

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON MSNBC'S MORNING JOE

Mayor Bill de Blasio: The President incited a rebellion against the United States government. Clearly, an unconstitutional act – and people died. That’s unforgivable. So, our legal team is right now assessing the options and as quickly as we come to a resolution, we’re going to have something to say. But, yes, there are several contracts with the City of New York and they’re all under review right now.

Mika Brzezinski: Okay, so Mayor Bill de Blasio, New York City, speaking yesterday. And Mayor de Blasio joins us now to announce what they have decided in terms of the contracts that the president has with the City. Mr. Mayor, welcome back to the show. What’s the story?

Mayor: Mika, I’m here to announce that the City of New York is severing all contracts with the Trump Organization. Our legal team has done an assessment and the contracts make very clear if a company and the leadership of that company is engaged in criminal activity, we have the right to sever the contract. Inciting an insurrection –

Brzezinski: Wow –

Mayor: Let’s be clear, I’m going to say these words again – inciting an insurrection against the United States government clearly constitutes criminal activity. So, the City of New York will no longer have anything to do with the Trump Organization. They have profited from these contracts. They will profit no longer.

Brzezinski: So, tell us about these contracts that you’re cutting right now. What’s the magnitude of these contracts? What do they cover? And what will it take to actually execute what you are saying right now?

Mayor: Right now, the Trump Organization profits about \$17 million a year from these contracts. They cover four different sites, three in Manhattan, one in the Bronx, different entertainment sites. And look, it’s quite clear, the President of the United States directed a mob to attack the U. S. Congress during the Electoral College vote. That’s – I mean, even saying the words, Mika, it’s almost impossible to believe –

Brzezinski: Right, I know –

Mayor: But it's criminal activity and so it's very clear. When the lawyers looked at it, it's just as clear as a bell, that's grounds for severing these contracts and we're moving to do that right away.

Willie Geist: Mayor de Blasio, it's Willie Geist. Let me ask you if we take a step back, for example the Trump Links Courts at Ferry Point which we've all seen when you cross the Whitestone Bridge, sitting there. Why, to begin with, is a Trump Organization golf course funded by taxpayers?

Mayor: Look, I can safely say this was a decision made in the Bloomberg administration. It's certainly not a decision I would have made. But they're not going to profit from it anymore. We're going to sever those ties. By the way, I'm not alone. The PGA made a decision that they were not going to have golf tournaments, major tournaments, at Trump golf courses. Our contract with the Trump Organization says they have to host major tournaments. They're not going to be able to do that anymore, obviously, because the PGA has said this is unacceptable. So, I think you're going to see a lot of this kind of domino effect because of the president's aiding and abetting an insurrection. But that actually is a deal that should never have been made in the first place in my view. And you're not going to see anything like that going forward in New York City.

Geist: So, obviously, you're going to get pushback from the Trump Organization. You'll probably hear publicly from President Trump himself about this. What are the challenges as you try to unwind some of these deals like the one at the Wollman Rink in Central Park where a lot of people go ice skating or at the Central Park Carousel? Where do you see challenges in actually getting this done?

Mayor: Look, Willie, we're going to get new vendors to take over and what's obvious is these are sites that we want to continue serving the public but not with an organization led by a criminal. So, we will get new vendors to come in and take them over quickly. I want to see the service continue. Of course, we know the history of the Trump Organization. They'll likely challenge us in court but we're on strong legal ground. We're very clear about that.

Brzezinski: Mr. Mayor, while we have you here, we've been talking a lot about the vaccine and the rollout and just how long this is all going to take. What is the New York City story as it pertains to delivering the vaccine to people who so very much need it?

Mayor: Mika, look, here's the bottom line, we've given now over a quarter-million doses. We're moving very quickly. This week, we are projected to give about 175,000. A million doses in the month of January. My problem now is I'm not getting enough doses from the federal government and from the manufacturers. We're going to run out as early as next week. I want you to understand this – our pace is picking up quickly. So many people want this vaccine now that it's finally open to our senior citizens. So many people want it. Our problem now is if we don't get resupplied much more amply by the end of next week, we're going to run out.

Geist: Mr. Mayor, you've been fighting with the Governor, and your representatives have been fighting on Twitter about who is to blame for the slow rollout here. Are you getting the help you

need from Governor Cuomo and are the guidelines from the State too restrictive to get to the city the vaccines you need?

Mayor: Look, I fought hard for the freedom to vaccinate. I'm glad we won that battle. And now – I was out in Queens a couple days ago with seniors who finally had the right to be vaccinated. They were so – it was so amazing, Willie. They felt such relief immediately, such a feeling that – it's life and death for so many of our seniors and even getting the first dose gave them a sense that they were going to make it through. So, that was a battle worth fighting. What we need is maximum flexibility. We need the federal government, the State government to let New York City and localities all over the country do what we know best to reach our people. We've got great public health officials. They know what they are doing. Let them have the freedom to vaccinate the right way. But right now, the central concern is speeding up the supply.

I agree with President-elect Biden. We need a much more ambitious approach here than what we've seen under the Trump administration. We need supply that takes us ahead – like, right now, again, I can't see past next week because I don't have the supply. We need the Defense Production Act invoked. We need the supply of second doses delivered immediately to localities. It's just – it's strange to me, Willie, in the middle of a crisis of this magnitude why the federal government didn't realize they don't have the ability to go out and vaccinate people. States don't have the ability. Only localities, cities, counties – we do the work on the ground. Give us the vaccine and let us fly. We need this right now because so many people – appointments, we put them up, they get filled immediately. We have a phone line, we have a website. Every time we put up more appointments they are filled immediately. Get us more vaccines so we can reach more people.

Brzezinski: All right, thank you for that message. From the golf community to the banking community, now the City of New York – home of Trump Tower – severing all contracts with the Trump Organization. New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio breaking that news this morning. Thank you very much for being on the show.

Mayor: Thank you, Mika.

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