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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS ON THE JOHN CATSIMATIDIS  
RADIO SHOW**

**John Catsimatidis:** With us this morning is the Mayor of the safest city in America – Mayor Bill de Blasio of New York City. Good morning, Mayor de Blasio. How are you this morning?

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** I'm great, John. Happy New Year to you and it is a joy to say, yes, once again the safest big city in America – all kinds of reductions that we've seen. Absolutely amazing. We're at the lowest crime in New York City since the 1950s.

**Catsimatidis:** And that is unbelievably great. You know, whether you listen to our show or not, I've always said the Mayor has got a great Police Commissioner, a great Fire Commissioner, a great Sanitation Commissioner. She did a great job again cleaning up those streets of New York with all those – with the blizzard.

[Inaudible]

**Mayor:** Let me tell you, John. I'm really blessed to have a great team and you know my first Police Commissioner, of course, was Bill Bratton. He did an amazing job. Our Commissioner now, Jimmy O'Neill – one of Bratton's protégées – has been outstanding. I mean listen to this. Just this year, 2017 just past, compared to the previous year – a 13 percent decrease in homicides. Forty-five fewer homicides. Twenty percent decrease in shootings, over 200 fewer shootings than just the year before. And the amazing thing John, for decades people wondered, could New York City ever get under 300 murders for a city of 8.5 million people? At the end of 2017 – 290 murders. The lowest since 1951.

The last time we had this few homicides in New York City the Dodgers were still playing in Brooklyn.

**Catsimatidis:** Wow. And the other thing – the Fire Department. You have a great Fire Commissioner. I've talked to him before about some of the problems in New York with all the cold and them using the fire – stoves or other instruments to keep warm in some of the buildings. Now, there's also a problem in the New York City Housing Authority –

**Mayor:** Yes.

**Catsimatidis:** [Inaudible] warm. What are we doing about that?

**Mayor:** Well I want to – on the first point you raised. It's so important. We really have to educate people that in a cold weather – even though you understand, if people aren't getting enough heat they think, oh, let's open the oven up or you know put on a space heater and all that. People have to be really careful. Opening the oven can be very dangerous. Space heater – if you don't protect it properly, and protect the cord properly it can be very dangerous. So you know we've lost some lives because of people trying to heat things up the wrong way.

One the public housing in this city. We have the biggest public housing authority in the country. Over 400,000 people live in it. But here's the problem, John. A lot of the buildings are 50 years old, 60 years old, 70 years old. They have not gotten the kind of upkeep they've needed for decades. The federal government started moving away from support for public housing back in the 80s even.

So, we've got a lot of buildings with really old boilers, great employees who struggle to keep them going every day, but they've unfortunately got a lot of outages and we have to fix them literally every single day in some cases.

So, we are – we are generally able even when God forbid there's a problem with the boiler, to get it fixed within hours. But it's a constant problem.

**Catsimatidis:** Your Education Chancellor has resigned –

**Mayor:** Retired. Retired. 74 years old – she has run the race well.

**Catsimatidis:** You're absolutely right. What – do you have any prospects for bringing anybody else in soon?

**Mayor:** Yeah, John, we're involved in a nationwide search right now. I mean, look, the Schools Chancellor for New York City – it's the premier education job in the country, 1.1 million kids in our public schools. Now, under Carmen Fariña, she's done a great job the last four years.

I was so thrilled when she agreed – she originally had retired. She came out of retirement to take the job at 70. Has done an amazing job – test scores up consistently for four years. Highest graduation rate we've had ever in our history, obviously pre-k for all our kids. That's been instituted citywide. We're now moving to three-year-olds having early childhood education for free citywide.

So, she's got a lot to be proud of. Nationwide search – I can tell you one thing, I want an educator. My predecessor chose non-educators over his 12 years. I want a chancellor who is an educator.

We're going to look all over the country. We're certainly going to look in the city as well. And you know, my hope is in the next month or so that we'll be able to make an announcement but we've still got some work to do.

**Catsimatidis:** MTA. We have one of the oldest subway systems in the country. A lot of people have made a lot of recommendations and the number is being thrown around that \$800 million is needed and they need help from the City. What are your thoughts on that?

**Mayor:** The need is in the many of billions of dollars. I mean \$800 million has been talked about as the immediate fix. But Joe Lhota who is now the Chair of the MTA ran against me – well, you remember. You were in that race too. We were all good friends nonetheless.

**Catsimatidis:** Yep [inaudible] very capable individual.

**Mayor:** He's very good and I respect him a lot. He's said – if you look at the long term, the long term need is as much as \$40 billion. We need a bigger solution. I have proposed one and I am very straightforward, you know me. I'm very straightforward about it. I think the solution is a millionaire's tax in New York City only specifically to support the MTA.

I think it would give us a consistent reliable source of revenue so we can actually fix it. I think Albany needs to step up in the meantime and return the money they took away from the MTA – almost half-a-billion that was diverted from the MTA to other uses. That needs to come back to solve the immediate needs.

But, I think we can turn around the MTA. The State controls it but I think we can all work together to turn it around. But we got to serious about a long-term revenue source.

**Catsimatidis:** And on the millionaire's tax – it's not that I'm a millionaire but the fact is Jersey passed it and ended up collecting less revenue than when they didn't have it.

**Mayor:** The difference between Jersey and New York, and I'm not an expert on what they went through, but the difference for sure is – look, we see a steady stream of very successful people who want to live in New York City. You're an example. There's a lot of other people who are really devoted to living in New York City because of all we have to offer, are not only going to live here for half the year because of tax issues. And we've seen people in so many fields – in the cultural fields, in technology – more and more people coming in from around the world.

So, we're blessed right now that this is a place that a lot of successful and wealthy people want to be. So I don't fear a negative outcome. And look, when we're talking about a millionaire's tax, we're talking about a small additional surcharge

Obviously, John, a lot of people who are wealthy are going to benefit greatly from the tax bill that was passed in Washington –

**Catsimatidis:** Not in New York.

**Mayor:** Well, it's a mix. You're right. Some less so for sure because the tax bill is so unfair to New York and I think the Republicans did something very unfair in taking away state and local

deductibility, something that had been a bipartisan consensus in this country since 1913. That was passed originally in 1913 and only under Donald Trump was it undermined.

But nonetheless, there's a lot of people doing very, very well in the state – or city I should say. I think asking them to do a little bit more is not unfair. Any way you slice it, John, we need a long-term solution for the MTA. We got to have a reliable revenue source if we're going to fix things.

If the MTA doesn't get fixed it undermines the whole future of this city. I think we can all agree on that, that our economy depends on it.

**Catsimatidis:** I had Congressman Nadler on before, during our Local Edition and he's a big advocate of that Gateway Project. And it looks like the White House or Washington has put it to a halt temporarily.

**Mayor:** Well, John, I am really shocked by that because one of the things that President Trump talked about in his campaign that really got a lot of positive attention and a lot of people liked was the idea of investing in infrastructure.

And here's one of the biggest infrastructure projects anyone has ever seen – the Gateway Tunnel. But it absolutely will determine certainly a lot of the future of New Jersey economically but also because so much of the talent that comes in everyday to work in New York City comes from New Jersey, it will have a huge impact on the future of the New York City economy.

Here's a chance to make a smart long-term investment that will keep this whole metropolitan area strong. I'm shocked that a guy who says he's interested in infrastructure investment like Trump would get cold feet.

**Catsimatidis:** Do you think he's just negotiating, Mayor?

**Mayor:** Oh, I wouldn't be shocked. He does all sorts of things using public statements to try and you know position what he is trying to get done. But I do think John, it will be seen as a contradiction by a whole lot of people who liked him because they thought he was actually going to invest in infrastructure.

**Catsimatidis:** What is your vision of 2018? We're coming into a new year. The stock market in New York is the headquarters of the stock market, is over 25,000. I'm sure the City and State are making a lot more in revenues because of that market. What is your vision you want to accomplish in 2018?

**Mayor:** John first of all, I am so proud of what the NYPD achieved in 2017 and working more closer than ever with people at the community level. I want us to go farther in 2018. So, job one make the city safer. Built an even closer bond between police and community. Second, I want to take the progress we've made on education in general, specifically in childhood education I want to go farther. Continue to push up our graduation rate and build out this three-year-old early childhood education program. I think it is going to make a huge difference. And the last thing I'd say is we want to build affordable housing at even faster. Right now we're building at a retro

clip, I want to go even faster in 2018 and create a lot more jobs. I have a plan to create 100,000 new jobs that will begin in 2018 that will be good paying jobs. You know, middle class jobs. This is a city right now poised for even greater economic growth and I want to drive that. Look, we're a city that could be nine million people in the next couple of decades. We need to keep building those new good quality jobs to support that.

**Catsimatidis:** Would you urge Senator Schumer to work harder on sitting down with Trump and say, "I'm the senior senator from New York, this is what we need"?

**Mayor:** I think Senator Schumer has done an outstanding job. I think he has impressed me no end by being able to keep the unity in the Democratic Party and organize democrats to have the biggest impact. And look he showed at many of times the degree on earlier effort with the continuing resolution that he tried to work in a way that would reach some kind of common ground with the president. I think the president I hard to make sense of to say the least. But it's not for lack of trying on Senator Schumer's part. But I would say the most important thing to remember is now he's got 49 votes because of Doug Jones and I think there is a real chance that in the first week of November Chuck Schumer is going to end up being the majority leader of the Senate. So that to me is the focus of him continuing to do what he is doing but he's certainly shown the willingness to try and find productive outcomes with the president. I am not sure how consistent the president is.

**Catsimatidis:** You travelled to Iowa a few weeks ago.

**Mayor:** Yeah.

**Catsimatidis:** What do you want to be when you grow up?

**Mayor:** I appreciate that John. John, look, you know this job is one of the greatest jobs in the world being Mayor of New York City. It's one of the greatest –

**Catsimatidis:** I applied for it.

**Mayor:** Yeah, and let me tell you I am blessed starting a new term is wonderful. I feel really energized. The inauguration went so well. It was wonderful with Bernie Sanders; I was really honored to have him swear me in. This is what I am here to do and the future will take care of itself. So, you know, four years is a nice long time for me to focus on this work but I also said I am going to work to strengthen the Democratic Party around the country. I do want to see the Democrats take back the House, and hopefully the Senate. And to work for progressive causes, that's something that I will certainly keep doing.

**Catsimatidis:** The national Democratic Party have had this discussion with Perez and had Governor [inaudible] last week is lacking for leadership. Who do you think in the Democratic Party should be – stand up and say I want to lead?

**Mayor:** You know I don't think it's about a single person. I think there are some great leaders in the party. If you're talking about what Chuck Schumer is doing in the Senate, and Nancy Pelosi is doing in the House. They have created real unity in the party. They have created real clarity on

the tax bill. Democrats were saying with one voice that this bill was going to overly benefit the wealthy and corporations. I thought that was a very powerful unity. So they're doing their job.

There is dynamic progressive leaders like Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren who I think are doing a great job. Look, I supported Keith Ellison for the DNC Chair. I thought that he would have been great. But I am obviously trying to support the efforts of Tom Perez in any way I can.

I don't think it's about a single leader. I think its about continuing to you know win elections locally, like what happened in Virginia and in Jersey and obviously Alabama which was outstanding and continuing to come up with a single simple message. I think the message should be a progressive one and about an economic vision for fairness. I think that's something Bernie Sanders did a great job with in 2016 and bluntly Trump got a lot of that message out and attracted a lot of people. That should not be a message to someone like Trump can beat Democrats. Democrats have the strongest most progressive message of economic change and fairness. So I think that's even more important than a single leader emerging. But I am going to go all around the country helping to support the folks who will be part of that change and the folks who believe in that kind of vision for the party.

**Catsimatidis:** Mayor de Blasio, thank you so much for coming onto the show. And thank you for leading the safest city in America. Maybe you can give some lessons to the guy in Chicago.

**Mayor:** Well, he's a good guy, and we always want to help each other as mayors but John, you're a true New Yorker, you love this city. We as New Yorkers have so much to be proud of being the safest big city in America is something we hoped for, for many years. And now its here, and we're going to keep it that way.

**Catsimatidis:** Congratulations Mayor de Blasio, and thank you for joining us, and a Happy New Year.

**Mayor:** Thanks John, take care. Happy New Year.

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