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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR ERIC ADAMS HOLDS A PUBLIC HEARING ON
MATERNAL HEALTH BILLS INTRO 86-A, INTRO 409-A, INTRO 472-A, INTRO 478-
A, INTRO 482-A, INTRO 490-A, AND INTRO 509-A**

Mayor Eric Adams: A very important piece of bills that we are signing. Are we good to go in the back? Dealing with maternal health bill package. This is a public hearing today, and these bills are crucial. And I want to thank Speaker Adrienne Adams for her support on these bills, as well as others that I'm going to acknowledge.

Mayor Adams: We're signing seven bills so New York City will continue to be a national leader in maternal health. It's a critical moment for women in this city and across the country, and New York City wants to continue to be the place where maternal health is protected. From the overturning of Roe versus Wade, to state efforts to criminalize those who seek abortions, reproductive healthcare is in danger. The health choices should be made by women — and their bodies, they should make the decisions on these important medical moments. For those who choose it, motherhood could be tough, physically, medically, and psychologically. I've seen firsthand the resiliency of New York City mothers. My mother gave birth to six children.

Mayor Adams: And the numbers are clear, Black women are nine times more likely to die of pregnancy related causes than white women in New York City. That is an alarming, unacceptable number. It is not acceptable for mothers to be dying at the moment we should be welcoming a new life. We must do right by every mother and every baby. New York City is taking action to support women and ensure their safety. We're making sure women have access to maternal healthcare when they need it the most. No matter the color of their skin, their income bracket, or what state they come from. This bill, and these bills I should say, will promote education, increase transparency and expand access to maternal healthcare.

Mayor Adams: Intro 86 status A establishes a public education program regarding the city's standards for respectful care at birth, as well as the right to be free from pregnancy related discrimination. Intro 409-A improves access to data, and maternal mortality and morbidity. Intro 472-A codifies a Department of Health program to train doulas and provide doula services to residents in all five boroughs. Intro 478-A launches an educational campaign on the benefits and services provided by doulas and midwives. Intro 482-A requires the Department of Health to provide information on polycystic ovary syndrome and other health related items. Intro 490-A

codifies the Department of Health efforts to provide sexual, and reproductive health services, and conduct research on sexual and reproductive health disparities within the city. And finally, Intro 4509-A codifies a public education program on maternal mortality and morbidity, and requires the Department of Health to issue a report regarding the incidence of cesarean sections and recommendation to reduce maternal mortality and severe morbidity.

Mayor Adams: This will continue to empower women with information, and that's the goal here that we are putting forward. It takes a city to raise a child. That starts with supporting our mothers, and these bills would accomplish that task. Again, I want to thank Speaker Adrienne Adams, Vanessa Gibson, the president of the borough of Bronx, Public Advocate Jumaane Williams for Intro 86-A, Council Member Farah Louis for Intro 49-A and 482-A, Council Member Crystal Hudson for 478-A, Councilwoman Julie Menin for 490-A, Council Member Althea Stevens for Intro 5099-A. And so now at this time, as we always do, we want to invite the public to comment on these bills, and open the floor for those comment on these bills. Any comments?

Mayor Adams: Okay. No comments. So I thank you, and we will be signing these bills at a later day.

Question: Yeah, [inaudible]. I know you talked a lot on the campaign trail about a doula program specifically, and that was one of the bills here. Did you work with the City Council on that? Did you coordinate to move this forward? Or is this kind of the Council doing its own thing and you now support it?

Mayor Adams: Combination. We put the items of doula — something that I thought is very important, something that we need to invest in more. We rolled out a program in Brooklyn and we will continue to do so. And the councilwomen, council persons I should say, share my desire about the powers of doulas and how doulas help, not only with cesareans, but also alleviate the use of pain related medicine.

Question: Yeah. I know some people who work in this industry were concerned about, I guess, government involvement, which could sometimes be a very personal type of thing. I don't know if you have any information on how this will work. Will it be a smaller scale start, and will there be people who've been doing it for years coming in to talk about how they can expand this to a citywide — much larger than it usually is with private doulas?

Mayor Adams: Well, our goal is to look at some of the best practices that are taking place across the globe, and bring people to the table who have participated in doula services for years. As you stated, there are many who have been providing this service, and providing adequate doula care. And having government involved is not going to interrupt that, it's going to give the resources and support that's needed.

Question: There's been some concerns from doulas in communities of color that, I guess, people that are being used and trained on the doula city program, there's, I guess, a lack of representation, according to them. Can you speak to that at all?

Mayor Adams: I haven't heard of that at all. And I have been engaged in assisting, and expanding doula services from my days as borough president, and that's something that has not come across our desk at all. Okay, you want me to do some off-topics?

Question: Hi, Mayor Adams. I was speaking with the family of Darius Lee, the basketball star killed in Harlem two months ago, just in general, and about the recent violence we've continued to see. They [inaudible] two things for me I wanted to get your comment on if you could. They're not really hearing much from police, the unsolved murder's still ongoing, and victim services, they're not seeing more police in their neighborhood. And cops they are seeing [inaudible] — this a couple weeks ago, standing around, not doing as much as they would like. What do you say to families that continue to experience this gun violence, and not see change that they would like in their communities?

Mayor Adams: Well, I think it's a combination and we were extremely supportive of Darius. It's an unfortunate premature termination of life. We sent too many young men, and in general — specifically, and in general, too many young people are the victims of this violence. I want them to, the families — not only these particular families, but all of us — to add our voices to the catch, release, repeat system. Oftentimes, those who are perpetrating this violence are repeated offenders. And we have been clear on that. And the police officers doing their job. Close to 5,000 guns removed off the street, 27 year high increase in felonious arrests in this city for serious violent crimes. And those officers, those small number of officers that are congregating, the police commissioner was clear. Not only was the police commissioner clear, I'm clear. We need omnipresence in our subway system and on our streets.

Mayor Adams: But let's zero in on what we are doing, what has not been done before. Paper plates, ghost vehicles, those vehicles were used to commit crimes. We were ignoring them. We're not under this administration. Motorcycles, ATVs creating havoc in our system, in our city. We saw how they're used in criminal behavior. We zero in on those types of vehicles, and those who are using these tools. So our holistic approach, yes, it was successful in decreasing shooters, decreasing homicides, but we have so much more to do around those serious predatory crimes, like burglary and robbery. We could do a far better job if we stopped allowing dangerous people to go through the criminal justice system.

Question: Just to quickly follow up on that, is there anything you see implemented in the next couple of months, short of continuing to push for the bail reform changes, that your administration can do within your control? Do you have specific plans you're planning to launch?

Mayor Adams: Yes. Listen, I've made it clear. We're going to call on Albany. We're going to call on our prosecutors. We're going to call on our judges. I'm very clear on this, the safety of this city is the responsibility of the mayor. And in spite of what others are doing or not doing, we have an obligation to do our job and more. And we're going to continue to evolve. You're going to see a greater display of the omnipresence that's needed. I don't know if many people recognize at parades, you don't see those large number of people at peaceful parades, just standing around doing that anymore. Police officers, I should say. We are using our manpower better. I've said this on the campaign trail, and it was reinforced when I became the mayor. Our failure to deploy

our police personnel correctly, that is what we're zero zeroing in on. If we deploy our police better, it will continue to assist us in the job that we need to do.

Mayor Adams: And then we're going to target and use probation to assist us. We're going to use the Sheriff's Department to assist us. Our goal is to use every arm of law enforcement in a more coordinated way to go after violent people in the city.

Question: Perfect. Mayor, I have two questions for you. When it comes to the asylum seekers, I know there's been a lot of anticipation for that welcome center. I know that's been pushed back a little bit. Just hoping for an update for you on that situation. And also, when it comes to the mental health teams on the subways, how has that been going? Do you have any sort of update on how those mental health teams, with the cops that you paired with mental health professionals, just how that's going?

Mayor Adams: First, on the asylum seekers, we did a soft opening. We want to make sure we get it right, because, as you know, the numbers are coming in at increasing pace. We have close to 7,600 asylum seekers that have gone through our shelter. Currently, we have about 5,700 that are currently in our shelter. This is in addition to the men and women of this city, and families, children and families that need shelter. And so, when you look at the large volumes that we brought in and manage, in addition to those who are here already, I take my hat off to the team for what they're doing. We want to make sure when we open the site, that we are able to continue the success of managing a large number of those who are seeking asylum or seeking shelter in this city. Some who have come are going to live with family members, or moving on to other municipalities in the process. But we're looking to get it up and operating. We do the soft opening. We want to make sure it's right. We don't want to just do something expeditiously that's not going to be successful.

Question: And my second question as well, from with the mental health — just...

Mayor Adams: It's been — we're in week one. I mean, many of you I see in this room, you were there week one when we rolled out of removing encampments, giving people with mental health assistance. People were there. There were a lot of naysayers. First week, 2,200 people took us up on our offer. People joked about it when we said we're going to create a brochure to show what the safe havens were like. We did that. We partnered with police, and mental health professionals, and volunteers. And we were able to successfully take off a substantial number of people that went into safe havens, or went into the shelter system, once they saw what we were representing.

Mayor Adams: And I was on the subway system. I was speaking with people. You ride the trains now, you don't have those encampments everywhere that you saw before. You don't have a large number of people who are homeless like you saw before. Now, winter time is going to bring new challenges. We're clear on that. But we are going to be prepared, when winter time comes, so we can continue to do what's right for our fellow New Yorkers. So I think it was a success. I think the numbers, the last I checked, is close to 2,000, but we are looking to the exact number on how many took us up on our offers to go into the shelter system of safe haven. We'll give you the exact number. The last I checked, I believe I saw somewhere in the area of 2,000.

Question: Mr. Mayor, one of my colleagues in [inaudible] did a story, it was on the cover of the Post today, about the redeployment, what it looks like of plant managers in transit and patrol bureaus. Wondering if that's also part of what you just were explaining, with redeployment, and also the direction that you see the NYPD going. And also, do you know how many officers that involves?

Mayor Adams: You know, police officers are supposed to be going after bad guys. I said this on the campaign trail. The joy of Eric Adams, I'm doing what I said. I said that we were going to civilianize the department. Too many police officers with guns and shields were doing desk duties. I talked about this over and over on the campaign trail. And so, when you see officers now complimenting patrol, these are officers that have a gun, a shield — went through the same training. So when people say this is the bottom of the barrel, or whatever terminology we're using, that's just untrue. These are law enforcement officers that know how to fight crime. They were doing civilian jobs. And we are going to continue to decrease the number of officers who are doing civilian jobs, and put them — the job that they were hired for. They were hired to go after dangerous, bad people. And so the numbers, we'll give you the exact numbers, but we civilianized a substantial number of police officers. We'll continue to expand. The last numbers that I looked at, I said, "That's not good enough." We're going to go into every agency, and if there's not a real, legitimate reason for that officer to be there, that officer's going to go on patrol and fight crime, and compliment what we're doing.

Question: And what was that last number that you looked at, that you said?

Mayor Adams: I'll give you the exact number of what it was. I think it was in the area of 276, I believe. But we're going to go further. We'll get the exact number of how many we civilianized. But we're going to see substantial more. Too many police officers are doing clerical duties. During this all hands on deck moment, I need every police officer to carry out his function, and that is to protect the public. Now it may mean a time that two days a week, they need to be in because they're doing a specific task. I accept that. But every moment that we could have them out doing patrol, doing the omnipresent, going to those areas where we're dealing with really violent people, I need my police officers to be there.

Question: Mr. Mayor, the public advocate and Council Member Carmen De La Rosa visited Rikers Island today. And Council Member Rivera said that next month she's going to hold a hearing on that bill in the City Council to ban solitary confinement [inaudible] segregation. Your reaction to the visit and to the bill that is in front of the Council?

Mayor Adams: First of all, I commend Commissioner Molina and what he's doing. There's a part of that I didn't hear you say, that they're seeing some improvements.

Question: Yeah. They said that what they saw is better than last year.

Mayor Adams: Okay. Okay. Okay. We got to get that in there also. Somehow, if Chris can get that in the story, I'll be happy. You know?

Question: Make sure he does.

Mayor Adams: So there's a part. Here's the question that no one is asking — everyone who's critiquing Molina. What do you do with repeated dangerous people who are in jail? So, if the councilwoman wants to ban these things that she's talking about, and I don't believe in solitary confinement, but if she wants to ban these things, the question I need everyone to ask, which no one seems to ask, that critique jail — people who are repeatedly dangerous, over 80% of the inmates who are in punitive segregation, are from attacking other inmates. Other inmates. And so, if they're saying, "Don't take a person who commits a crime on another inmate or a staffer, don't take them out of a general population." Then we're saying, "Why are we arresting people in the city?" General population is our streets. And so, if the mission is, if someone commits a crime, we don't confine them, then they need to say that. Say they don't believe anyone should ever go to jail for committing a predatory crime.

Mayor Adams: If you are in jail and you commit a predatory crime on a staffer, a civilian, or another inmate, I want them to tell us what we should do with them. Because I don't know what they want us to do with them. I think people who commit violent crimes should be removed from society. And they commit violent crimes while they are removed from society, they need to go somewhere so they don't hurt people again. So, she may have an answer that I'm not aware of. And just ask her for me. What do we do with people who commit crimes inside jails? Violent crimes inside jail — slashes, stabbings, assaults, rapes. What do we do with them? She said, keep them in general population? No one has answered that question yet.

Question: Thank you. Also, on Rikers Island, after the visit, the comptroller was saying that he does not believe the city is on track to shut down Rikers Island by 2027 due to a lack of urgency about finding new places for the satellite jails. Just curious what your reaction is to that.

Mayor Adams: I thought you asked that. [Inaudible.] First of all, we're going to follow the law. But can you ask the comptroller a question for me? I believe we're 2,000 above the number of what we stated the count was going to be. I know we're higher in our ability. When we go to the borough-based jails, the current numbers we have now is higher. So, I would like the comptroller to tell us, what do we do with those inmates that's not going to fit into the borough-based jails? What do we do with them? See, I need the folks that are idealistic to deal with the realism of this. People are committing violent crimes, and if the rule is — from those who are saying of the idealism, let me tell them about the realism. When you still have a higher number of people that can fit into the borough based jails, what do we do with those that continue to do shootings, robberies, assaults, rapes, and other crimes? What do we do with them? And if they don't have an answer for that, then they should ask themselves, how do we move forward? We're going to follow the law. The law calls for the jails to be closed. We're going to follow that law.

Question: Is there anything in particular that your administration is doing right now to bring more urgency to do that 2027 deadline?

Mayor Adams: I'm sorry, to bring?

Question: Any specific actions that are being taken by the administration, in terms of locating satellite jails. Is there any particular action being undertaken actively?

Mayor Adams: Well, we have to have a plan B, because those who have created a plan A, that I inherited, obviously didn't think about a plan B. You know? Look at the incarceration numbers. And one have to ask, what was the plan B? What was the plan B that stated, if we don't drop down the prison population the way they thought we were, what do we do? No one answered that question. And that question should have been raised when we talked about the borough-based jail plan.

Question: So what would plan B be in your mind?

Mayor Adams: We have to look at everything from state facilities. We have to see. We get help from the governor. We have to sit down with the chair of crime and corrections. We have to see what's available. Now remember, closing Rikers was dealing with a distance issue, that we said it was unfair to have people travel great distances. If we have to use safe facilities, we're going to have to consider that. Keeping the city safe, everything must be on the table. And if it means using other facilities, we have to do that. And that is what we are looking at, because someone has to think through a plan that, I believe, was put in place and we did not think through. The numbers are higher than what the borough-based jails would hold. Right now, the numbers are higher. So either we're saying, "Once you reach a certain number, anyone who commits a crime, a dangerous crime, once you reach a certain number, then those who commit a dangerous crime no longer have to be arrested"? I mean, is that what people are saying? Someone has to start answering these questions before we make these policies.

Question: Looking back last week at the primaries, you endorsed a couple candidates that lost, one that got blown out. What do you think this says about the moderate politics that you want to see in Albany? And also, did your endorsement activities — do you think it affected your standing in next year's session up in Albany?

Mayor Adams: So, there's two parts to every statement. You said that, "You endorsed candidates that lost." Now what's the other part of that? Come on, Jeff.

Question: There was one incumbent that won.

Mayor Adams: One incumbent. Now you putting attachments to it. You know? Addabbo — my endorsement.

Question: You endorsed Addabbo?

Mayor Adams: Yes, I did.

Question: I didn't know.

Mayor Adams: Right. That's why I'm here. You know? When you do an analysis, I don't believe the congressional winner in the Park Slope area was a DSA candidate. I find him to be more

moderate than anything. Kevin Parker — I endorse. So, if you are looking at the glass as being half empty, look at the fact that I see it as being half full. And there's more support up in Albany than people think. I get real communications for my colleagues up there — state that, "Eric, we are in line with what you are saying." And so, I'm not worried about what's going to happen in Albany. I'm going to go up there just as I... Remember, I started this year, everybody said, "Eric is not going to get any W's in Albany." And we got everything from land trust in NYCHA, increase in the funding for our childcare. People thought we were going to lose mayoral control. We got mayoral control. And so, each session — I worked in Albany — each session, you have to stand up and get up there and convince people. Because what people learned, when I went to Albany — they said, "You know what? Eric's agenda's the same as our agenda." There was no one up there against childcare increase. There was no one up there against the things that we were fighting for with land trust. So, we'll be right. This is Albany. Albany's Albany.

Question: Hey, mayor.

Mayor Adams: How are you?

Question: Good, thanks. I wanted to ask you, my colleague, Yoav Gonen, just published a story about a police officer, Michael Sher, who — he's evaded any discipline for an action he did during the 2020 protest. He was caught on in his own body cam video, taking the mask off of a protestor and spraying them some face.

Mayor Adams: I remember that. I remember that.

Question: So, given — I know you've worked a lot in your career as a police officer on police reform, and people are very upset about this, that he's only been docked 10 vacation days. I want to know if you had a comment. I know you haven't had a chance to read the story because it came out when you were up here, but that's the gist of it. So I don't know if you have any comment, and if you think there should be another look at this type of disciplinary action.

Mayor Adams: There were probably three incidents that I witnessed during the protests that were horrific. That was one of them. That was one of them. To pull down the mask of a person, and mace them in that manner, really violated the trust. And it really damaged the credibility of the number of officers that, in spite of being yelled at, being cursed at, had things thrown at them, they showed the discipline. There was no reason for that officer to carry that out. The commissioner, I'm sure she reviewed it — the recommendations where it came from. I will have a conversation with her, because this is the first time I'm hearing about it. But that was the poster child of what destroyed, I believe, the good work that many of those officers carried out. I was in the street those days. I saw how challenging it was. I saw how difficult it was. And the overwhelming number of officers did not perform like that.

Question: Thank you.

Mayor Adams: Thank you.

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