

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

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** July 27, 2020, 7:10 PM  
**CONTACT:** [pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov](mailto:pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov), (212) 788-2958

**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS ON INSIDE CITY HALL**

**Bobby Cuza:** Welcome back to Inside City Hall. It was another violent weekend in the five boroughs with eight people shot and killed in just one day. That comes – that includes a Brooklyn shooting late last night, where two teenagers were killed and one other was injured. The NYPD is working with community members on anti-gun violence efforts. And, as we just reported, the Mayor is urging courts to expedite their reopening process. Joining me now to talk about all this and more from the Blue Room inside City Hall is Mayor de Blasio. Welcome back to the program, Mr. Mayor.

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Thank you very much, Bobby. How are you doing?

**Cuza:** I'm doing all right. So, I've heard you talk a lot in recent weeks about what you've referred to as a lack of a functioning court system. You've called on the courts to begin the reopening process. You've offered the City's help. We heard today sort of a forceful response from the Office of Court Administration, which is on the State level. They said, while New York City still does not allow indoor dining, the Mayor blithely asks us to call in thousands of people a week citywide for jury duty. Clearly, he has absolutely no understanding of how the criminal justice process works. I wonder how you would react to that? And the concept of jury duty seems to be a valid concern. How are you going to make jury duty work with thousands of people coming in with social distancing and all the safety precautions that you would need to have in place?

**Mayor:** Look, Bobby, I'm amazed that the Office of Court Administration is not trying to innovate in this moment. They're not indoor dining. They're not restaurants. They're the criminal justice system for God's sakes. We need them to function. They can't explain their way out of this. We require them to be functioning fully to ensure that people who have done violence in our communities actually suffer the consequences and are off our streets. I mean, think about it for a moment, the comparison to indoor dining is actually rather distressing when you think about – what we're talking about is stopping shooting, stopping killings. I was with the family of Davell Gardner Jr., a one-year-old killed – and when you look at what's happening in our neighborhoods, we need the criminal justice system to fully re-engage so we can get people who do violent crimes off the streets once and for all. And we can't do that if there aren't trials and there aren't enough trials to keep up with the challenges we're facing. So, look, we all have work to do here. I said it this morning, the NYPD needs to do more; communities are stepping up, we need them to do everything they could possibly do; prosecutors – everyone has to do more. But if it comes down to the question of can you safely bring a jury into a space to have a trial, tell us what you need. That's what I said to the Office of Court Administration this morning – do you need big spaces? We've big spaces. We'll make them available to you. Do you need, you know, face coverings? What do you need? Whatever it is, we'll help you get it, but simply not having a

functioning criminal justice system is going to endanger the people of this city. We can't go on like this.

**Cuza:** Do we know where this falls within the metrics of reopening? In other words, under phase four reopening, does that give the court system the green light to resume jury trials? Are they holding back, you know, as a matter of policy and not as a matter of being blocked from doing this by the rules that the City has set forth?

**Mayor:** No. Clearly – the court system had made clear they were coming back – August 10th is the date that I heard was for the initial activity in New York City. I've never heard them say anything but they're coming back, but, unfortunately, their version of coming back is very slow and nowhere near the level we need it to be. We need it to get to full speed very quickly. Now, again, unlike many other situations we deal with – I've been a member of a jury, I do know what that's like. I know the number of people you need to bring together. I know the number of people you ultimately need in a courtroom to have a trial. It is a manageable number of people and any number of measures can be taken to distance people, provide face coverings, all sorts of things to make it go smoothly. Perhaps the problem is trying to have the trials just in the traditional spaces, and that may be a very valid concern. That's why I said, do you need more space? We'll find your space, or whatever they need. But it does not at all appear to be a problem with the State rules because the court system had already said they were coming back. What I'm saying is, they've got to do it very aggressively and quickly to allow us to address a real crisis also caused by the perfect storm of everything with the coronavirus. Look, a year ago we were having amazing success continuing to drive down crime and violence in New York City. What's the X-factor here – this horrible disease and everything it's done to the city. But we all have to fight it back, Bobby. And here's a chance – you know, the State had said, yes, you're going to have a court system again. We're saying it has to be right, it has to be fast, it has to be big, because, in the meantime, a new and horrible crisis has come out of this perfect storm, and that's the fact that we're losing the lives of too many people in our communities. We can't go on like this. We have to break this cycle and this is one of the ways we do it.

**Cuza:** How much – how much do you see bail reform playing into this equation? Police officials have talked about this. Some bail reforms were rolled back earlier this year by the Legislature, but, in my understanding, there are certain offenses that are not bail eligible, including, I think, some gun offenses. So, some of these accused criminals would be back out on the street, because of bail reform, regardless of whether the courts were open, right?

**Mayor:** Well, Bobby, there's a lot of moving parts here. It's what the NYPD does, what prosecutors do, what judges do, what the court system as a whole does – all of this matters in the equation. But let's even take the case of an individual who's arrested, and then, under the law, they cannot be held in for bail, and they're on the street. Well, the difference here, again, is, still in a normal time their trial would come up. There would be a follow through. And Commissioner Shea talked about this today. The fact that there's going to be a trial and there's a timeline, creates a positive pressure of the dynamic to address and resolve issues. In some cases, that might be a plea bargain, in other cases, a full trial, but the goal is a speedy trial. And this is an age-old American value. We can't accept the notion of very few jury trials and a slow process that holds back those consequences, because then if someone is on the street, even if by State law they're supposed to be on the street until their trial happens, if we keep waiting and waiting and waiting before their trial ever happens, that is magnifying the danger if there's someone who's committed

a violent offense. So, Bobby, I mean, just think about it – the whole process from arrest and arraignment and the charges brought – everything is predicated upon a trial being at the end of that process and an outcome. And if someone no longer should be on the streets, because that's the decision of the jury of their peers, then that's acted on. That outcome isn't happening in the vast majority of cases, including cases with really violent individuals. That has to be changed.

**Cuza:** On the topic of police reform, as you know, 50-a, the State law was repealed that shielded police disciplinary records. Yesterday, ProPublica, the nonprofit news organization published some 4,000 police disciplinary records they had acquired from the Civilian Complaint Review Board, which is the independent oversight agency. They published those online. You can go in and search by officer. Any officer who's had a substantiated complaint is in that database. The Police Commissioner this morning on NY1 said he had concerns about that, because in some cases these complaints ended up – there ended up being no wrongdoing that was found. Do you have an issue with these records being released?

**Mayor:** Look, we want to do it the right way, not through a third-party organization releasing them. You know, we want to release these with a full picture, if there was a disciplinary action, if there was a decision not to, if there was a trial. What I said weeks and weeks ago when the 50-a law was repealed is we intend to put out the full disciplinary record, but that means really making sure it is complete and clear. I don't know exactly what was put out that ProPublica published, but I do know I want it to be the official policy of our uniformed agencies to consistently update the disciplinary records in a public way, with the appropriate ground rules attached. There's court activity right now that's not allowing us to do that, but that will be resolved, I think, sooner rather than later. And then, I want people to feel the confidence that they can see someone's display record. But it also has to be clear when it is – when a charge was not found to be the case; when, in other words, when there's a charge that was taken against an officer, but the officer was determined not to have committed an offense. It's important we look at that too and not just assume because the charge was brought, that, that's the whole story. You know, due process is something we all value and we value it for our officers as well.

**Cuza:** Alright. Mayor de Blasio, stay right there. It is time now for a short break. I will have much more with Mayor de Blasio straight ahead. Stay with us.

[...]

**Cuza:** Welcome back to Inside City Hall. I'm joined once again by Mayor de Blasio from the Blue Room at City Hall. Mr. Mayor, we had a story tonight about the Financial Control Board and the fact that Governor Cuomo has now appointed some close associates to that board, the concern being that the State perhaps could step in and try to take control of the City's finances at some point. Governor Cuomo himself today made reference to scrutiny that needs to be paid to the city budget. What are your what are your thoughts on that?

**Mayor:** Well, a couple of different points, Bobby, first of all, the three people he appointed, good people, I know them all well, respect them, I'm sure we can all work together. Second, I mean, just look at the law. You're talking about the 1970's and 80's, yeah the Financial Control Board played a very, very active role in the City's finances, but that hasn't been true for many years because the City of New York has been so fiscally responsible and so strong for so many years, and we are the economic engine of New York State where we're most in New York State's

revenue comes from, and even with the horrible experience the last few months that remains true and will remain true. New York City unquestionably is going to rebound. So I think we shouldn't misunderstand the Financial Control Board. Its role is very different today than way back when in some very, very bad times during the 70's and 80's.

**Cuza:** You – your administration put out some good news today about the Test and Trace Corp, that's the team of contact tracers that are reaching out to those who have tested positive for coronavirus, 96 percent of those who have tested positive have been reached, or at least that's the current numbers, 74 percent have completed their intake, which as I understand, it means they have agreed to self-isolate for a couple of weeks. What do you think of those numbers? I mean, 74 percent sounds pretty good, but that still leaves 26 percent that might still be backed out there on the streets and potentially transmitting the virus, right?

**Mayor:** Yeah, look, first of all, it's outstanding. I mean, to reach 96 percent of the people we're trying to reach, that's unbelievably good, and I give a lot of credit to every one of the Test and Trace Corp for that. The Test and Trace Corp is only really weeks old. I mean, it really came into its own around June 1st. That's how recently this thing was set up. So, when you think about that, I think that work will continue to improve and we'll be able to go deeper and deeper into that group of folks and reach people, reach them better. I think it shows an immense amount of progress in just six, seven weeks, but it's also – I agree with your point that we got to keep going for the next person, the next person, the next person, because we want to do everything to knock down this disease.

I mean, today we had amazing indicators in New York City. One percent of all tests came back positive. The latest information we got from the State I think it was 229 new cases. That's an amazingly low number, very, very few that have gotten to the point of hospitalization. We're talking about confirmed COVID cases coming into the hospital each day is now somewhere in the five to 10 case range when you really look at the cases that are confirmed after testing, and these are amazing examples of progress, but we want to drive it lower. So yeah, Test and Trace Corp is going to keep expanding and we've got to keep getting the message across. I mean, this is an area, Bobby, where I think everyone needs to do better, whether it's City, State, private sector, every institution in the city should be saying to people, if you come in from out of this city, or if you're New York City person who was elsewhere in one of those troubled states and you come back, you have got to recognize the quarantine. I think there's a big role for private sector nonprofits, you know, universities, you name it to play in really helping to discipline people and remind them and educate them that they have to abide by this quarantine for everyone's benefit.

**Cuza:** Mr. Mayor, I want to ask you about something that came up during your question and answer session this morning, this sprang from the mind of WCBS reporter Rich Lamb who asked you about the City Seal and the fact that there's a Lenape Indian in that seal holding a bow – as in a bow and arrow – and you said maybe it was worth taking a look at that. I don't know how familiar you are with the seal, but can you expand on that a little bit? Is that something that the commission that was examining monuments a couple of years ago might go back and take a look at?

**Mayor:** First of all, I give Rich Lamb credit, he's a great journalist and, you know, one of the most respected members of the press corps, and he asks a great question. I mean, City Seal, I don't know if most New Yorkers have spent a lot of time looking at it or ever will, but it's an

important symbol, and we should examine it. I think this symbol, you could see it different ways, but it really is worth looking at carefully. The new commission that we're putting together on Racial Justice and Reconciliation is going to look at a lot of things. It's going to look at, you know, where there is structural racism in New York City government and in our institutions in the symbols, but more urgently than that even, figuring out the specific actions we need to take, and I'm not just talking about symbols and monuments, but on policies, budget, city laws, our charter, the things that we need to do to really address structural racism. So that commission is going to look at a lot of things, but the City Seal should get another look. Look, I mean, it says 1625 right there on it. It's 2020. It's a very different time. We should think about all our symbols and that's I think a healthy thing to do.

**Cuza:** Mr. Mayor, you're a baseball fan and we see a lot of trouble in Major League Baseball.

**Mayor:** Yes.

**Cuza:** The Yankees game is being postponed. We've seen a lot of players test positive. What's going on? What is Major League Baseball doing wrong?

**Mayor:** Yeah, I don't if they're doing anything particularly wrong, Bobby, but I'm a real fan. I'm worried for the season. I think everyone's worried for the season. I mean, it started pretty damn well the last few days, and you know, even without the fans, it still felt like something special was back. I would hope and pray that what teams will do is just reach deep into their reserves. You know, they have these expanded reserves they've been able to carry this year. I mean, let's face it. We're not going to see all the stars we're used to, but I'm hoping they can keep the season going because I think it's important that people's morale. I mean, sports mean so much to all of us. So it's going to be tough when you see what happened with the Marlins. That is a little scary, but my hope is that's going to be a rarity and mainly they can make adjustments and keep the season going for all of us, because we need some good news. I mean, we've had some great things like outdoor dining. And today I went to one of our city pools we opened up in Bed-Stuy, that's beautiful, the beaches, there's a lot of really good things that are giving people some hope, but baseball is a big part of it. So, I hope that I can really find a good way forward.

**Cuza:** All right, Mr. Mayor, thank you so much for joining us as always and we will see you again next week.

**Mayor:** All right, Bobby. Take care.

###