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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 11, 2018
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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON INSIDE CITY HALL

Errol Louis: Welcome back to Inside City Hall. It's Monday and that means we are talking with Mayor de Blasio. Thank you for joining as always, it's very good to see you.

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Good to see you.

Louis: I want to pick up right where we left off. The report came out – we got word of it just today that JCOPE had fined Mr. Capalino \$40,000 and that there appears to be a discrepancy between what he said he did, what JCOPE agreed with him that he did and fined him for, and what the record says about what happened at the meetings that he helped arrange. What's – how does that happen?

Mayor: Look, I haven't seen what JCOPE put out, I'm just going to reiterate what I've said many, many, many times, the whole entity in question, Campaign for One New York, was put together to achieve things like getting Pre-K for all our kids and getting affordable housing legislation passed and moving an agenda for progressive change.

We sought Conflict of Interest Board guidance in what we did, we sought legal guidance, we tried to do things the right way throughout, and I think we did things the right way. So, I'm not familiar with what these specific situations are, it's obviously between JCOPE and the individuals involved, I just know we did things the appropriate way.

Louis: Well I mean what they are talking about is a meeting, you may or may not remember the particular meeting, but this is September of 2015, this is Offinger and Capalino bringing together a group, that they described to the people who came as a kitchen cabinet of folks who helped fund the Campaign for One New York, to meet with the Mayor at the old City Hall restaurant, you know, it's gone now. And that you had some kind of a discussion, and you know, again, if it's cleared, if you thought it was legal, if you thought everything was on the up and up, surely you knew that these people are lobbyists. Doesn't that belong on a lobbyist report –

Mayor: What I said from the beginning, I did this as Public Advocate, I've done it as Mayor, no previous Mayor did it, is when a lobbyist lobbies me on the behalf of a client, I disclose it. A

lobbyist talks to me about politics or the Mets or something else, that's not lobbying on the behalf of a client, but if they lobby, I absolutely disclose it. That's been my consistent route.

Louis: There is – there is going to be a built in sort of contradiction there though, right? I mean, because the lobbyist is going to back and tell his client and might even report on his form I saw the mayor –

Mayor: I don't worry about what other people say in pursuit of, you know, their own relationship with their client. I – again, this was a voluntary thing I created as Public Advocate, I'm very proud of that, it is something I have done as Mayor, it's something I've now instituted as a standard, again, no previous Mayor did it. If someone comes to me, they are a New York City registered lobbyist, they have a client, they start talking about the clients business, bang, I'm putting that online. And I've made it clear, and I don't talk to lobbyists now –

Louis: In the real world, where this stuff happens, there will be a lot people moving around, it could be a fundraiser, it could be a quasi-public event, guy comes by and says, hey my people will talk to your people, we hope to do some good things, thumbs up to the Mayor, Mayor gives thumbs – gives thumbs up back, that guy has done some lobbying.

Mayor: Anything that is lobbying, anything that is promoting a position on the behalf of a client, I disclose, it's as simple as that.

Louis: Okay, I mean, do you understand why there will continue to be these kind of conflicts?

Mayor: Look, I think having a strict a standard I have of disclosure, which I had well before this particular set of issues came up and I've made very clear, I don't sit with lobbyists anymore. I mean as a result of disclosing, I mean this is the great irony in all of this Errol, you know, the fact that I voluntarily disclosed underlies the interests, well, I do voluntarily disclose and that makes it very easy for me to say to lobbyists that I'm not going to talk to them about their clients and I don't. It's a simple as that.

Louis: Okay, let's go move on to the shooting in Crown Heights. Are you satisfied with the way the investigation has gone so far?

Mayor: Look, I think it's very important that the Attorney General stepped in, it's a relatively new law and I think it's a good and healthy thing, that in instances like this, automatically the State Attorney General comes into play. You and I both know a lot history where often people wondered about whether there was going to be fairness, this I think puts that to rest, so that's a very good thing. Clearly the fact that the NYPD disclosed the transcripts of the 9-1-1 calls and the video of Mr. Vassell as he progressed that day and what it showed is very important. There is more to do. Look, we have to respect the investigatory process by the Attorney General and where he will take that. We can't prejudge that but I do think it suggests, you know, a level of consistency and transparency that is very important. The tragedy here is this young man, who was troubled with a mental health issue, is gone and, you know, we as a society and as a City still have to do more to avert these tragedies to begin with. Not in the split second moment when

it's often too late tragically but in the months and years before when we can reach someone and help them.

Look, one of the things I'm going to be very focused on in these next years and certainly my wife, Chirlane, is – it's how do we make this notion of reaching out for mental health support absolutely consistent and ubiquitous? How do we get every family to feel it's okay, it's not a stigma, it's not a negative? How do we get every professional who comes across someone whether they are a doctor or a police officer or a teacher or whoever it may be – if they see someone they kind of need to help, connect them to the help that's out there for them?

That's the great, painful part, Errol. The help is there but we are so far away from connecting the dots –

Louis: This – there are advocates out there who are saying that the help is out there for what are called in some cases the worried-well. People who need some help and who can benefit from the kind of supports that will happen if you pick up a hotline and can make an appointment and can talk with a counselor. But in these other cases – and I understand it's a small number but they are numbers that happen over and over again.

We remember the case of Eleanor Bumpurs, we remember the case of Gidone Busch in 1999. We remember the case of Deborah Danner which happened on our watch, and now this latest case where – and I mean I personally just seen these where I've tried to contact people about someone who's half-naked in the street ranting and raving essentially out of their mind and what they say is call the police which is exactly the wrong agency to come in many, many cases. They can handle many of the emotionally disturbed persons but there are too many cases where it sort of goes wrong. Is there going to be room in the Thrive NYC to really seriously address this?

Mayor: Yes and it's already long since begun and it's a matter of deepening it. First of all, we now have over 8,000 officers who are trained in how to deal with emotionally disturbed people in a way they never were before.

Second, we are now – we have created and are expanding these co-response teams of mental health professionals that can match up with police officers to deal with these situations when there's at least time to deal with them, that there are professionals who can be brought into play.

It's a much more of a focus on getting the mental health professionals into the mix. For example, if you talk about someone out on the street, there's time to address the situation. You pair up cops with mental health professionals then they take the individual to a medical facility where they get evaluated. That evaluation may lead to the individual being held if they are a danger to themselves or others and perhaps being put into ongoing treatment.

Other people might be in a position to get treated at home but at least you have an opportunity there to get them on a regular regimen. This is a more aggressive approach that has been had in the past. The other point is with 888-NYC-Well.

I think a lot of people still need to understand it's not just like the hotlines in the past. This is something I think more developed. You can call on behalf of someone, a loved one, a family member, a friend and actually arrange for an appointment for the next level of service they need.

It's not just you call in that moment. You know you're right, if someone has anxiety or depression they can call 888-NYC-Well and get help right then. But let's say it's something more serious. Even opioid addiction for example – literally in the course of the phone call they can make an appointment for you to get the next level of treatment.

So in the case of opioid addiction it might be that you need a methadone appointment, it might be that you need buprenorphine. There are specific actions for each kind of need that now there's what they call a warm hand-off. They will literally connect you to the service –

Louis: Well, what's available for the person who comes and says my son is bipolar, he's off his meds, he's been arrested 25 times in the past. I've called you before, you've taken him, he's been released, and we're right back where we started.

Mayor: So we created an initiative, NYC Safe, with the whole notion of tracking individuals who have diagnosed mental health problems and a history of violence. And when that combination is found you then can apply very systematically follow-up. You can literally have folks from, for example, the Health Department making sure people are getting appointments or if they need more serious treatment, helping them get into that kind of treatment.

It's much more of a hands-on approach than what's been there in the past –

Louis: So, will that be, I guess even retroactively [inaudible] because this person sounds like he would have been the perfect candidate for what you just described.

Mayor: What we are learning more and more, and it's something I've talked to the Health Department, the NYPD but we're also going to have to get our public hospitals and our private hospitals involved – we are going to try and pool information evermore intensely, more tightly to find people who have an ongoing reality of any propensity to violence and have that history of diagnosed mental health and then systematically get them treatment.

That has been happening in the last few years. It's – honestly what we find is it is in the hundreds of people, not in the many thousands, it's a relatively small group of people but we constantly find new people as they encounter the authorities in one form or another or they go to a hospital.

It's a growing effort but I think it's going to make a big difference. But I just wanted to – the punchline of all this is there's always some form of treatment or follow up available, and not if actually has a systematic form it didn't use to have. That's the core notion of Thrive.

Louis: Okay, let's take a short break, here. We'll be right back with more from Mayor de Blasio in just a minute.

[...]

Louis: Welcome back to Inside City Hall, I'm joined once again by Mayor de Blasio. I think you might have wanted to be a Councilmember all over again. It was one of those classic encounters on the floor of the chamber today where there was this very contentious back and forth with the NYPD over the Special Victims Division that deals in particular with sexual assault. Do you plan to weigh in on that? Do you think the department is doing enough? Does the Council have a point when they say that there needs to be more officers and an upgrade to the physical facilities?

Mayor: Look, there's clearly been more personnel applied in recent years and my message to Commissioner O'Neill has been whatever he needs, we're going to find a way to get it, but he said very clearly last week – we were together at a press conference, he's going to reevaluate the entire operation of the Special Victims Unit because there's going to be a new Chief of Detectives soon. Obviously Bob Boyce, who has done an outstanding job in that role has to retire because of the mandatory age limit. There's going to be a new Chief, there's going to be a review of the operations of that whole division, and whatever needs to be done to improve its work, strengthen its work, we're committed to doing.

So, I think Special Victims Unit, the NYPD has gotten a lot of acclaim over the years for doing good work. We obviously want to make sure it can be the very best it can be. There is more reporting going on, and that we don't have a perfect insight into everything happening, but what we strongly believe we're seeing is a lot more reporting, a lot more people coming forward and as sad as it is that there so many people who come forward, the reporting is actually a very good thing. It means a lot of perpetrators will be stopped now because these crimes are finally coming to light that used to sometimes be held back because people felt stigmatized or ashamed. So we're going to make sure they have the resources they need. That's the bottom line.

Louis: Okay I mean I know with the sort of the pride and the [inaudible] of the NYPD they don't like having the Councilmember or frankly any outside forces coming in and sort of telling them how to rearrange their shop. On the other hand you've been on both sides of the building so you get that the Council might want to have some input. Would it be a problem, do you think, if they were to just go ahead and pass a law and say we like what you're doing but we want to give you some very specific instructions on how to get it done.

Mayor: I haven't seen anything proposed. I'll make a general statement. And I was a member, I was proud to serve in the Council for eight years. Oversight is necessary. Tough questions are necessary. I used to question City agencies and I put them through the ringer because that's part of the checks and balances, right, and accountability. However, a legislature also has to know where that line is, where you're not trying to manage day to day operational work. That's where I think there's a legitimate concern. It's one thing to hold an agency to account, to make sure it's living up to its mandate. But at the same time you have to respect the day to day work of professionals and not get too much into the mechanics of how an agency is run.

Louis: Well on that note, the back and forth with the Department of Investigation which is supposed to be, it's a little bit hands off, it's not like every other agency. You name the Commissioner, the Council has to approve, both you and the Council can sort of direct or guide

some of the operations of that particular agency. And you've had sort of a falling out over some personnel over one of their subdivisions that deals directly with schools.

Mayor: Well by far biggest division because it's the largest agency by far.

Louis: Well what's – what was that all about? I mean –

Mayor: I was very surprised; I have to be honest with you. You know the history of that special commissioner role for Department of Education is a pretty legendary role. You know, Condon more recently, Stancik before that, I mean major, major figures. By far our biggest agency. And the importance and the independence of that role was respected. And then we had a situation out of nowhere where you know the DOI Commissioner named someone to that role and then summarily fired the person, and then there was a whistleblower charge. And I was very upset by what I saw because it didn't resemble anything we've seen in previous decades of something that worked. You know, that special commissioner role worked obviously and helped to root out corruption and problems at DOE.

That's why I put forward the Executive Order to clarify what –

Louis: In a case like that did you make a call to the DOI Commissioner and say you know hey what the heck is going on –

Mayor: No I will be very straightforward, it was absolutely consistent with the way he handled it. He certainly didn't place a call to me to tell me who he had chosen or to tell me that he had a problem with the person he was choosing and was removing her. Or that he had a whistleblower complaint against him. I never heard any of those things so I simply used my mayoral power to say we're clarifying this situation, that there needs to be consent on the hiring or firing of that role going forward.

Louis: And it – that's over as far as you're concerned? No further litigation or anything?

Mayor: I don't know. I'm not a lawyer. Obviously there's a whistleblower charge that will lead to some follow up, some due process. But what's clear is going forward that that role can only be filled with my consent.

Louis: Before I let you go let's talk about Trump Tower a little bit. There was a proposal 20 years ago that – by one of your predecessors that there be widespread installation of sprinklers everywhere. That didn't happen. We now saw at least one of the – arguably one of the effects of that is that you have a bunch of old buildings including Trump Tower that were grandfathered in. There are a number of people who are out there who are arguably living in somewhat dangerous conditions. Do you think there needs to be systematic follow up?

Mayor: It looks like unfortunately an exceedingly difficult situation, and I'm not an expert on this but what I understand so far is we have a lot of buildings that it's probably either physically or financially close to impossible to actually achieve that at this point with the older buildings. Now the good news is every building going forward has to have those sprinklers – every new

building. Every building that goes through a certain level of rehabilitation, you know, redesign has to have those sprinklers. But there's a lot of really old buildings in New York City that may not even be able to truly accommodate them. So, I don't have a perfect answer for you. I don't think there's a one size fits all. I think we should be mindful of every opportunity to put them in wherever we possibly can going forward.

Louis: You have sprinklers in Gracie Mansion?

Mayor: That's a great question. I think so, but I'm not an expert.

Louis: Okay. Be careful until you figure that out, right?

Mayor: I will not play with matches.

Louis: Yeah right please, not inside the house anyway. Okay we will see you next week, thank you so much for coming by.

Mayor: Thank you.

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