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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO, CHANCELLOR CARRANZA ANNOUNCE
CONTRACT AGREEMENT TO PROVIDE PAID PARENTAL LEAVE FOR ALL NEW
YORK CITY PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Alright. Okay. We're here for what is unquestionably a celebration and something that makes us – all of us here feel very good and very proud about New York City, that we're going to announce something that will allow parents to be together with their babies at the beginning of their children's lives. That is a beautiful thing.

But before we talk about that, it's impossible not to talk about what's happening at the border of this country right now and all of us are feeling. I want to thank all my colleagues because everyone agreed that this topic has to be addressed upfront.

Right now, children are being ripped away from their parents in this country by our government and what's happening is so painful and it's starting to get eerie and to suggest very, very dangerous things. We're now hearing about these 'tender age shelters' – they're calling them 'tender age shelters' – coming up with such a polite name for something so disgusting and troubling as pulling away babies from their mothers.

We have to make sure that we understand that each one of these children is a human being with a name and a family and a story, and we cannot let the efforts to dehumanize, which are clearly being done by the administration in Washington – we can't let that infect the rest of us.

We have to tell the stories of these children and really respect their humanity. I want to tell you about one of these children. His name is Eddie. He is nine years old. His mom is detained in Texas right now. I spoke to his aunt yesterday, his Aunt Crystal. And she is worried sick about Eddie. His grandmother is worried sick about Eddie. His mother, in detention is worried sick about Eddie. And they can't see him and they don't know what's going on with him and they don't know what his future is.

Weeks ago Eddie and his mother left Honduras from a situation they felt literally was endangering their lives to seek asylum here in this country. The journey was dangerous but they were fleeing an even greater danger. And the one thing Eddie knew was, he had his mom by his side and that continued until the moment our government took him away from his mother.

So, that was at the border almost 2,000 miles from here. He was put on a bus and sent almost 2,000 miles to New York City with no family member. When I spoke to his aunt yesterday, she talked about heartbreaking that was, how terrifying that was for a nine-year-old child.

The sad fact is Eddie is literally of countless children because we're not getting any honest reporting about how many children are being treated this way and where they are and what's happening to them. We don't even know how many are in New York City. We know some are for sure but we don't even know how many.

We have reached out to the Trump administration asking for these answers and have not received them, and it's our job, all of us, to say this is not America. This is not what we believe in as Americans. We're not going to stand for this. We're not going to stand for our government literally withholding the truth about children who are in danger.

All of us have to ask ourselves when we see children kept in cages and divided because of their race and their background, what are we going to do about it? Are we going to stand idly by? Are we going to fight? Are we going to protest? Are we going to use everything in our power to change it?

I will promise, and I know so many of my colleagues here feel the same thing – I will promise to do all in my power to address this situation including what's happening here in this city and as some of you know, last night, a group of children was being shuttled in the dead of night into an intake facility in East Harlem.

We still don't know the facts about those children and who they are what's happening to them. We do know that Eddie's family says he was held in that same facility in East Harlem and immediately after this gathering, I am going to go that facility in East Harlem to get answers for the people of this city.

Just want to say something very brief in Spanish to all of those who are watching this in shock and dismay and are feeling solidarity with these families and especially to the families themselves –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

In English – my heart is with you, our city is with you, and all New Yorkers are with you.

So, thank you everyone for giving us all a moment to think about this issue and now I will take us back to what we originally came here to do. And we're going to talk about a very important step forward for our families here and there is no one better to start this gathering than Jennifer DiBerardino, who is a kindergarten teacher at P.S. 204. Welcome, Jennifer.

[Applause]

[...]

Well done, Jennifer. Jennifer's son is going to have a wonderful blessing of you being there in the very beginning of his life. He's also going to have an educator at home and he's off to a great start. And I want to say, our teachers – everyone knows there's no one who does more to shape the future of our city than our teachers. And we honor for them that and in fact we have spent the last four years focusing on showing the respect of this city and the appreciation in this city for all of our educators, something that didn't happen enough in the past.

But we also know that the most important job – and I say this as a proud parent – the most important job for all of us who become parents is that of mom or dad, it is our number one responsibility, it's the number one focus of our lives. And that's why Paid Parental Leave makes so much sense. It's always made sense but it makes even more sense in the 21st Century where people are working so hard and such long hours and struggling to make ends meet.

It's a fundamental matter of fairness to make sure that people have this opportunity. In 2015, we extended Paid Parental Leave for 20,000 City workers and started the process which has led us to today and will lead us beyond today as more and more of our employees will have the opportunity.

We are proud to announce, all of us together today, that starting in September on the first day of school, 120,000 members of the UFT employed by this city will be able to take up to six weeks of Paid Parental Leave.

Congratulations to all.

[Applause]

And this covers birth, it covers adoption, or foster placement of kids under six years old. I just want to say a real thanks to everyone who was involved in this process. There was some real work that had to go into it and a lot of negotiation and detail but people came together and did a great job getting us there.

I want to thank from the City, First Deputy Mayor Dean Fuleihan and our First Deputy Budget Director Ken Godiner. And I want to thank the CEO for Labor Policy at the DOE Larry Becker – all of you, for your hard work. I want to thank, before I turn in a moment to some of the key players in all this – I also want to thank the City Council members who are with us here today who have been very supportive of this policy and always supportive of our educators.

And I saw the Chair of the Education Committee, Mark Treyger, thank you, Mark. And also believe we have Council member Adrienne Adams, Council member Peter Koo. There he is, there they are. I'm looking left, you're to the right.

Yes, and Council member Justin Brannan. Thank you so much. And Council member Steve Levin. Results are coming in. Did I get everyone?

[Laughter]

Alright. The other thing I want to say is – and we had a gathering last night at Gracie Mansion with parent leaders – I said to them what I feel fundamentally, parents are the first and last teachers of our children. And when it comes to our educators, their first responsibility is to be the greatest teachers in the world for their own kids.

And this is going to give us a chance to really help them do that, and I have no doubt it will also help us to continue to improve our school system and to benefit 1.1 million New York City school children.

Just a few words in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, and I want to also give tremendous thanks – Michael Mulgrew, his whole team. Again this was a process that took some real work but everyone kept working at it. Michael, thank you for your strength and your perseverance, and thank you for standing up for your members so that we could get to today with a great result for everyone. Michael Mulgrew –

[Applause]

[...]

The team at the Office of Labor Relations has been – seems to be working nonstop for four-and-a-half years on so many things. This was a high priority, took a lot of work, but another great victory, I would say, Bob Linn, and for you and your whole team. You brought forward another example of great progress in this city.

Commissioner Bob Linn, Office of Labor Relations: Thank you, Mayor. I am extraordinarily proud to have reached this historic agreement with DOE and the UFT for Paid Parental Leave for UFT represented employees.

I want to thank especially Michael Mulgrew. We've worked together long and hard to achieve this. We have yelled at each other a little bit –

[Laughter]

Didn't yell at each other a little bit too. I want to thank Larry Becker for all his work on behalf of the DOE. He's the Chief Executive of Labor Policy at DOE. We collaborated and worked closely to reach this important agreement.

As I said, a number of months ago, in New York City where collective bargaining is so strong, the place to resolve an important issue like this is at the negotiating table between labor and management.

Through collective bargaining with the UFT, we were able to reach an agreement that will provide this incredibly important parental leave benefit. We did it in a way that was fair to the works, fair to the city, and fair to the taxpayers.

We worked hard. We worked together. And I think, in New York, we showed that public sector collective bargaining can indeed work. I thank everyone that was involved. I think we'll talk about the specifics later on but it's been an extraordinarily tough effort and I really appreciate reaching yes.

[Applause]

Mayor: Amen. Well, one of the things I always say about our Chancellor is that he has an important distinguishing feature. He is an educator and I believe our Chancellor should always be an educator. And as an educator he understands how important it is for the people to do this hard work to have this benefit. So this is a great day for the Department of Education. Chancellor Richard Carranza –

[Applause]

Schools Chancellor Richard Carranza: Thank you Mr. Mayor. I am incredibly happy to be here today. Quite frankly, Mr. Mayor, I thought at the end of President Mulgrew's comments, he was going to say now go forth and multiply. We'll take the enrollment.

[Laughter]

Mayor: Always thinking ahead.

Chancellor Carranza: It's all about strategic planning. All kidding aside, this is a monumental day for us here in New York City and when we think about Equity and Excellence and what that means to us, we are now creating, if you think about this, truly, the pathway to the fairest big city in America. And I want to echo all the congratulations to Mr. Mayor, you, for your leadership. I want to thank also Mr. Becker on the Department of Education's team. I want to thank Mr. Linn. But I also want to thank *el presidente*, Mr. Mulgrew, and it's important because these were tough conversations, they were tough issues, but we stayed at the table, we were able to see a path forward.

And what I am so proud about in the City of New York is that now we will have children literally from birth having their best first teachers, their parents, being able to be with them and at the tender age of three we are going to hand them off into our 3-K program, and then they are going to move to our pre-K program, and then as you've seen a great example of one of our kindergarten teachers, we're going to take those babies and we're going to love them, and they are going to be the smartest, highest performing kids in America. Right here in New York City, right here in New York City.

[Applause]

You know as a teacher, almost 26 years ago, I did not have paid parental leave. So I had to make the very difficult choice, and luckily my spouse was able to stay home and take that time, but we had to make the choice, what are we going to do? So to be in the educational space at this point in my career to see that my colleagues in the classroom will no longer have to make that difficult choice, but will be able to do what we've asked them to do is be with their children, be their first teachers, get them started right until they hand us to the 3-K classroom, is very gratifying, I'm very excited, and I'm very, very supportive of this initiative.

As a parent this is personal. As a Chancellor, as your Chancellor, this is very personal. And as a New Yorker I'm incredibly proud because it is personal.

[Chancellor Carranza speaks in Spanish]

[...]

Mayor: I'll just conclude with a thanks to all of the UFT members.

Also I see we're joined by Council member Helen Rosenthal, Laurie Cumbo. Welcome both of you, thank you so much.

But to the UFT members, the point Michael made in the beginning, like so many things that change in the world and improve in the world, it comes from the grassroots up.

So, the members fought long and hard and I want to thank you on behalf of the city. It was a good fight and a fight well fought and a fight that you won for the right cause. Thank you, congratulations.

[Applause]

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