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**RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO, SENATOR SCHUMER ANNOUNCE FEMA  
COMMITMENT OF AT LEAST \$1.6 BILLION TO REPAIR AND PROTECT SANDY-DAMAGED  
PUBLIC HOSPITALS**

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** First, I want to thank everyone at Coney Island Hospital, especially Executive Director Arthur Wagner. His whole team do an extraordinary job serving the people of Brooklyn at this wonderful hospital.

This hospital means so much to the surrounding communities – it has for years – but it was a particularly important anchor for this community in the days when Sandy hit, and the days after, where there was such pain, so many challenges, so much unknown. This hospital was a beacon, despite its own challenges. And you know, the nurses, the doctors, all the staff got ready in anticipation of Sandy. They brought their overnight bags. They knew they were in for the long haul. They were ready to serve no matter what was thrown at them. This hospital lost power that night that Sandy hit, but it didn't lose a single patient. I want to emphasize that – it lost power, but it didn't lose a single patient. And that is a credit to all of the men and women who work at Coney Island Hospital.

We want to, today, in this process of talking about the good news, remember the really heroic efforts of the people who serve – at that time and since – protecting the members of this community. A lot of folks are with us here today. I want to particularly thank Dr. Ram Raju – who you will hear from in a moment – the president of the Health and Hospitals Corporation, who's done an extraordinary job making sure this hospital is getting stronger all the time. I want to thank Dan Zarrilli, who's the director of our Office of Recovery and Resiliency – played a big role in making sure we get the resources we need going forward; and the elected officials you'll be hearing from in a moment, who have been very very supportive of all our efforts to help this hospital get stronger, and to shore up this city in so many ways.

Today's announcement is truly extraordinary for our hospitals. It has tremendous meaning for the city of New York as a whole. This is resources that were deeply needed, for Coney Island Hospital and three others. FEMA – to the great credit of FEMA – and I'm going to talk to you in a moment about what Senator Schumer has done to encourage FEMA to be there for us, and his efforts have been herculean as usual – but FEMA – I've got to tell you – someone asked me the other day how you – how we felt as a city about our federal partners – FEMA has been an extraordinary partner – consistent and communicative and helpful in so many ways. FEMA is investing at least \$1.6 billion dollars – that's today's announcement, and it's a big one – FEMA will invest at least \$1.6 billion dollars to reimburse the Health and Hospitals Corporation for repairs already undertaken since Sandy, and to fund new projects to protect us against future storms. That's an extraordinary commitment by FEMA. It is, in fact, the second-largest award in the history of FEMA. This is something that all New Yorkers should appreciate, how the federal government has stood up for us – the second-largest award in the history of FEMA for our New York City public hospitals.

This – it's going to support recovery and resiliency measures for the hospitals, the four hospitals that are included – of course Coney Island, Metropolitan Hospital in East Harlem, Coler Specialty Hospital in Roosevelt Island, and Bellevue Hospital in Manhattan. This money will allow us to do the kinds of things we know are necessary for resiliency – replace and improve generators and put them in safe positions, new pumps, flood-proof elevators – all the things that will allow our hospitals to keep going through thick and thin. All four hospitals will receive new flood walls, the most foundational type of protection – all four will get them. And Coney Island will get a new critical services building. So, this is crucial to the future of these hospitals and their protection.

Now, I mentioned Senator Schumer. He has been – in the midst of everything that was thrown at the city and the state with Sandy – the worst natural disaster in the history of New York City – he has been a rock. He has been the leader of the efforts to make sure we had the resources we need that we could fully recover. He has been absolutely unwilling to stop until everything we needed was in place – and that is a different kind of heroism. You know, I have immense respect for the doctors and the nurses and everyone at the front line in those days – that was incredibly tough and they did an amazing job. It's a different kind of heroism to stick with it for two years and make sure that we get the resources we need. It is just as important, and crucially important for the long run of our hospitals, that we had a champion who was willing to be there and make sure we got what we needed.

This is a crucial part of a bigger resiliency plan, also largely due to the work of Senator Schumer. Remember, \$20 billion dollars will be spent on resiliency over the coming years. Four big components, just to put it in perspective: the protecting of infrastructure and critical services – and one great example last month, when the city committed \$28 million dollars to make Staten Island University Hospital more resilient; the strengthening of coastal defenses – our partners in the Army Corps of Engineers have been extraordinary – 670,000 cubic yards of sand on Coney Island beaches alone – they're doing other great work at beaches all over the city to make them stronger; the upgrading of buildings and the FEMA support we've gotten for key buildings around the city, including public housing – for example, the Coney Island Houses, which we were – we celebrated a few weeks back; and the effort to makes homes and businesses and neighborhoods safer and more vibrant – you're going to see a lot of funding for resiliency technology that will benefit small businesses and help to protect them in the future.

All together, \$20 billion dollars, 257 different initiatives, all being moved simultaneously – you see activity all over the city – you'll see it for years. And every year we are getting safer, and each year we will be safer than the year before. That's what it takes for the future of this city. And we have been able to do this because of the commitment of so many leaders, and because of the hard work of so many people who serve our fellow New Yorkers.

A quick word in Spanish before I turn to Senator Schumer.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, I just want to say – whether you say it in English or whether you say it in Spanish, we have had a champion in Washington. Chuck Schumer has been so consistent in support of this city and so able to get the job done time and time again. This grant – again, second largest grant in the history of FEMA – is largely due to the leadership of our senator, Chuck Schumer.

[Applause]

[Senator Chuck Schumer speaks]

[Applause]

**Mayor:** Thank you very much, Senator. Now I want to introduce the president of the Health and Hospitals Corporation. I want to say about Ram Raju – he’s doing an extraordinary job. And you can see, as the senator mentioned, HHC’s capacity is immense – you’ve gotten a real example of that over at Bellevue the last few weeks – and they deserve immense credit. Ram brings a special ability to the effort to help strengthen Coney Island Hospital because for years he was the COO and medical director of Coney Island Hospital. So this will be a special labor of love for him to assist the team here in these efforts to make this hospital even stronger. President Ram Raju –

[Applause]

**Dr. Ram Raju, President, Health and Hospitals Corporation:** Thank you, mayor. Good morning, Mr. Mayor, Senator Schumer, friends, colleagues of Coney Island Hospital and also the Health and Hospitals Corporation.

We are here this morning to celebrate this milestone, this funding award from FEMA, which will permit restoration and fortification of four of our hospitals that suffered damage during the Hurricane Sandy two years ago. When this hospital – which in we are standing Coney Island Hospital – temporarily closed after Hurricane Sandy, it reminded all of us that hospitals are not just health care [inaudible] systems – they are intertwined in the social fabric of the community. They are social institutions in the communities we serve.

When the public hospital closed – after Coney Island, Bellevue – the community loss and suffering is far greater because we serve the most vulnerable amongst us – and we take good care of them. The federal funding marked here today this morning will assure that, in the long term, never again we will face the circumstances of storm like Sandy without the structure designed to extraordinary – to withstand extraordinary climate so that we do not close our hospitals again.

We would not have reached this day without the persistent, professional, and caring efforts of many, many, starting with the – our senator, Senator Schumer, and our mayor. I want to thank from the bottom of my heart – I wish to express my personal gratitude and the gratitude of the Health and Hospitals Corporation to all those who worked very hard to bring us here today – I just want to name a few them. Our team in the Health and Hospitals Corporation has been deeply involved in the restoration and mitigation process and working with FEMA – Antonio Martin, our executive vice president; [inaudible] from the finance team, who really shepherd and spearheaded for countless days and nights trying to get the numbers right; Ari Wagner, my friend, who heads Coney Island Hospital; Steve Alexander, who heads – of Bellevue; Jeremy Berman, our legal counsel, who has been working [inaudible]; and John Levy, from Base Tactical, who advised us throughout this process. Andrew [inaudible] Department of Health [inaudible] Emergency Management has been of immense help to us and they were guiding us through the whole process. And I also want to take the opportunity to thank Brad Kieserman, Chris Thomas, and Laura Phillips – people from FEMA, who has been extraordinarily helpful and they were there throughout the time we were trying to negotiate this thing.

Again, thank you for coming – thanks to senator, the mayor for being here today at Coney Island Hospital. The future of New York City public health system, the largest in the world destination, will gain safety, security, protection from the [inaudible] – protection because of the FEMA projects. So I just want to thank the staff, the resiliency and dedication of the staff, who took this – took this particular particular storm and also be able to put them – their own risk – their own health and their own homes at risk – but took care of the patients, and as the mayor rightly pointed out, transferred hundreds of patients without losing a single patient. He talks about the dedication of these workers, the resiliency of the team, and we just basically defined what we are meant as a public hospital system of great city and in the country, New York City, and New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation. Thank you, mayor.

**Mayor:** Thank you.

[Applause]

[Mayor de Blasio introduces various elected officials]

[Various elected officials speak]

[Mayor de Blasio introduces Chief Nurse Terry Mancher of Coney Island Hospital]

[Terry Mancher speaks]

**Mayor:** All right, we're going to take questions about this announcement, and then we'll go to off-topic after. About this announcement –

**Question:** I guess I'm wondering if there's anything more that you're looking to do that would require authorization from Congress [inaudible] Sandy, and whether that's impacted at all by the change in power of the senate?

**Senator Schumer:** You know, we knew that we should get everything we could up front, because that was, again, the experience of Katrina. When they didn't get everything up front in the immediate aftermath of Katrina, they got what they needed, but then afterwards it was much harder. So, we actually, when we came up with the \$60 billion, it was a complete list. Now, could something new come up that we don't know about? Yes, but that's not on the table.

**Question:** Just a follow up on that question for Senator Schumer – could you just speak, generally speaking, moving forward, how we think the Democrat's diminished power in Congress [inaudible] –

**Senator Schumer:** We're staying on topic.

**Mayor:** I thought that was kind of clear, my friend. On topic –

**Question:** [inaudible]

**Mayor:** It's not related. On topic –

**Question:** How high did the water come here?

**Senator Schumer:** Ten feet? Ten feet?

**Mayor:** The exact – do you want to describe where the water was?

[inaudible]

**Arthur Wagner, Executive Director, Coney Island Hospital:** Basically, the basement was filled, and probably up to 18 inches to two feet along the first floor where you're sitting here. This was under water. We had emergency services units come up with a boat to the front door of the hospital with some patients during the storm.

**Question:** [inaudible] how much of this money is to reimburse repairs already done and [inaudible]?

**Daniel Zarrilli, Director, Office of Recovery and Resiliency:** Roughly \$65 million dollars for work that's already been done – emergency generators that have been put in place and other measures, flood walls at

Bellevue and other things – and then the rest is going to be building new facilities here – at Bellevue and the other three hospitals.

**Question:** Can you explain what commitment means and when the money will come [inaudible]?

**Mayor:** The actual process of getting the money?

**Question:** Yeah.

**Dr. Raju:** The way it works is that they approved our projects, they approved our money – they've just got to go through appropriations through Congress. But we are trying to get some conditional approvals so that we can start the project with architecture [inaudible] planning before then.

**Question:** How long will that process take?

**Dr. Raju:** [inaudible] Senator? He doesn't know. It probably takes a little bit in six to nine months.

**Senator Schumer:** Yeah, it's – let me just say, it is not appropriations through Congress – it's been already appropriated. They just have to give official notice when they send the money out to the Appropriations Committees. I just wanted to make that clear.

**Question:** Senator, just to make clear, Senator Schumer – what is that – so you're saying there will be no impact on the Republican landslide of the federal [inaudible] coming into New York for Sandy recovery [inaudible]. So at this point, all the money set [inaudible] –

**Senator Schumer:** Correct.

**Question:** [inaudible] – they can't touch it.

**Senator Schumer:** We didn't think of elections. We just thought of the fact that if we were going to do this in pieces, we would get less money as the immediacy of Sandy wore off, so we asked for everything we thought – we asked the governors, the mayor, and everybody –

[Senator Schumer is interrupted by an announcement over the P.A. system]

Oh, I have to go.

[Laughter]

So, we asked for everything we thought we needed, and so far, so good. We haven't had to even think of going back.

**Question:** So there's nothing that can be done by the Republican leadership to change that?

**Senator Schumer:** That's right. That money is already allocated.

**Mayor:** The – and just to put a point on it. Because the senator, to his credit, both fought for the amount that was actually needed – because lord knows there were people in Washington trying to low-ball New York City, New York state, New Jersey – and the senator fought for the actual amount needed to get us back, and get us strong – that's what got baked in – that \$20 billion in resiliency money is an act of law. And then you remember all the announcements we made along the way – the three tranches of HUD funding, all announced, locked down; the FEMA awards, announced and locked down – that's all moving. So, we don't have a crystal ball, but I

can tell you, the senator's approach, which is aggressive and fighting for every dime we need, has given us a situation where that money is now definitely –

**Senator Schumer:** Some of our Republican colleagues said, let's do it in pieces. You need 60, we'll give you 10-15 now, and let's see what you need later. We resisted that successfully.

**Mayor:** Amen. On topic. Going once. On topic. Yes –

**Question:** This may be a goofy question, but does the money actually come in a check, or does it go, like, electronically into a computer, how does it –

[Laughter]

**Mayor:** It's a really big check. [Laughs]

[Commotion]

[Laughter]

**Mayor:** You go to the bank. There's a stack of them.

**Zarrilli:** It comes as transfers through – from the federal government to our OMB here in the city. Yeah, that's right.

**Mayor:** Okay, last call, on topic, going once. Going twice. Gone. Off topic –

**Phil:** Just a few here, guys.

**Mayor:** Just a few. We'll go – okay, these, I've got one, two, three, four, five. Let's go.

**Question:** Two questions – two-part question for Senator Schumer. One, do you expect the Democrats to recapture the majority in 2016, and two, do you feel like the governor did enough to elect a Democratic state senate here?

**Senator Schumer:** Okay, well let me answer both. First – look, the number one issue affecting our country and our state is that middle class incomes are declining, that middle class folks feel that the future is not as bright as they used to feel, and that, since 2001 actually, the actual income that the average family makes in America and in New York has declined. And so the party that best answers that question will win in 2016 – I believe it will be the democrats. Second question – yeah, I – the governor endorsed the senate candidates, the state party gave money to the senate candidates, and I have no problems with the governor's action at the state or federal level.

**Question:** Mayor, and certainly Senator Schumer – your thoughts on the possibility that the president is trying to take executive action on immigration – whether that's a wise idea, especially – yesterday we heard McConnell kind of fire a warning shot, saying you better not do that because it's going to set a bad precedent?

**Mayor:** You just start, I'll [inaudible].

**Senator Schumer:** Well, the real answer here is to pass our immigration bill, which passed the senate with strong bipartisan majorities. It did all the things that our colleagues are asking for are done in that bill. They say toughen up the border – that bill provided, in a Hoeven-Corker amendment, enough money to put someone on the border every half-mile from Galveston, Texas to San Diego, California, 24/7. It provided an electronic fence. It provided drones. Yeah, the border isn't fixed, but it's because the bill that we passed was blocked by House Republicans. So the bottom line is, you know, if they want to pass that bill quickly, that would solve the

problem – it's bipartisan, it has the support of business groups, it has the support of high tech, it has the support of the evangelical churches – the whole Republican coalition. But given that they've blocked it, I think that the president has no choice but to take executive action where he can, which is legal – wherever it's legally allowed – to help reform the immigration system. We cannot put up with this constant obstruction. We need to fix our broken immigration system.

**Mayor:** Just a quick follow-on – it is incredibly broken – it has been for years. It's time for action. I think the senator has it exactly right. If Republicans are ready to pass a bill, great. If not, the president must act.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, 25 mile an hour speed limit starts tomorrow. So how are you convincing people to adhere or is enforcement in place? I know the signs are going up. [inaudible] –

**Mayor:** It will be phased in. I mean, look, there's certain roads and highways where the 25 mile an hour limit does not apply. It's the quote-unquote “default speed limit” – it means in the absence of a different limit being noted, 25 is the limit. We'll be doing a lot of public education over the coming months. We'll be doing a lot of warnings – obviously, enforcement over time. But I'll tell you, I think there's a real consensus in this town that we need to have people drive more carefully, more safely, and slower for the protection of our kids, our seniors. I've been very very pleased with the response to Vision Zero – and by the way, the last I checked a few days ago, 24 fewer pedestrian fatalities than last year. Vision Zero's just gotten started, but already 24 fewer pedestrian fatalities than last year. That's real progress, so I think people will embrace it.

[Commotion]

**Mayor:** Okay – one, two, three –

**Question:** [inaudible] people in rival cities saying that after these election results it's not a good idea to have the DNC in New York, because, you know, it's more liberal and Democrats need to be, you know, more inclusive of swing states. Do you think that these results will affect your chances –

**Mayor:** No, I don't at all. I think the Democratic National Committee is trying to figure out where they can have the best convention – you know, the best security, the best resources, the best logistics, and the best place to have a platform to get their message out. There's no question in my mind – that's New York City. We are in a position to provide them with everything they need and I think that's what will win the day.

**Question:** Dr. Raju, what's the latest on Dr. Spencer and how close is he to a full 100 percent recovery?

**Dr. Raju:** He continues to be stable and is making good progress. And hopefully he will be able to come off the isolation soon. So we will let you know as this evolves.

**Question:** Senator Schumer, going forward, how do you think the Democrats diminished power in Congress is going to affect New Yorkers?

**Senator Schumer:** Well, look – we've always tried to work – in the senate, you have to work in a bipartisan way, unless one side has 60 votes. I've been able – [clears throat] – I've been able to pass some of the pieces of legislation I'm proudest of when we were in the minority. The bill that gives every family – middle class, poor family – \$2,500 dollars off on their taxes each year to defer the cost of tuition was passed when we were in the minority – it was my legislation. The bill that allowed generic drugs to be more freely offered to people, saving billions and billions of dollars, saving the HHC a whole lot of money, passed when we were in the minority. So I'm going to keep working in a bipartisan way and I think that, in the senate, I'm hopeful that the new Republican leadership will want to work in a bipartisan way. I think they've said that that's what their intention is. And so I think we can make good progress.

**Question:** [inaudible]

**Senator Schumer:** Well, again – we’ve been able to get lots of things done. The original Sandy legislation was passed when we were in a slight majority, but carrying it through the over years – sorry – the original 9/11 legislation, the \$20 billion, was passed when we – for a moment – when we were in a slight majority, but we had to get all that money allocated and changed around when we were in the minority, and it worked out very well.

**Mayor:** Thanks, everyone.

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