



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

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CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR BILL DE BLASIO APPEARS ON 77 WABC RADIO

Rita Cosby: And joining us now is New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio. Mayor de Blasio, thanks so much for being here on the show.

Mayor Bill de Blasio: You're very welcome Rita.

Cosby: Now you are of course going to Iowa. Walk us through what you will be doing.

Mayor: Well I want to help Hillary Clinton in any way I can in Iowa. I've been out to Iowa for two of the previous elections and have a little sense of how the caucuses go, and I'll do whatever is needed: knocking on doors, phone banking, talking to local activists, whatever it takes to help turn out folks for caucus night. And it's an amazing process Rita, it's really democracy at the grassroots. So I'll go wherever they need me to go, I'll be starting in Des Moines but I'll go wherever they need me to go.

Cosby: Have they given you at least some sense of the type of events or where they will be using you, because it's obviously a high profile thing for the New York City Mayor to come there.

Mayor: Right, right. I think, what I've said to them is I want to just work in any way that's helpful, do whatever, so I don't think of it as high profile, I think of it as doing the same kind of thing I've done in previous cycles, to go and turn out the vote. So you know, I think wherever they have a particular need – and I'm happy to talk to any group big or small, or as I say, I've knocked on plenty of doors in Iowa, and I'm looking forward to doing it again.

Cosby: Are you surprised that the race is so tight in Iowa between Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders?

Mayor: No, I think it has been a very spirited debate, and I think a healthy one for our party and our country. I think the people of Iowa historically are tough judges of candidates, and they put them through the paces, and they do historically have a progressive bent, certainly the Democratic voters. So I don't think anything here is surprising, but I feel very good about how it's going to end up on caucus night for Hillary. I think she's certainly doing all the right things to prevail.

Cosby: You do believe that she will win? Because he's been pulling out some big numbers at his rallies as well.

Mayor: He has, but you know, again – I think a lot of things that Bernie Sanders has talked about have been very important and very good for this country, but I think the caucus process is really democracy at the grassroots and it comes down to who is motivated to show up and to participate on a cold Monday night for a couple of hours. And I think Hillary's team has a lot of organization, a lot of support on the ground, and I think it's going to yield a very good result on Monday night.

Cosby: Are you surprised that he has gotten so much momentum, especially in the last few weeks, it seems there?

Mayor: Well no, again, because I think that the discussion that's going on right now actually has grown over the last year. You know, the elections two years ago, issues about income inequality and the decline of the middle class and economic unfairness were not at the front of the discussion, and I actually think Democrats suffered because they didn't talk directly to those issues. But Hillary Clinton has been, Bernie Sanders has been, Martin O'Malley has been, and I think it has energized people. So it's no surprise to me that folks are aligning to different candidates. What's so interesting is the commonality, that all the Democrats are talking about addressing income inequality, taxing the wealthy more, raising wages and benefits – none of the Republicans are focused on those solutions. Donald Trump is talking about the problem to some extent, but he's certainly not offering real solutions. So I think this has actually been a very organic trajectory in this election, that the issues people care about are coming to the fore, and it's generating a lot of support – certainly for Hillary Clinton and certainly for Bernie Sanders.

Cosby: What's your reaction to Donald Trump and the fact he is doing well in Iowa?

Mayor: I don't think anyone should ever go to sleep on Donald Trump. I think he is a very wily guy. I think he has said horrible things, and very divisive things that disqualify him for the presidency in my opinion, and I think the American people will feel that. I think Republicans will feel that too. But you can't underestimate his ability as a campaigner, I think we've learned that lesson. I'm not going to be surprised if he wins Iowa, but in the long run, I don't think his approach is going to be found acceptable by the American people.

Cosby: Do you think that Hillary Clinton could beat him if it turns out to be a Hillary Clinton, Donald Trump matchup?

Mayor: Oh absolutely. Look, I am convinced Hillary Clinton will be the Democratic nominee and I'm convinced she will be the next president. There is a decent chance Donald Trump could be the Republican nominee, and I believe fundamentally – she will beat him. I think more and more people in this country are looking for a decent and inclusive society, and a society that addresses income inequality. They're not going to vote for a billionaire who has no real solutions for the middle class, and is angry and negative toward women, Mexican-Americans, Muslim-Americans. It's just not going to fly. It'll be a real race, of course, but in the end I think Hillary will prevail.

Cosby: You talk about billionaires, there's word about mayor – former Mayor Bloomberg maybe getting in to the race. What are your thoughts about that?

Mayor: I have said I respect him, and I certainly think he's done – in his time as mayor, he did some good and important things for the city, and he also did some things I very much disagreed with, and I don't think he addressed the issues of income inequality sufficiently. But I think the bottom line, Rita, is the people of this country are not going to turn to a billionaire to solve problems that were largely created by billionaires. The financial crisis, the Great Recession, what happened on Wall Street, I think there's tremendous frustrations still because the effects are still being felt [inaudible]. I think people are voting against that status quo, and they're certainly not going to turn to someone synonymous with that status quo to make these changes.

Cosby: You think he would be the wrong person to enter the race now?

Mayor: Well again, I'm supporting Hillary Clinton so – you know, it's a free country, anyone can enter a race if they want to, but I think unquestionably Hillary Clinton is the best person to be our next president. Whatever Michael Bloomberg does is his choice but I don't think it – there's going to be a lot of receptivity, again, because people are looking for someone who's going to fundamentally address income inequality and restore economic fairness and I don't think he can make a plausible case that he's going to do that.

Cosby: You talk about going, of course, to Iowa. Did Bernie Sanders ask you to come and support him?

Mayor: Oh, I talked to Bernie Sanders months and months ago. We had a very cordial conversation. I have great, great respect for him, I have for years but I told him that I was not looking to endorse him, that I felt strongly about my personal relationship with Hillary Clinton and that she had increasingly addressed the issue of income inequality in a way that I thought was both the right policies and could be achieved. So, I have a real respectful relationship with him but certainly, I obviously made clear, privately and then later publicly, that I would be supporting Hillary Clinton.

Cosby: And what was his reaction? Because some people would say that your policies are in some ways more aligned with his.

Mayor: Well, I don't think anyone is surprised, one, that I wanted to see a progressive platform for the next Democratic president of the United States and that I wanted to see issues of income inequality addressed – and that's what I said originally, that I thought it was important for Hillary Clinton to lay out that vision, and she did that, I think, very, very effectively over the course of the few months of her – first few months of her campaign but, again, I also have a long-standing personal relationship and tremendous respect for her, so, I don't think anyone was surprised that on a substantive level, I wanted to see these issues addressed and on a personal and human-level, that I have an immense respect for her and a real friendship with her.

Cosby: Now what happens if you run into Ted Cruz in Iowa, Mr. Mayor, because he's of course criticized New York values? What would you say to him?

Mayor: Oh, I have a thing or two to say to Ted Cruz. You know, I'm just going to tell him, he's a hypocrite because the very same day when he was saying that, he had sent yet another fundraising appeal to New Yorkers to help his campaign. So, as I said at the time, he likes taking New York money and then he attacks New York values – it's absolutely hypocritical. One of the few times I've agreed with Donald Trump was his response to Ted Cruz in that debate and I thought Donald Trump did that very effectively and fairly – to remind Ted Cruz that not only is New York City, in many ways, the greatest city in this nation but the city that withstood the worst attack we've suffered on our soil, as a result of terrorism, and overcame it. So, I think Ted Cruz embarrassed himself that day. He still never apologized to the people of New York City, which I think is really a sad commentary on how opportunistic he is –

Cosby: Would you ask for apology if you see him?

Mayor: Oh, I will certainly ask for an apology. I'll ask for it publicly. If I see him in person, I will gladly tell him, very bluntly, that you don't spit in the face of New Yorkers and then ask for our money. You know, we need an apology if he even wants to get the time of day from people in New York City.

Cosby: And we're talking to New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio. Mr. Mayor, I want to ask you a little bit about the horse carriage issue because that looks like it's going to come up for a vote next week. I know you're very passionate about it. It is – it looks like it's the very same day as a vote on City Council raises and there's some people asking, is it a quid pro quo?

Mayor: Not at all. This is – these are two issues that have been out there for quite a while – both of them, you know, months ago I named a commission of really fantastic civic leaders to look at the issue of compensation for elected officials. They came back with a very intelligent, well thought out report several months ago. That's been out in the public domain now – people have had a chance to think about it. The Council is providing a formal response now. And the Council is making – from everything we've seen so far – profound reforms, ending the practice of special compensation for committee chairs, ending outside income in the way it's been allowed previously, and outside employment in the way it's been allowed previously, making the role of a

council member, truly, a full-time job. These are major reforms that have been demanded, you know, all over the country but they're happening here now because of the City Council. I give them a lot of respect for that.

Horse carriage issue, as you know, has been playing out now for many months. The process of negotiations has come to a culmination in the last couple of weeks, that announcement happened weeks ago, that there was an agreement with the Council and with the union involved – the teamsters union. So, these are two things that are moving on their own timelines and have their own merits. I have said fundamentally, horses – horse carriages do not belong on the streets of the biggest city in the nation. It's not safe. It's not fair to the horses. It's adding to congestion. They belong in Central Park. We can make that work for everyone and I think this is a great plan, a great compromise and I'm very hopeful it will be supported by the City Council.

Cosby: But no deal? No –

Mayor: Not at all. They're not connected. I would not allow them to be connected.

Cosby: What's your reaction when you talk about the [inaudible] Central Park Conservancy has now been speaking out against the horse carriage plan and saying that they're worried about crowding in the paths in the park – they're concerned?

Mayor: Well, we obviously, have made adjustments, it's part of why we made the decision to make the adjustment in terms of pedicabs – that's also an important industry and one that we'll certainly work with to make sure that those workers have a good livelihood but we made several adjustments to achieve the fundamental change of getting horse carriages off the streets of the city. A lot of people have come up to me and said how much they appreciate that in terms of safety, in terms of ending congestion in Midtown, in terms of making sure the horses were treated right. It will still be a vibrant industry – the horse carriage industry for tourists but in the end the Central Park Conservancy, I respect them, I appreciate what they do for the city, but they don't run Central Park. Central Park belongs to the people of New York City, you know, our Parks Department and the City Council, and obviously me as mayor, make the decisions about what's best for Central Park and we think this is the right balance.

Cosby: And Mr. Mayor, I want to ask you, finally, about cleanup with the storm. There's a lot of controversy about the cleanup in Queens, or the lack thereof. Do you think things will be done differently in the future?

Mayor: Well, we're looking carefully at everything that happened with the storm. Now, Rita, I remind you – second biggest storm in the history of New York City by just 0.1 inch. If we'd gotten just 0.2 inches more, it would have been our biggest snowfall in 150 years. Our Sanitation Department did an outstanding job. People have said to me, all over the city, how much they appreciated how well we did. Look how much better we did compared to other cities on the eastern seaboard. Clearly, there were some neighborhoods, I've said it very bluntly, that I don't like – I don't like what happened there. It should have been better. It should have been stronger. We going to do an after-action report and figure out how to do better next time but when you look at the overall situation, the Sanitation Department did an outstanding job.

Cosby: And finally Mr. Mayor, a beautiful tribute for one of the Staten Island Ferries to an Afghanistan hero. Your thoughts on how beautiful and how, I think, important that was.

Mayor: Thank you for that, Rita. I – Sergeant Michael Ollis gave his life for his country. He jumped in front of a suicide bomber in Afghanistan to save another soldier – exemplary young man, everything we could want, from someone representing the values of this city and of Staten Island, and of, certainly, this whole country. And so, I felt it was very important to name the new ferry boat after him. I want to give credit to Borough President Jimmy Oddo from Staten Island who advocated strongly. I sat down with Mr. and Mrs. Ollis yesterday. It was very moving to see – showed me photos of their son, they showed me his medals, they talked

about why he wanted to serve his country. And he is so worthy of this honor and his name will now be remembered for many generations to come.

Cosby: What a beautiful tribute. Mr. Mayor, thank you so much.

Mayor: Thank you, Rita. You be well.

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