

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

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CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON CNN'S NEW DAY

John Berman: New this morning, the New York City Council has voted to slash the NYPD budget by \$1 billion, a nearly 20 percent cut. Joining me now is the Mayor of New York City, Bill de Blasio. Mr. Mayor, thank you so much for being with us. Look, the number of shootings in New York City have risen dramatically since one year ago. 503 so far this year compared to 350 over the same period last year. So, given that, why is it the right time to cut money from the Police Department?

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Yeah, John, we have been, for years, the safest big city in America, and we continue to be. I take that issue very seriously about those shootings. We're going to have to fight that back. But it was really important, at this moment in history to say, we're going to take money away from policing and put it into the needs of our young people. That's what happened here. We shifted money to youth programs, to the kinds of things that nurture and support young people. And I think this is important to recognize as something much – with much bigger ramifications. I said months ago before even the coronavirus, our young people need to be reached. They don't need to be policed, they need to be reached and supported and nurtured. And that's what we're doing. We're not only – a billion dollars, you're talking about, another half-billion beyond that to create recreation centers, places young people can go that are positive, to create broadband access for young people in public housing. We've got to do a lot of things differently if we're going to change the reality for so many of our young people in this society. And one of the places we were able to find that money was in our police budget.

Berman: Why do you think the numbers of shootings have increased year to year?

Mayor: Look, I think we have tremendous frustration and challenges out in our communities because of the coronavirus. People don't have work. People don't have their normal routines. I think that is making everything more difficult. Obviously, our court system is not working, so we don't have our normal criminal justice system dealing with people who have done something wrong. We've got to get that back up and running. That's something the State of New York runs. We've got to get that back up and running. But we're going to fight back this challenge. The NYPD always fights back to the challenges it faces, but it's against a very complicated charge dynamic with the coronavirus.

Berman: Talk about complicated. So, on the one hand you have people asking is now the right time to cut given the rise in shootings. On the other hand, you do have people saying the cuts that you have made aren't real. Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez of New York, put out a statement. She said, "Defunding the police means defunding police. It does not mean budget tricks or funny math. It does not mean moving police officers from the NYPD budget to the Department of

Education budget so that the exact same police remain in schools. That is not a victory.” Your response –

Mayor: Well, she's just wrong. The facts are, we took money from the NYPD, put it into youth programs. We are reducing the size of the NYPD but still in a way that can keep us safe. We found a way to keep our patrol strength consistent and keep people safe while saving a lot of money and reducing overtime costs, figuring out things that the NYPD should not do any more that could be better done by civilians, and, of course, constantly reforming the effort. We want to work differently in our schools. We've been doing this for years, reducing suspensions, putting restorative justice approaches into place that are much more humane and focused on kids and their needs, not just punishing. This work's been going on for years. So, I'm very confident that we can make this reform and keep the city safe at the same time.

Berman: I want to ask you about a court decision from last week, a federal court ruled that you and Governor Cuomo violated the Constitution by restricting religious services during the lockdown of the pandemic. The court said you, “openly discouraged religious gatherings and threatened religious worshipers and sent a clear message that mass protests are deserving of preferential treatment” essentially saying that you treated the protesters who were on the streets differently than the religious gatherings that were on the streets. Your reaction –

Mayor: No, just wrong. We worked with the religious leadership of this city for months, Cardinal Dolan in the Catholic church and so many other religious leaders, who were in full agreement that it was not time to bring back religious services because of the danger it would cause to their congregants. The protests were an entirely different reality, a national phenomenon. That was not something that the government could just say, you know, go away. It's something that really came from the grassroots and, obviously, had profound meaning. And we're all acting on the meaning of those protests. But it's really apples and oranges. Our religious leaders were the first to say it was not time to bring back services. Now we're doing it carefully, smartly. So, I think that decision profoundly misses what the very religious institutions themselves were saying.

Berman: Let's talk about where we are in the country and specifically in the city, in terms of the pandemic. Boy, it's a different New York City today than it was two months ago. The number of cases have gone way down. But as you look south, as you look west, how concerned are you that there will be people who bring this virus back to New York City?

Mayor: John, I'm very, very worried. I mean, look, we fought a hard, hard battle. You saw it all. And we went through the worst in this whole country. And then we came out of it. New Yorkers have done an amazing job. They are wearing those masks. They are observing the social distancing. That's why every day the health care situation gets better and better. But now we have a threat of the disease coming from our own country and coming back here and causing a resurgence. We're going to be really careful. And people coming here from other places really should quarantine, if they come from those states that had a lot of problems. We're going to support them in that. We're also going to be really careful with the decisions we make and be cautious about how we reopen to make sure we keep people safe.

Berman: What do you think about indoor restaurants in New York City?

Mayor: Look, we're going to have more to say about that at ten o'clock today, but the bottom line is that situation is causing a lot of concern right now, because what we've seen around the country is those indoor restaurants and bars caused a huge increase in the coronavirus cases in a lot of places. Whereas outdoor – here's a good news story, John – outdoor seems to be where a lot of positive things are happening. So, we started outdoor dining on a vast scale a few weeks ago. It is going great. It is much safer. The customers love it. The restaurant owners love it. So, we're going to double down in that direction.

Berman: You say you have an announcement to make it at ten o'clock. That's just an hour and 20 minutes. Why not tell us now? Should I have any expectation that I would be allowed to eat indoors at a restaurant in New York City in the next month?

Mayor: John, you are an intrepid reporter. Let's face it. I just will make it a positive – focus on outdoor dining, that is where people are the most safe and that's where people are going to have a great experience.

Berman: In terms of people traveling into New York, the quarantines you're saying, have you seen examples of enforcement? Is it really being enforced or is it just asking nicely?

Mayor: No, of course. Look, we take it really seriously. And we've created a huge test and trace apparatus in this city that can also ensure that anyone who needs to quarantine gets whatever support they need – health care, food, anything they need to stay in that quarantine so everyone's safe. We need the names and that's something the State of New York handles because they have the police at the airports, for example. But we – once we have the name of someone or someone makes clear to us they're in the middle of a quarantine, we'll support them and we'll get it done.

Berman: The Broadway League has said no shows in 2020, which is tough to hear.

Mayor: It is.

Berman: It's tough to hear, but look, should we expect them in 2021, given – you know, are you fully dependent on a vaccine to open Broadway theaters?

Mayor: Look, a vaccine is going to change everything. That's the obvious fact. And from everything I hear, a vaccine is not too far off in the future and we should be hopeful, but I think what's hard for anything indoor is we're going to have to see the health care situation continue to improve consistently to feel good about indoor activity. Now that said, if you can do indoor activity at 50 percent or something like that in the future, there's a workable scenario so long as there's good social distancing, face coverings, etcetera. But I think this is a step by step thing. If we can sustain how healthy New York City is now, I think a lot of things become possible.

Berman: Mayor Bill de Blasio, we appreciate your time. Thank you very much for being with us this morning. We wait with bated breath, the ten o'clock announcement on restaurants.

Mayor: There you go.

Berman: Thank you.

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