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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** June 27, 2021, 3:30 PM

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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO DELIVERS REMARKS AT GAY OFFICERS  
ACTION LEAGUE IN MANHATTAN**

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Brian, that was so beautiful, and I want – everyone, I wanted to say, Brian speaks from the heart in everything he does, and he has just shown his passion for the kind of change we need to make so it's truly a society that includes everybody. He's done it in word, he's done it in action, and throughout his life. Let's thank Brian.

[Applause]

I'm going to take inspiration from Ritchie Torres, who always tells it like it is. The way to answer exclusion is not with more exclusion. If we're going to move forward, we have to bring everyone together. It's easier said than done, I know, but I have watched honestly with shock these last days. The notion that the heroes of this movement, folks who did something very, very difficult, went into the police force to make change. That was not easy. I'm preaching to the converted, but let me just say, it's not easy to be a change agent within the NYPD or any police force. It's not easy to say we are going to be here as a statement that the world can change and is changing. We're going to change the culture from within. We're going to reach a hand to the community while wearing a uniform, because that is what we aspire to – a city, a government, a police force that represents the community, honors the community, respects the community, understands the community. That could only happen if LGBT officers joined the NYPD by definition. And I want to say to all the officers present and past, God bless you, it was not easy to do, but you did it. You did it for the betterment of New York City and to try and move us forward.

And I think, I do – as someone who has not experienced some of the pain, I do understand in some way that folks who have gone through pain, that folks have gone through injustice who have seen the wrongs of the NYPD as well, and the wrongs of policing in general, I understand there are real issues to be addressed. No doubt, no one is saying, I don't know anyone saying, “Oh no, we're in a state of nirvana. Everything's solved.” There are real issues to be addressed still. There've been issues from Stonewall present, way before Stonewall. We know there are issues to address, but the right way to address them is to bring the voices, and the strength, and the community into the NYPD to fix things and move us forward. So, I have been struck in these days, and Brian, you said that you were alluding to the history we all went through together, when you and others were excluded from the St Patrick's Parade, and many of us found that intolerable and many of us did not participate in that parade for a long, long time, because we could not see our brothers and sisters left out, and today I cannot see my brothers and sisters left

out again. That's why I'm here with you to thank you, to thank you for who you are and what you do.

[Applause]

As with every moment of challenge, New York City does find a way through. I really believe this. Again, this is not happy talk. Sometimes it takes a lot of struggle. Sometimes it takes tough conversations. Sometimes it takes the world catching up a little bit, but we'll find our way through this. But what I really look to and I believe we will get to, is a day where anybody in any community in the city can look at a police officer and feel a sense of connection and understanding both ways. We're not there yet. We've got a lot to do, but I don't want to give up on that dream. I don't think we should give up on that dream. Whether it's a member of the LGBT community, whether it's a young black man, whether it's an immigrant, I want the day to come in this city where anyone who walks down the street and sees an officer coming toward them, says "that's someone here to help me," and when the officer sees that individual walking toward them, they think "that someone might as well be a member of my family or my neighborhood, someone who I can relate to and care about because they're part of our community." That's what we have to build. It will be ceaseless, difficult work, but that's what we have to build.

And I'll only conclude with this. We have to take time to thank heroes. Anyone who said, "I'm going to go into a difficult environment and open minds, change hearts, wake people up," anyone who said, "I'm doing that, even though it will be tough, even though it will be uncomfortable, even though sometimes there'll be painful," that's a hero to me. And I know that every officer could tell many stories. Maybe it was a partner who happened to not understand the community previously, but through that experience, their mind was opened. Their heart was opened. Maybe it was someone you helped who before had harbored bias. But when you were the person who saved them, suddenly they saw people in a different light. Maybe it's those little, small changes that happen in someone's soul when they actually get to know another human being. But every officer here again, present and past, and everyone who's supported GOAL along the way you have changed the heart and soul of the NYPD, you've opened the door. Now let's walk through it together. All of us, let's walk through it together. Thank you, God bless you all.

[Applause]

And all the honorees amazing work. God bless you all. Let's thank the honorees one more time as well.

[Applause]

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