florida in 2000, it just wasn't contested after the fact, the way it should have been. So yes, Rosenberg to your question – I think you will see that. I think we have to take it head on. I think people will feel cheated and angry this time and will

stand up against it. But there's no question in my mind, if you actually see what's happening on the ground and if people feel enfranchised, you'll see a lot of powerful results tonight.

Darden: Ladies and gentlemen, more with Mayor de Blasio coming up next on HOT 97.

[...]

Rosenberg: Don't ever stop, man.

Darden: Hip-hop, folks – 2018 midterm election coverage, Hot 97.

Rosenberg: I don't understand the voice.

Mayor: Yeah, what is that voice?

Darden: You got to have to the big voice –

Rosenberg: That's not it. That –

[Laughter]

Darden: You do one, Rosenberg. Do one.

Rosenberg: Midterm elections. I don't know. I don't have – why would have I have the voice.

Mayor: Guys, this is not a positive voice.

Stylez: Midterm elections, 2018.

Mayor: Why are you all making your voices worse? I don't understand it.

[Laughter]

Rosenberg: How about just, midterm elections coverage?

Mayor: There you go.

Rosenberg: On Hot 97. That makes me want to listen, right.

Darden: Nah, man. It's got to sound scary, Mayor. You got to scare people. It is life or death, get out and vote.

Mayor: This is not a shark movie. This is an election. What is wrong with you?

[Laughter]

Darden: Mayor de Blasio, what's going on, man? We feel like you was scared to come talk to us.

Mayor: Oh, stop, stop.

Darden: After all these years, man, the NYCHA stuff, the lead paint stuff, the rat infestation. We're like where's de Blasio?

Mayor: I've been here and will be here. Come on.

Darden: No, we – honestly, I've said on the radio multiple times, de Blasio is scared to come see us now. Things got crazy around the lead paint –

Mayor: I will meet you in the thunder-dome.

[Laughter]

There we go, excellent sound effect.

Darden: But you can admit that the NYCHA lead paint was terrible. It played out terribly.

Mayor: Of course, and it – look, we have to take full responsibility for fixing it. But I want to be clear, the problem, unfortunately, began years before and we didn't understand the extent of it. I want to be real about that. But there is some –

Darden: And I appreciate you saying that.

Mayor: No, and it's really important to be straight up about it. But there's a very powerful thing that got lost because unfortunately bad news travels very fast, good news doesn't. Since 2005, the amount of lead exposure for our children in New York City has gone 90 percent which is an extraordinarily good thing for this city. I have said, you know, we have a Vision Zero strategy in terms of traffic and traffic crashes and fatalities – I've said we want to do the same thing on lead.

We want to eradicate lead, not have a single New York City child exposed anymore. Because we've reduced it by 90 percent in just, you know, 15 years we can get this done. So we have a new lead czar, Kathryn Garcia, leading the way. We've put very, very aggressive measures in to once and for all identify where it is and deal with it.

Darden: Why is it so hard to identify. Help us regular folks understand why it's not just like walk into an apartment, boom – like, what's the – ?

Mayor: Because we're talking about things that were done over decades and decades and layers and layers of paint, and all sorts of things. If it was – look, if it just presented itself as like here's something to just take out of the apartment and close the door behind you that would be great. Unfortunately, we're talking about stuff that in the walls, covered up, sometimes exposed, sometimes not.

Rosenberg: And is this one of those situations where you as a mayor, an executive in the city, are hired by us to then hire other people to handle jobs –

Mayor: Correct.

Darden: And so you're entrusting their know-how, you're vetting this people to whatever degree you and your staff can, and if they go out and botch it, this falls on you because you're not actually going door to door checking lead because that's not your area of expertise –

Mayor: Right. The bottom line is I have to hire the best people I can find to do the work and you know of course hold their feet to the fire and ask tough questions. But you know, I have 380,000 employees. I have one of the biggest governments anywhere, obviously, and my job is to put together a group of leaders who are going to make sure it runs well.

We know that's tough because it's a big city, it's a complicated city but I take personal responsibility in every instance. Here the challenge is that lead paint inspections have been required in this city and required in public housing and all housing for well over a decade. There's actually a piece of legislation that I supported when I was in the City Council.

But in the previous administration, those inspections stopped in NYCHA for reasons we do not understand. And when our team came in and took over they did not understand that that had been missed, and that is on us because we missed it but also on our predecessors because they stopped the inspections.

But we can't – we don't have a time machine so the question is what we do now. And now what we've done has been very, very aggressive about saying we're sending out inspectors every single year. We're doing the remediation every single year. If we find any young person that's been exposed, we're getting them the health services they need. One – if there's a silver lining, one thing is if a young person is exposed to lead and you catch it quickly, that exposure level can go down quickly too and can help to protect that child.

So, we're pulling all these strands together. So, as I said, it's a Vision-Zero – we want no child to be exposed to lead. The other thing to know, Ebro, is NYCHA has been an issue but actually most lead paint exposure happens in private housing –

Darden: Interesting.

Mayor: We have a lot more to do there to address that problem. Lead paint exposure has gone down a lot more in NYCHA than it has in private housing. Anyone who thinks that there may be a lead paint situation needs to call 3-1-1.

Darden: And why would you expect that in your home? Like because of how old it is maybe?

Mayor: Well, definitely a lot of older buildings and look, the public sector is not perfect but the public sector puts a lot of energy into health and safety, and following regulations. Some private

landlords don't. And that's, in fact, when Local Law 1 was passed to try and address lead paint it was first and foremost about those private landlords because that's where the problem was. So, anyone who thinks there's lead paint in their home should call 3-1-1. The Department of Health will come over and inspect and make sure – lead paint really is an issue for kids under six. There's much less danger after the age of six, or six or up.

If you have young kids zero to five, if you're in an older apartment building, if you think there may be lead, pick-up the phone, call 3-1-1, and we'll make sure there's follow-up.

Darden: And Laura, you pointed out one day – and I know everybody's like why are you guys talking about lead paint but honestly it's because it tastes sweet. I didn't know that. Was that you who told that, Laura Stylez?

Stylez: No, we were discussing it because we obviously we read in an article that 10,000 more apartments have come up with lead poisoning and then you said that you had read it somewhere that because it's kids –

Darden: I was like why are people eating paint, like what's going on out there. Come to find out lead paint tastes sweet.

Stylez: So, babies are touching things and licking things and apparently that's something that attracts them and that's how they end up getting poisoned also.

Mayor: But that's if it's chipping. I mean this is really what it comes down to. Most of the time, a place that has had lead paint, it's covered up, it's painted over. There's no way chips are coming out. It's where, for whatever reason, it's been disturbed and there's a little bit of flaking or chipping. That's the danger which is why we have to stay on it all the time and this is an every single year kind of thing and why we decided to have a lead czar – to make sure that every piece of the City government is active on this.

But the biggest challenge is to make sure with the private landlords that wherever it is, we get after it is, and we address it quickly. And look, I think if everyone participates and lets the City know what's going on we can actually make additional strides. We've reduced lead paint exposure 90 percent. I want to reduce it to 100 percent.

Darden: And the rat situation. The city has a rat – everybody knows about the rats in this city. But in NYCHA there, in certain buildings there it's a complete infestation going on.

Mayor: There are buildings – this shocked me. I had no idea when I became Mayor. There are buildings that have basements with dirt floors in some of the really older NYCHA developments because remember some of those go back to 1930s, 40s, 50s. And that's like rat heaven, when they have a dirt floor they can come up through and there's a food source somewhere. We are paving over those floors.

We're putting in much better facilities to deal with trash because if the rats don't have anything to eat, they don't stay around, and a whole lot more extermination. This a real big problem but

it's one that we have found things that actually work. We actually now have a plan. Dry ice is another thing we now are allowed to use which has a tremendously positive impact on dealing with rats.

Darden: Rats don't like dry ice?

Mayor: Rats really don't like dry ice.

Darden: Interesting.

Mayor: Yeah, so, that's one of the most foundational ways we can get at them. So, we found new ways that work. We have a lot of work to do because remember 400,000 people live in public housing. It's like its own city. Some buildings are in pretty good shape, other buildings not at all particularly the ones that are the oldest but we're going to be very systematic about going at the rat problem.

Darden: Just recently there was the Proud Boys incident here in the city. And because of the current leadership of the nation, white supremacy and open racism has just become more commonplace, so it feels. I mean around New York City and Long Island, we've always heard – and there's always been hate crimes and different things pop up but it just feels like right now it's at an all-time high.

Rosenberg: People are emboldened.

Darden: Yes. Maybe it's just how we feel because of social media and the media is covering it so much –

Mayor: No, they're getting license from the President to talk that way.

Darden: So, you as somebody who is looking at this stuff every day, you feel like there is a lot more?

Mayor: Look, for a long time the most meaningful voices in our society sent a message of some kind of respect, some kind of understanding you cannot openly discriminate and cannot treat people that way publicly. Now, a lot of people behind the scenes continue to have negative and divisive views but they didn't feel like they could come out in public with them, right.

Donald Trump opened the floodgates. He gave permission to folks to use hate speech. He gave permission to the white supremacists. Now, I can't put it all on him, right. It's been there all along and there's plenty of other elements of our society that, you know, quietly or openly encourage division.

I've often said, there's somethings we see that are divisive and have been divisive for years that we've just grown accustomed to. But he brought something out in a sharper way and we've got to stop it. We have to get to the point again where people recognize, not only is not acceptable to say it, it's not acceptable to think it.

Darden: But an organization or a group – I don't know if I would call them an organization – but an organization like the Proud Boys or any white supremacist group for that matter going around inciting violence in this city where we live or any city, right. And then it's like police are standing right there watching it happen. And you see the videos, and for me it's kind of like how is that even possible that these people are allowed to have hate speech and walk the streets of our city, and there's no ramifications. But that's me.

And you know, people say freedom of speech – but certain things incite violence, I believe. Like a swastika is violence. You're inciting violence to me. A confederate flag is you're inciting violence to me. You're running around talking about hate Jews and blacks and this one and immigrants, that's inciting violence. You are doing that to antagonize individuals. That's hate speech. Why isn't it that – why isn't it that cut and dry?

Mayor: Okay, I want to – you're asking one of the most basic powerful questions about American democracy. So, here, look, we have these horrible hate events and the horrible killings in Pittsburgh. We had a synagogue desecrated in Brooklyn. We had the African Burial Ground in Manhattan, where horrible, racist, graffiti was written. We have to go after hate crime – those are hate crimes – with really sharp, clear consequences.

And I think if you look at the history, the NYPD puts a lot of energy into addressing hate crimes and has had a very powerful impact in terms of bringing to justice those who do them. And I think that's one of ways you stop hate crime, it's by showing people consequences.

That is different from the question of freedom of speech. If the Proud Boys – you know, I detest what they believe in – but if they gather peacefully, the Constitutional right is to be able to say what you believe no matter how much we detest it, no matter how much we think it's wrong. If they incite violence directly, then our police will intervene, must intervene. That's true left, right, center.

Anyone who directly incites violence, that's a different matter. But the hate speech itself, let's be clear, it's constitutionally protected. And in the end – I mean, that's painful to me sometimes. There's that famous question – you know the American Civil Liberties Union stood up for the right of Nazis to march in Skokie, Illinois. It was a famous case. Because they made the point that you can't judge by philosophy.

We might say, oh, don't let the Nazis march but someday someone could say don't let us march, right. So, one American value is all different – all different viewpoints can be aired.

Rosenberg: That's the gift and the curse.

Mayor: Right. The gift and the curse. But the second it turns towards violence, that's a whole different reality and it must be addressed.

Rosenberg: How's your relationship with the NYPD these days?

Mayor: I think we've come a long way. We have retrained the entire police force in de-escalation techniques. Implicit bias training is now being provided to help weed out the biases we all have as human beings. Now, I think if you look at the NYPD under neighborhood policing – here's a stunning – this is a fact, stunning fact – 2017, 100,000 fewer arrests by the NYPD compared to four years earlier. 100,000 fewer arrests and crime went down anyway.

Darden: Wow. That's great stuff.

Mayor: Something different is going on.

Darden: Better relationship. And I know the big throne in your side is finding affordable housing.

Mayor: Yes.

Darden: We have a housing crisis –

Mayor: Yes.

Darden: I mean I hate calling it a crisis because there is plenty of empty spaces. It's just that people can't afford them. How are you addressing this and the homelessness issue? I'm seeing these shelters, communities are pushing back against shelters.

Mayor: Sure.

Darden: It's you against different communities. People don't want the shelter here. It's supposed to go over there, etcetera, etcetera. What are doing to address this?

Mayor: Look, I came out in the election year last year, my election year. And I said we are going to do 90 new shelters and we are going to do them in every kind of community to represent where homeless folks come from because homeless folks come from pretty much every neighborhood in New York City. That's how – and we want people getting back to their home community, if God forbid they are homeless, we want them back to their home community to help them get out of homelessness. We've now gotten over 90,000 people who were homeless in the last five years to housing – 90,000 people. We've gotten 2,000 who were living permanently on the streets to come off the streets and stay off the streets. So some of these strategies are working. On affordable housing the big plan that we made a ton of progress on is 300,000 affordable apartments either built or subsidized meaning you live in your apartment, you get a subsidy to stay there long term. That plan is ahead of schedule, I'm very proud of it. But the thing we need the most is next year, in Albany we need to strengthen our rent laws, we need to protect the affordable housing we have because if our rent laws aren't strengthened a lot of people right now who are rent stabilized, rent controlled are going to lose those apartments.

Darden: And what would that process be like?

Mayor: It's a vote in Albany.

Darden: Okay.

Mayor: The Legislature comes back January 1st. I believe there will be a Democratic State Senate, which is going to be a game changer. And we can finally put laws in place that will protect the affordable housing we have. We got over 2 million New Yorkers who are under rent regulation. It's one of the things that make New York City different – is that 2 million plus New Yorkers who are in rent regulation to 400,000 people in public housing, most cities don't have anything like that to protect working people and everyday people but those laws need to be strengthened because we see what's happened to the cost of housing. I say we go to Albany, we put in place laws that say if you're in affordable housing right now, we are going to help you stay there long term so we can be a city for everyone.

Darden: Mayor de Blasio, ladies and gentlemen. Everybody wake up and get to the polls. They are open until 9 am. De Blasio –

Mayor: 9 pm.

Darden: 9 pm, I'm sorry.

Mayor: And flip your ballot. Flip your ballot, you got candidates on one side, ballot questions on the other side. Please vote yes, yes, yes on question 1, 2, 3 – flip your ballot vote today.

Darden: There it is. Mayor, anything we didn't touch before, you know, because Mayor may not come back.

Mayor: I'm coming back

[Laughter]

Darden: Here's big time now, he's in the second term.

Mayor: Laura, Laura, Laura what's going on over there. He's – I'm coming back.

Stylez: Well, Mayor, you know I fight for you but –

Mayor: I'm coming back, I'm coming back.

Stylez: I felt neglected also. He's not going to come.

Mayor: I don't want you to feel that.

Darden: You're not telling truth right now Laura.

Mayor: I think we need, Laura, we need counseling.

Darden: Y'all had some Hispanic heritage situation at the, listen –

Mayor: We need counseling.

Stylez: I felt left out, I left out.

Darden: Blaz, Blaz.

Mayor: We can't have that.

Darden: Blaz you guys had a Hispanic heritage event.

Mayor: Okay.

Darden: Laura Stylez has been to – what's the name of the house over there?

Stylez: Gracie Mansion.

Darden: There you go. Been to the crib a few times.

Mayor: Yes she has.

Stylez: Very supportive –

Mayor: Very.

Stylez: – About mental health.

Darden: She was not invited.

Mayor: Okay, I say –

Darden: I don't know who your new staff is but they don't know.

Mayor: We have got to fix this. Can we get a professional counselor and just on air do counseling –

Rosenberg: Work this out.

Mayor: Can we talk this out.

Darden: Rosenberg you good on this? You know –

Rosenberg: I'll try to find someone.

Darden: Relationship counseling. Because look, Mayor, man –

Mayor: Okay, come on we have been together a long time guys.

Darden: Don't start acting funny now.

Mayor: We've been together a long time. If you don't love me by now –

[Laughter]

Darden: Ladies and gentlemen Mayor de Blasio, thank you for your time today.

Mayor: Thank you everyone. Vote, vote.

Darden: Everybody, straight Democratic today. Listen I'm a registered independent, I'll be honest.

Mayor: Yes

Darden: And I know that today is that day though where we have to ensure that checks and balances is working and it feels like there is no Republican that wants to distance themselves far enough from Trump and his rhetoric and his behavior.

Mayor: It's shocking. I expected some voices of conscious to emerge from the Republican party. We haven't seen it.

Darden: It's sad.

Mayor: It's sad and there will be a reckoning one day in a country that's ultimately not going to buy what Trump is selling. But I say vote for Democrats but vote on the Working Families Line, that's what I am going to do. The Democrats, all the major Democratic candidates, major offices are also listed on the Working Families line because I think that sends a message about wanting more progressive change.

Darden: Interesting so voting, because I just voted Democrat this morning. I saw the Working Families line but I didn't know that, what that meant.

Mayor: It counts just the same, it counts just the same for vote total of your candidate but I believe Working Families Party has been a very positive progressive force in this state so I'm going to be voting for all those candidate who are Democrats but on the Working Families line. And I am going to be voting yes, yes, yes on the ballot questions 1, 2, 3. Most important thing is everyone get out and vote. But you are right, if we don't see people standing up to Donald Trump we should not reward them with our vote.

Darden: Mayor de Blasio ladies and gentlemen.

Mayor: Thank you, thank you. I'll be back.

Darden: Yes, we'll see.

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