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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR ERIC ADAMS OUTLINES “WORKING PEOPLE’S
AGENDA” FOR NYC IN SECOND STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS**

Mayor Eric Adams: Good place. Good place. Good energy. Good feeling. And just my fellow New Yorkers, I just want to say thank you. A year ago. I was sworn in as your mayor and we have climbed a lot of mountains since that day and I just want to pause for a moment and just ask my senior team just to stand. Just stand. What are you doing sitting down, Chief Maddrey?

Let me just say this from the onset, I love these men and women so much. They love me and most importantly, they love this city. We've cried together, we've laughed together, we face crises together and as I sat in the foxhole of crises, I wouldn't not be in the foxhole with any other group of people than these men and women who are serving the people of the City of New York right now.

When you think about it, one year ago we were facing crisis after crisis. Covid, crime, an economy in freefall. I was mourning my mother who transitioned before she could see me, her son, become New York City's second Black mayor. And Adrienne, I know you lost your mommy during that same time and people tell us over and over again, it's been over a year. We need to get past it, but we can't. I think about her every day and as I stand on this stage, I feel her presence all around me.

But there was something amazing about mom. She never rested when there was work to do and neither did New York City. We hit the ground running and we got stuff done. One year later, our city's on the pathway to being safer. Our economy is recovering and our stores, subways and hotels are full. Our children are back in school with their teachers and friends. Our theaters are thriving, our restaurants are booked and New Yorkers are back to work. I am proud of our achievements this year and I want to thank all of you who worked so hard to get us to this moment today. I stand before you here at the Queens Theater in the borough where I grew up, home to an international working-class community, to say to you my fellow New Yorkers: the state of our city is strong. It's strong.

As strong as the police officers and first responders who have made this city safer. As strong as the legions of city workers who have laid the groundwork for the future. And above all as strong as the working people of this city who make it all possible. Your early mornings, late nights — where I see some of you — and double shifts keep us moving, keep us healthy, keep us safe.

Especially over the last few years, you have done everything for us and this city must do more for you.

Today I want to outline a Working People's Agenda based on the four pillars that uphold a strong and sustainable society: jobs, safety, housing, and care. These are the things that our administration is working for every day. Every New Yorker needs a good paying job. So we are investing in a new generation of apprenticeships, community hiring and job training. Every New Yorker needs a safe and welcoming neighborhood. So we are getting New York City's most wanted off our streets and investing millions to make our city cleaner and greener. Every New Yorker needs an affordable place to live. So we are working to add 500,000 more homes across all five boroughs. And every one of us needs care, not just in crisis but throughout our lives. That's why we are expanding the social safety net, making it easier to access public benefits in healthcare. No matter who you are or where you live, we're changing how we get things done for New Yorkers. Building success at the source, solving problems upstream instead of reacting to crises downstream, moving beyond recovery into a new era of abundance and equity. And it starts now. It starts with us.

We are getting things done for the people of New York City and we are not doing it alone. It will take everyone in this room working together. And I want to recognize my colleagues in government who are here today. The amazing, amazing AG Letitia James. No one does it like you. State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli as he watches our money. And I don't know if he was able to make it, I know he was a little under the weather, but my Assembly member, Speaker Carl Heastie. And City Comptroller Brad Lander. The forever present Public Advocate Jumaane Williams. My sister, Adams and Adams Corporation, City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams. And the five men and women who prosecute and protect and think differently about going upstream and public safety. Our amazing district attorneys, Alvin Bragg, Darcel Clark, Melinda Katz. And once you're a borough president, you're always borough president — Borough President Vito Fossella, Vanessa Gibson, Mark Levine, Antonio Reynoso, and Donovan Richards. Give them all a hand.

And last but not least, our governor. Our governor. You see her on stage, you see her delivering her vision and address. You are going to see real leadership in this governor. This governor is the steady hand we need at the wheel right now. I may be the pilot for the city, but she's the pilot for the state. And I say over and over again, we are all passengers. Don't pray for her to crash, pray for her to land this plane because you are passengers on it also. Thank you, governor, for what you do every day. And her presence here today is not only a testament to our incredible partnership, but to her commitment to the people of New York City and the state. I'm grateful to have her here as well as our lieutenant governor. She's fighting for us and they are fighting for us in Albany.

So as I said, our Working People's Agenda starts with jobs. Not side hustles or occasional gigs, but jobs with good pay and good benefits. Jobs you can support yourself and family on. Jobs you can build a life around. New York City has added more than 200,000 new jobs over the last year and our employment growth has outpaced the state and the nation. But hidden in that celebratory energy is that the unemployment rate for Black New Yorkers is at least three times as high as for white New Yorkers. This era of inequality must end. We're going to make sure that all New Yorkers finally have access to good jobs. We are reimagining our city's workforce development system from the bottom up, improving education, expanding job training, and creating

employment on ramps at every stage of the process so that New Yorkers from all walks of life can benefit from this economic recovery.

People used to move to where the jobs were. But in today's economy, jobs come to where the talent is. So we are going to bolster, build, and diversify that talent, creating the best educated, best prepared workforce anywhere in this nation. Today I'm proud to announce that we will connect 30,000 New Yorkers to apprenticeships by 2030 and this in part thanks to our new Apprenticeship Accelerator. This is on-the-job experience with an opportunity for permanent employment in high demand careers. And it will ensure employers can tap the talent they need. We're also going to expand the CUNY 2x Tech program to more campuses, including community colleges with a focus on institutions serving first-generation college students and communities of color.

But we are also investing in the jobs of the future. Last year, Governor Hochul and I announced a new life sciences hub in Kips Bay which will create 10,000 jobs and \$25 billion in economic impact. And this year the city will kickstart a new effort to become the global center of sustainable biotech. We will start by opening a first-in-the-nation incubator at the Brooklyn Navy Yard where biotech startups will transform the way we eat, build and protect our environment.

And as we work to create more jobs, we will also help New Yorkers train for jobs that are in high demand right here. Jobs in techs, renewable energy, and nursing. Our city and country are already facing a nursing shortage and the federal government estimates we will need 275,000 more nurses nationally by 2030. So I'm proud to announce a new Nursing Education Initiative in partnership with CUNY that will help New Yorkers enter the nursing workforce, stay in that profession. We want them to climb the career ladder. We will support 30,000 current and aspiring nurses over the next five years with everything from additional training to mentorship and clinical placements. New York City needs our nurses who did such an incredible work during the pandemic. Nurses are the hands, the heart and soul of our healthcare system and we will never forget you and we will continue to supply you with the resources you need.

We also need to help more New Yorkers with disability into the workforce. Think about this for a moment. Right now, only one in three are employed. Our city will launch the new Center for Workforce and Workplace Accessibility and Inclusion, which will connect over 2,500 people with disabilities to jobs. We will continue the mission of helping New Yorkers living with disabilities thrive in the workplace and in every other aspect of city life.

We're also looking for new ways to address old injustices, including supporting the largest legal cannabis industry in the nation. Really want to take my hat off to my state lawmakers for pushing through this legislation and making sure it's done fairly and correctly. This year we will launch a new loan fund to help more New Yorkers who were impacted by the war on drugs to start new businesses. At the same time, we will increase enforcement against unlicensed cannabis shops. We are not going to let bad actors undermine the promise we made to New Yorkers who were impacted by marijuana criminalization. I want to thank you, Sheriff Miranda and Chief Maddrey, for the combined effort in zeroing in on these issues. And let me be clear to those who think you are going to come into our communities without a license, put our kids at risk, steal jobs away from people trying to do it the right way. Let's be clear. Man, you must be smoking something because that's not going to happen.

But we are also going to make sure more of the money that our city spends goes towards creating jobs for New Yorkers right here at home. That means working with our partners in Albany to finally give New York City the power to require companies that benefit from city contracts to hire higher local community members. If we just continue to promote community hiring, this would allow us to keep 36,000 economically disadvantaged workers connected to good jobs every year. We also want to make sure even more city dollars go to minority and women-owned businesses. We recently hit our M/WBE spending goal three years ahead of schedule and today I'm announcing an even more ambitious commitment. Working with Speaker Adams and the City Council, we are committed to awarding \$25 billion in contracts to M/WBE businesses by fiscal year 2026. And all of my men and women part of the City Council, I cannot thank you enough for your partnership in this initiative. And we will increase that number to \$60 billion by 2030, more than doubling our current rates. But our support for small businesses does not end there. This week we announced a Small Business Opportunity Fund, a \$75 million loan fund that would be the largest in New York City history. And Commissioner Kim and his team, I want to thank him for what he accomplished. First Korean American to hold the position. When you diversify your commissionership, you diversify the opportunities that we live in. Thank you, Commissioner Kim.

And while our tourism and hospitality industries have recovered substantially since our city shut down in 2020, we cannot take that progress for granted. We will show the world that New York City's open and ready for visitors, attracting major events like the 2026 FIFA World Cup, and we hope, the next Democratic National Convention. We will continue to invest in our cultural and creative sectors across the board. From iconic museums and arts organizations to our legendary film and television production industry. And as I said before, talent is at the center of our job strategies and we know it starts with education. I cannot be more proud of my friend and chancellor, David Banks. True visionary, understands what our children need and he and I are united in our vision of giving all of our children a bright start in the bold future.

We are making three fundamental commitments to our young people. One, every child will get the support they need to become a strong reader at or above grade level. Two, we will establish a whole child approach to education, factoring in social-emotional learning and other supportive services. And three, every student who graduates from a New York City high school will have a clear pathway to the future. Whether that is a job, job training, or continuing education.

Let's start with reading, the foundational skill that every child needs to succeed. This year we made sure every elementary school was supplied with a phonics-based curriculum built on the science of reading. And going forward, every school leader will be trained in this improved literacy instruction so they can support the teachers in implementing that curriculum. Next year, every school will also have at least one staff member trained in the most effective reading intervention available so that every student can access the support they need. We will also launch the first district school in the city's history dedicated to supporting students with dyslexia while continuing to expand new dyslexia programs citywide. Before I took office, there was no consistent dyslexia specific screening across all our public schools. As of this year, we rolled out new screeners in nearly 200 schools and by next year they will be available in every public school in the city.

Why is that important? It's important because families like Sanayi. Three of her sons were diagnosed with dyslexia, but until recently, our public schools simply didn't have enough support

for students facing those challenges. Sanayi worked two jobs to get them the extra tutoring and her oldest son has since earned a full scholarship to Fordham University. We are inspired by this family, but no parent should have to work two jobs just to provide a basic education for their child. Sanayi, we are proud to be working with you to ensure your youngest son, and children like him, can get all the services they need right in the school in their neighborhood. Because children with dyslexia should not have to walk in a classroom and see dumb student written on the back of their chair. They should not have to believe that it is better to stand on the street corner instead of getting the education they need. They should not have to be part of the 30-40 percent of inmates at Rikers Island who are dyslexic. They should be able to know that they just learn differently and if we give them the tools that they need, they will go from despair, they will go from uncertainty and they will rise up to be the mayor of the City of New York.

Second, academic success is important, but we must also take a whole-child approach to education, supporting our children with healthy food, physical education, social emotional learning, and mental health services. This year we are rolling out the biggest student mental health program in the country. We will provide our high school students with everything from telehealth care to community-based counseling depending on their individual needs. We'll initiate a new program focused on daily breathing exercises and mindfulness exercises, and we'll continue to expand nutrition education standards and plant-powered menus in our schools. Our children may hate me today, but they will love me tomorrow.

And this year we're going to make long overdue updates to our Fair Student Funding formula, redirecting \$90 million towards supporting students in temporary housing and schools with a concentration of high-need students. Good job, Chancellor Banks.

That brings me to our third promise. Third, every student will be ready for what comes after high school. It's not just about connecting them to jobs, it's about planning for the future all along the way. Starting this summer, up to 35,000 middle school students in our Summer Rising program will receive career exposure, field trips and college visits. We are also enhancing and diversifying our largest in the nation's Summer Youth Employment Program. Jumaane Williams, you and other colleagues, you fought for this a long time and no one heard you, but we heard you and we did the largest in the nation and we are going to continue to do it every year. Good job. Good job.

But also this year we will empower our LGBTQ+ youth through a new initiative that places students in truly supportive work opportunities. Our city is determined to make sure our students graduate from high school with skills, strategy, and purpose. That's why we are expanding our FutureReadyNYC program to 90 schools and 7,000 students next year. We want our students to get the experience and support they need to transition to college and career paths before they graduate. So when you get your hard-earned diploma, you'll get more than a handshake. You will get support, direction and a path to opportunity.

Our children must be educated, but they must be safe too. Yesterday I spoke to a mother of a young man who was stabbed in Coney Island. It broke my heart. I have one son and I love Jordan and I don't know how many times the police commissioner and I — we've gone to hospitals and spoken to parents. It's devastating when you hear parents on the other end of that phone. It breaks your heart when you have to sit inside that hospital room and you know don't have much that you can say to condone them. These young people need help and we are

committed and dedicated to doing that. Our administration came into City Hall with a mission and a mandate: reducing gun violence. We've already made real progress. Shootings are down, murders are down, but that means nothing to the mother who lost their child.

And we know that major crimes were down last quarter for the first time in six quarters. New Yorkers can finally see safer days ahead after several years of rising crimes. And I want to thank everyone who has supported this effort. Especially you, governor. You saw it and you were committed and I want to thank you for that. And I want to thank President Biden, who I believe was a leading voice around this national epidemic of violence. They understand that the fight against illegal guns is a top priority for our city. We will continue to work with all of our colleagues in government to combat gun violence in New York City across the nation. That means advocating for common sense gun reform at every level of government.

We're just a few weeks into the new year and already this country has seen multiple mass shootings. Americans have had enough, New Yorkers have had enough. We must get this done. Ending gun violence means stopping it before it starts, especially when it comes to our youth. By the time a young person gets a gun in their hand, the system has already abandoned and betrayed them and we won't allow that to keep happening in our city. We're going to use proven methods and intensive community support to keep guns culture from taking root and taking over. That means more neighborhood safety teams in more places, more violence prevention programs in neighborhoods with the highest concentration of violent crime, and a new Neighborhood Safety Alliance, a partnership between local precincts, service providers and community leaders in many of these same neighborhoods.

And I always say this is my Aaron Judge year, but I was already hitting home runs when I picked Police Commissioner Keechant Sewell to lead the Police Department. Powerful, powerful presence, took on the awesome responsibility of leading this department. True leader. Just want to thank her for all her work keeping New Yorkers safe this year. She has saved lives and supported the department through a very tough year.

This year we will build on that work, increasing our efforts to protect New Yorkers from robberies and burglaries as well as other violent crime. The NYPD's Crime Prevention Unit will expand their focus on retail theft and work with business owners and Business Improvement Districts on other solutions to prevent shoplifting. We will also expand the community response teams to operate at the borough level and we will make better use of our most powerful tool in the fight against crime, our communities. And let me be clear on this. We are not going to criminalize poverty. We will partner with the DAs and if a person is stealing because they don't have something to eat, we will show them how to get food. If a person is stealing because they have a drug problem, we are going to show them where the access to drug treatment is. The goal is to go after organized crime, but we are going to set the standard. This is not going to be a city where anarchy will run. This is going to be a city that is going to be a safe, productive city.

And we do that by bringing the community closer. What the commissioner's doing, she's bringing CompStat meetings to the community level. These are the monthly meetings with local precincts and NYPD brass go through the data to determine how to address crime block by block. We are going to give New Yorkers direct access to a version of these meetings for the first time so they can interact directly with local and citywide NYPD leaders. If New Yorkers don't feel like they can engage with NYPD, we will never be able to fully serve them and keep them

safe. We're going to break down those barriers and we will be a big — this would be a big step in the right direction. And yet the other day, the commanding officer of the 28 Precinct put out a wonderful video showing at the Drake concert, and those of us who know, “We started from the bottom, now we here.” And people critiqued that. They attacked him for having a community engagement. They attacked him for showing how the police must be interacting with the police. Let's stop starting off hating each other and start embracing each other. This is what we want to do.

And we will also roll out new and expanded efforts to fight everything from property crime to traffic violence and quality of life issues. Many of these problems are rooted in the continued crisis of recidivism. Time after time, we see crime after crime from a core group of repeated offenders. It's only roughly 1,700 known offenders that are responsible for a disproportionate amount of violent crime in our cities. These are New Yorkers, they're most wanted by New Yorkers. We know who are and we need to get them off our streets. This year we are going to work with our partners in Albany to find reasonable evidence-based solutions to this recidivism crisis. We all agree that no one should be in jail simply because they cannot afford to post bail. But we should also agree that we cannot allow a small number of violent individuals to continue terrorizing our neighborhoods over and over again.

And I look forward to working with the governor and lawmakers to make the right decisions so that we can ensure defenders are provided with the speedy trial that our Constitution guarantees and that victims and their families are provided justice in a timely manner. That means making sure our district attorneys and defenders have the resources they need to clear the backlog of cases and finding ways to expedite the discovery process. Discovery is the process of exchanging legal information before a trial begins and it has become so complex that it is jamming up the entire system. This must change. Justice delayed is justice denied. Our legal system must ensure that dangerous people are kept off the streets, innocent people are not consumed by bureaucracy and victims can obtain resolutions. This is something we can all agree on. Let's get it done in 2023.

Our city is also going to escalate our campaign to end another daily crime that kills far too many innocent people and that's traffic violence. 2023 is the year we are going to tighten the screws on reckless drivers, holding them accountable for their actions before they harm others. We must treat traffic violence the same way we treat other dangerous crimes. We are working with our partners to advance new legislation called ROADS. That stands for Removing Offenders and Aggressive Drivers from our Streets. These new laws will increase penalties for serious crashes, running red lights and impaired driving, including revoking the privilege to drive on our streets. We will also continue to save lives by expanding protected bike lanes, crack down on the illegal placards and placard abuse and ensure swift and serious consequences for those who drive with suspended or revoked license. We've had enough of gridlock and scofflaws. Going forward, we're going to deploy more NYPD tow trucks on our streets. We're going to ticket and tow abandoned or illegal parked cars that block traffic and visibility. This is going to help to keep our delivery zones, bus lanes and bike lanes clear and help us to make driving, biking, and walking easier and safer for everyone. New Yorkers should not have to fear for their lives every time they cross the street or bike to work. Vision Zero means exactly that. Zero fatalities. That's the goal we take very seriously.

Our administration is going to invest in improving quality of life for New Yorkers across the board. For far too long, New Yorkers were asked to accept things that should be unacceptable: crime, rats, trash, traffic. When we allow quality of life to deteriorate, it is working-class New Yorkers that suffer the most. It also hurts our economic recovery. Last year our administration made significant improvements to more than 75 commercial corridors in all five boroughs. This year we will build upon that work, especially when it comes to rats. Most people don't know this about me, but I hate rats and pretty soon, Commissioner Tisch, they are going to hate me. Hiring our new rat czar, and it won't be Curtis Sliwa — will be just the beginning of a new era and delivering the best in public service and public spaces.

We're going to Get Stuff Cleaner by launching the country's largest curbside composting program. By the end of 2024, all 8.5 million New Yorkers will finally have the rat-defying solutions they've been waiting for two decades. In just three months, a pilot composting program right here in Queens kept nearly 13 million pounds of kitchen and yard waste out of our landfills. Commissioner Tisch, I know you out there somewhere, good job. Good job. That's more than the weight of 300 city buses. Imagine how much we will accomplish when every family in the city is participating. A lot of people have talked about this issue, but this administration, we're getting it done.

And quality of life improvements won't stop there. We're also going to replace unsightly construction sheds, requiring all buildings to use newly-designed structures that preserve the vibrancy of our streets and increase enforcement against those that leave those sheds up for years at a time, blocking sidewalks and windows. And speaking of sheds, it is time to retire those Covid cabins and replace them with something better. Let's not kid ourselves. The Open Restaurant program was a massive success that saved so many of our restaurants, bars, and cafes during the pandemic. And what the governor did with allowing the cups and continue to expand that it really boosts our economy. But now it's time to come together and figure out how New Yorkers can enjoy outdoor dining with a permanent version that works for business and residents. And I know New Yorkers support this vision and I look forward to working with Councilwoman Marjorie Velázquez and the City Council to achieve this. We're going to get this done. We're going to get it done.

And open space is important. The pandemic highlighted the critical role of parks, playgrounds, and waterfronts play in improving the physical and mental health of all New Yorkers. Building on the commitments Governor Hochul and I announced in our “New New York,” we're going to create extraordinary new public spaces in every borough in this city. We will invest more than \$375 million in new parks and plaza, widen sidewalks, safer intersections, expand bike lanes and inviting landscape. You're going to have a lot of money, Sue Donoghue, in these parks.

And I hope it's not lost on you how many times I say the name Governor Hochul. There's a real synergy and partnership in this state. And we will — building on the success and popularity of our Open Streets program while creating permanent community spaces where people can gather and enjoy the best in culture and wellness programming. Commissioner Ydanis Rodriguez has talked about it for years. I know he's in the audience somewhere. Great job, commissioner.

And our new director of public realm will ensure we invest in our public spaces citywide, coordinating across city agencies, businesses, and community groups to deliver results for all New Yorkers. Public safety means more than protecting our streets. It means protecting our

environment, the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the future of our children and generations to come. For too long our working-class neighborhoods have borne the burden of highways and heavy industry leading to polluted air and the highest asthma rate in the nation. This environmental injustice is not acceptable. It is something that my good friend and current borough president has talked about, Antonio Reynoso has dealt with this issue for years. Good work and let's continue to move forward on this. And it's really wrong, especially when the technology we need to change is already here. That's why we are committed to reducing building emissions to create a healthier and more sustainable city.

We are also electrifying our city vehicle fleet. We're going to go even further, requiring for-hire vehicles to do the same. We are announcing today that Uber and Lyft will be required to have a zero emission fleet by 2030. That's zero emission for over 100,000 vehicles in our streets. But the best way to do it is listen to my good friend Janno. Take the subways; Metrocard your way through the city. We're pleased that both companies are embracing this shift and we look forward to working with them to get it done. We're also encouraging New Yorkers who drive to make the switch to electric vehicles as well. We're going to add charging stations in all five boroughs.

Our commitment to improving the environment and fighting climate change means reinventing our energy sector across the board. New York will continue to lead the way to our clean energy future by becoming the wind power hub of the eastern seaboard. The South Brooklyn Marine Terminal will soon become one of the largest offshore wind port facilities in the nation. This will create... as Congresswoman Velázquez texted me this morning, all of this is great if we don't create a pipeline to employment to those who have been denied and we are going to do this. We will create jobs and help New York City meet our goal of 100 percent clean electricity by 2040. We will also be unveiling even more of our sustainability agenda this April in our updated PlaNYC, which will include new data on how our food choices impact our environment. And we'll be launching a new climate budgeting process that puts sustainability front and center. Going forward, the first question we will ask about new programs and investment is, will this help meet our climate goals?

The future of our city will be cleaner, greener, and healthier for all, including our wildlife and marine life. Like the dolphins who recently visited us in the Bronx River. That's the future of our city. More dolphins, fewer rats.

This is the greatest city in the world and every day more people want to come here, work here, and be part of the New York City story. New York City must remain a city where every day people can find an affordable place to live. Young people, immigrant families, and retired folks all need a place to call their own. That's why we have continued to support public housing every step of the way. It is a foundation of our affordable housing stock in a pathway out of poverty. For years, public housing was underfunded by the federal government, but we are starting to turn that tide. Last year we made renovations to more than 8,500 NYCHA apartments through the RAD program and we have committed a historic \$23 billion for housing, including money for repairs to NYCHA buildings. And we got the NYCHA Trust passed, unlocking billions of dollars for long overdue renovations. But we would never have gotten it done if we didn't have tenant leaders like Barbara McFadden leading the way. She helped organize her neighbors at Sheepshead-Nostrand Houses. Along with so many other NYCHA residents, they took the long ride to Albany and spent day after day meeting with state lawmakers. Barbara, you got it done

for us. Now we're going to get those repairs done for you and your fellow NYCHA tenants. Thank you, Albany. Thank you, governor. Thank you to the leaders who made this happen.

And we must invest in our public housing, but we also need to build more affordable housing for all New Yorkers. That's why New York has committed to being a City of Yes. Yes to more housing in every borough and in every neighborhood. Last month we released our plan to Get Stuff Built. Deputy Mayor Maria Torres-Springer and the entire team, Chief Housing Officer Jessica Katz all came together. We laid out a moonshot goal of building 500,000 additional homes over the next decade. Homes for people from recent arrivals to lifelong New Yorkers, homes for seniors, families and veterans. I said we couldn't do it alone and the good news is that we don't have to. In her State of the State address, Governor Hochul committed to providing more tools for New York City to build the housing we need. Governor, again, thank you so much for the leadership and support on so many of these issues. You have been there for the city right from the start and in 2023 we're going to accomplish greater things together and I'm looking for it.

And that's including building more housing in high-opportunity neighborhoods and near transit hubs. I recently announced plans for 6,000 new homes and 10,000 new jobs around four new metro stations in the Bronx. And good government is continuing the success of previous administrations. We are able to build on this based on what my good friend Rubén Díaz Jr. did in the Bronx. Job well done and we're going to build on that. But we're not stopping there. Partnering with Francisco Moya and others at Willets Point, just a short walk from where we are now, we're working with the councilman to build the largest new 100 percent affordable housing development in 40 years. This visionary new development will feature much more than housing. It will have a world-class soccer stadium, public space, and good jobs too.

This year we will pursue opportunities to add even more housing, jobs and infrastructure in all five boroughs. From the moment I took office, I've said that we want to work in partnership with Council members and communities to build more housing together. And more and more of the Council have come and stated, let's make this happen. Colleagues are standing up to be part of this solution. Councilmembers Erik Bottcher and Keith Powers have called on us to help them make Midtown Manhattan a true live-work community. They're not saying not in my backyard, they're saying built in my backyard. Hats off to them. That means creating housing in areas that currently only allow manufacturing and office uses while protecting good jobs in the center of our city's economy.

And we also heard members like my good friend and public safety chair Councilwoman Hanks calling for a master plan for the North Shore of Staten Island with investments in the waterfront, housing and job opportunities. Staten Island used to have the reputation of the forgotten borough. You are not forgotten in this administration. I'm proud of you Council members and I'm proud to say that you have answered the call. The Economic Development Corporation and the Department of City Planning will be working with you and Speaker Adams on plans that address the needs of your communities while tackling our citywide housing crisis that we have. And I thank you for demonstrating what real leadership looks like.

Building new houses is essential for our future, but we also need to address the housing crisis here and now. That means protecting tenants and helping New Yorkers stay in their homes. So we are investing over \$22 million in tenant protection programs, including more staff to increase

investigation and enforcement against bad landlords and stronger partnerships with community groups and legal service providers to protect tenants from being pushed out of rent-regulated apartments. We're also cracking down on landlords who discriminate based on source of income. If you tell a potential tenant that you don't accept Section 8 vouchers or other rental assistance, guess what? That tenant may be an actor hired by the city and we're going to take enforcement actions against you. My commissioner of Human Rights that's here, Commissioner Annabel Palma, is focused on this issue so much.

Housing is the biggest cost to New Yorkers, but it's not the only one. In this digital era, access to the internet is essential for work, school, and life, including medical care. We're going to help all New Yorkers get connected no matter what their income level. We're expanding Big Apple Connect within NYCHA developments, delivering free internet and TV to tens of thousands of New Yorkers. And we will launch a new pilot program providing free broadband to Section 8 households in the Bronx and in northern Manhattan. My chief technology officer, Matt Fraser, who's out here somewhere is really doing an amazing job for making it access. Thank you, Matt.

Listen, we are committed to fighting for support for working people and actually making sure they get the support they need. Don't let it fool you. I may wear nice suits, but I'm a blue collar cat. This year we will make it simpler for New Yorkers to access public benefits like unemployment insurance, Medicaid and SNAP. We will cut unnecessary red tape and expand benefits screenings to New Yorkers in need will get every dollar they deserve. That would include a focus on seniors as well as veterans who may be eligible for newly expanded federal funds. We often get it for the people. We need to know how to get it to the people, and I am truly pleased by this. And we need our partners in Albany. We're working to pass legislation that will allow individuals to keep public benefits for up to six months after they take a new job, easing the transition to financial independence. Last year we announced we were putting \$350 million back into the pockets of working people through our expansion of Earned Income Tax Credit. Albany, you should take a bow on this one. All of our Albany lawmakers, this was such an impressive move that we accomplished last year. People highlighted the one thing we disagreed on, but go look at the number of things that we have agreed on. You delivered for working class people in this Earned Income Tax Credit increase.

This year, we're making sure working people actually get that tax credit by launching a historic expansion of our free tax prep program. And beginning tomorrow, we'll be introducing free business tax prep for freelancers and gig workers. Another first for New York City. With an infusion of new funding and unprecedented coordinations with schools, houses of worship and NYCHA and community partners, we will be able to process an additional 26,000 returns next year and save New York's approximately \$14.3 million in filing fees and refunds. Right now as we speak, New Yorkers are applying for and receiving those expanded benefits. A family of four making \$25,000 will see payout increase from \$300 to \$900. Let me tell you what the difference is when you think about it.

Think about Ronald Brown. Lives in Queensbridge Houses with his two daughters. Like so many New Yorkers, he got laid off during the pandemic and was having a hard time getting back on his feet. Last year he came into one of our free tax prep centers hoping to get his federal stimulus check for \$1,400. By the time he walked out, we had gotten him almost \$15,000 including the expanded state income tax credit we fought for and won. I hope you are coming back this year

because we're going to get you and your family the money you deserve. That's what you did, Albany. That's what you accomplished.

And finally, I want to talk about something that doesn't get enough attention. Our responsibility as a city to care for New Yorkers in the greatest need. Over the past year, our ability to care was put to the test by the asylum seek crisis. New Yorkers rose to the occasion, as they always do. Since last spring, we have had more than 42,000 asylum seekers arrive in the city. We have provided them with shelter, food, education, healthcare, and legal support. We will continue to do our part, but we need everyone else to do their part as well. This is an all hands on deck moment and I want to thank the Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader Jeffries and our tireless congressional delegation for everything that they have done so far. But New York City, we cannot do this alone. We can't continue to shoulder this cost on our own. We are going to need help. We're going to need our Albany partners. We're going to need Washington, D.C. The asylum seeker crisis is a national crisis and it should not be just for New York City residents. That's just unfair.

And not only is it unfair for New Yorkers, but it's unfair for the asylum seekers. You come here to pursue the American dream, not to live in a nightmare. The Statue of Liberty sits in our harbor for a reason. Every one of us in this room ancestry came from somewhere and the asylum seekers deserve better. And so while we continue to provide care for new arrivals, we also deepen our commitment to every resident of the five boroughs. We're going to fundamentally change the way we provide care for our citizens. We're moving from a system that waits until New Yorkers are in crisis before offering help to one that focuses on upstream solutions. That means eliminating bureaucratic barriers and focusing on the structural challenges that so often force people into crisis. We'll begin with one of the most vulnerable population, people experiencing homeless. This year, we're working with our state and federal partners to offer free comprehensive healthcare to New Yorkers who have spent more than seven days in our Department of Homeless Services shelters. This will make New York the first city in the country to do so. We're not going to wait for people in crisis to show up at the er. We will provide the care they need when they need it. That's progress, that's compassion, that's care in New York City.

And you know where I'm at on Wednesdays at 9 p.m. rain or cold, I'm on 34th Street and Seventh Avenue giving our food to the homeless. And then when I leave there, I go into the subway system and engage with the homeless. Find a day, just one day, just one hour, and say I'm going to do something for someone. Just one hour. And with 8.5 million New Yorkers, if we all just dedicate one hour to go to a homeless shelter and tutor to a child that is homeless, one hour to go in the subway system and talk to someone that's homeless, one hour after church service to go into the street and pray to someone that is in need. Just one hour. If we just give one hour, we will turn around the conditions of homelessness and despair in our city.

And we will also take an upstream approach to our opioid crisis. Do you remember what heroin did to our city and country? Do you remember what crack cocaine did to our city and country? That's what fentanyl is about to do right now. If we don't stop the fentanyl and opioid abuse, it is going to destroy generations to come. This is a major crisis that we are sleeping on. Fentanyl is destroying our cities across America. We have to fight back and stop it. We are going to invest \$150 million of opioid settlement funds secured by our good friends, Attorney General Letitia James into proven harm reduction and treatment programs.

And we'll move mountains because ain't no mountain high enough to address the growing problem of untreated serious mental illness and social isolation. A few months ago we laid out an initial approach for connecting the most severely mental ill New Yorkers with needed care. This work is driven by the dedicated heroes who are out on the streets and in our subways night and day, helping New Yorkers in crises. This is not police-led. This is led by outreach workers and professionals. Deputy Mayor Williams-Isom and her team has put together a good team to address this issue. And these are everyday New Yorkers like Richard Arroyo, who works on one of our Health Engagement and Assessment Teams. Grew up in Marcy Houses and studied to become a social worker to help people in need.

Richard has spent the last 10 months riding our subways in high stakes, high stress situations, helping people in crisis get the services they need. That could be as simple as pointing them to a food pantry or as big as getting them into a shelter or treatment. He says the most important thing is to look people in the eye, show them you see them as human beings, as equals. They may not accept the first time, but once they see city workers helping others, they're willing to open their lines of communication. Richard, on behalf of the entire city, thank you for your service.

But here is the next phase. This year we will give Richard and his colleagues even more ways to connect people with mental health illness to care and compassion. A few months ago when we laid out the strategy of connecting New Yorkers, we knew what we had to do. But now Dr. Vasani — I know he's here somewhere — a real hero in this area, we are going to put in place something called clubhouse model. In the next few weeks, we will outline our broader plan around mental health. These clubhouses for people with serious mental illness will be places that provide peer support and community access to services, employment, and an educational opportunity. Second phase of this.

And we also want to work with New Yorkers getting them healthy by making sure they have access to fresh food, including fruit and vegetables. We will fight the continuing crises of obesity and chronic diseases by expanding city investment in healthy food access for lower income New Yorkers, including the launch of Groceries 2 Go and Green Stands. You can't have Whole Foods in Park Slope and junk food in Brownsville. You can't have it this same way. Can't have it the same way.

And when it comes to care, no one cares for us the way our families do, especially the women in our lives. That's why I was proud to announce a new future for women's health in our city, building on the important work we've already done, including supporting new mothers with doulas and home visits. We will continue to focus on women's health through an all hands on deck summit in March and other initiatives I announced last week. And in the coming months, we will unveil a comprehensive women's agenda driven by the amazing women in leadership position at City Hall. My women deputy mayors, chief of staff, and other women leaders, stand up. Stand up. Chief advisor, counsel, IGA. Thank you. Thank you.

Because when we support women and families, we are all better for it.

Over the past year, we have spoken about getting things done. We came into office with a People's Plan and I'm proud to say we have delivered for the working people of this city. We're

on the pathway to a safer city with more jobs and more opportunities, and we have laid the cornerstone for a new era of affordable housing.

Promises made, promises kept. This coming year is about expanding that vision of what can get done and what will get done. It means building a strong foundation that supports today's realities and anticipates tomorrow's needs. City government must work to improve the public good, supporting an economy that works for all and cares for the working people who make it possible. Jobs, safety, housing, and care. Without these pillars of support, cities crumble, institutions for society weakens.

We will not allow that to happen in New York. It is the working class that has lifted up this city, built it brick by brick on the bedrock of a free and democratic nation. And going forward, we will sustain the workers who make this city possible. Working together, we can build a better city for all. Keep those pillars of civic power strong, open more golden doors and inspire others to do the same. We're just getting started and there's no stopping. The world's greatest city filled with the best stuff on Earth, New Yorkers. Thank you, New York.

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