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**RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY ON NEW YORK CITY'S ALBANY AGENDA**

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Good afternoon, everyone. I'm just going to give you a couple thoughts up front and then look forward to your questions.

I think the speech, today, certainly included a lot of progress on some important issues – a lot of real progress for New York City, and I think, for the whole state. We have been working on a number of the issues that the Governor addressed today. These are some of the priorities we've had. Obviously, for the last two years, issues like pre-k and supportive housing, \$15 dollar minimum wage, affordable housing overall, family leave. These are areas that, I think, are so important for New York City and for New York State, and it's great to see the state making serious commitments on these fronts – on these fronts, important commitments that I think will help the people of our city and the entire state.

Now, we know there's going to be a legislative process ahead. And some of these issues will face a real battle. Certainly, we know that about the \$15 dollar minimum wage, for example. But I can say that I will certainly do all I can to support the Governor and any of the legislative leaders who are taking the lead in this effort. We want to see these things pass; we want to see this progress reach the people in New York City. So, I'll be actively engaged in whatever way is productive in those fights up ahead.

We have not yet had an opportunity to review the budget carefully. And we all know that it's crucial to read the fine print, and understand fully the ramifications of each element of the budget. I've heard the broad strokes of a couple of areas where we're going to have some specific concern related to CUNY and related to Medicaid. We're going to look at those issues very carefully. Obviously, we want to make sure that the interests of New York City are protected, and that the resources we need to provide health care and to support students are there. So, we'll have more to say as we have a chance to analyze those specifics.

But I'd say, in broad strokes, it's a good – a good day for sure, and some real progress today.

With that, welcome your questions, Dave?

**Question:** Mayor, can I ask you specifically, I know that you're going to look at what he said about homeless services in New York City or across the state – \$10 billion for affordable housing, \$10 billion for supportive housing. I know you probably think that's great. But the fact that he put Stringer, kind of overseeing the shelter system –

**Mayor:** No that – Dave, wait a minute – that's not what he said. I want to be fair. Look, I've said when I think the Governor's put forward initiatives that will help New York City, I've said I will praise them and commend them. I think it's commendable that the state is making a serious commitment on supportive housing, and on affordable housing. I want to see all the details, and I want to understand the timelines and how it's all going to play out, but it's not a surprise. I said the way we thought was most productive to proceed was that New York

City would make its own commitment, the largest commitment New York City's ever made on supportive housing – that we would put that on the table to show good faith; to show the seriousness of our purpose, and that we hope that would spur the state onto action. So, I'm thrilled that that was there in the budget. And, substantial resources, the kinds of things we talked about in the last two budgets – we were concerned that there weren't substantial resources for running homeless services and providing some of the things we needed to do to help the homeless. Again, pending a detailed review of the proposal it certainly appears on first blush that there are some new additional resources for the day-to-day work we do to help the homeless. So, those are good things. The audit is a separate matter, and that's where I'm respectfully contesting. The audit, which as I understand it – obviously, we want to know the details – but is Comptroller DiNapoli and Comptroller Stringer working together – could be very consistent with our goal of making sure that every shelter is fixed because, look, the Governor I think indicated there are some shelters that do very well. You know, there are some shelters run by organizations that are tremendously respected. There are others that just haven't measured up. That's why we put together our shelter repair squad; that's why we – I asked for the investigation from the Department of Investigation back last spring to figure out where are the problems so we can fix them. If the audit is complimentary to that effort, that's perfectly acceptable. What we've lacked in the past was the resources to help us fix the problems – again, on first blush, now the resources will be there.

Yes?

**Question:** I was wondering what's your position on the education investment tax credit. The Senate passed it on Monday.

**Mayor:** Yeah, same as I had in the last session. I just don't think that's the most productive way to approach education funding.

**Question:** But why is that?

**Mayor:** Because I believe the approach that we have focusing on the needs of our public schools where, obviously, the vast majority of our children are educated, I think that's the right focus. I think what's quite clear in the Governor's speech, and I certainly have said it many times about the school system in New York City, we have a long way to go to be able to breakdown a status quo in which many kids did not get the education they deserve. So, I believe fundamentally that's where the resources need to go.

**Question:** Okay, thank you.

**Mayor:** You're welcome.

**Question:** Can you please elaborate on your concerns about the \$800 million cuts to CUNY and also some of the details about Medicaid?

**Mayor:** Yes, and again, we're seeing these initial details really only in the last hour. And I want to emphasize the legislative process ahead. Once we get the details, we've analyzed the budget – I'll be back in a couple of weeks to provide my budget response. But, clearly, if something actually is going to undercut our ability to provide health care to our people or to support our students, I'm not only going to speak up, but work hard to address it. But it's premature to go into detail because we're only seeing it for the first time now.

Yes?

**Question:** You have any sense either from the speech today or during your meeting with Governor Cuomo earlier today where the proposed new units of affordable housing would be? Is that going to be in New York City or all across the state?

**Mayor:** I would say that because of the history that we've known with affordable housing programs I'm sure they'll be a very substantial number in New York City, but I did talk to the Governor about it earlier. You know, it's an initial idea, we have to see the specifics about timelines and how it's going to play out. But, look, it could only be for the good of New York City if the state is making an additional commitment to affordable housing on top of the 200,000 units we're already committed to because remember, those 200,000 units are being funded with city dollars; with effectively public-private partnerships that we engage in. The state has not played a direct funding role in our 200,000 units. If the state's going to do 100,000 more on top of that we know New York City will benefit from a substantial number of those units.

Yes?

**Question:** Can you tell us about your meeting with the Governor and any other – who else did you meet with today while in Albany? And whatever you can share about the nature of the conversations?

**Mayor:** Absolutely. I met with Speaker Heastie; I met with Leader Jeff Klein – continuing meeting with people this afternoon. You know, as I said when I came out of the meeting with the Governor, it was about a half-hour. I thought it was a productive meeting. We talked about a number of the issues in the speech, and some of the follow-up that we would do afterwards on these issues. You know, I think the most important point is that I've been saying we needed to figure out how to cooperatively address issues like supportive housing, and I felt very good about the conversation because a lot of the ideas that we had talked about, and there's been – look, there's been a public dialogue in the sense of we put forward the supportive housing proposal, for example, and we've talked about some of the other things we would like to see the state do in partnership with us. That's been on the table. There's been a running dialogue between the staffs, as I've referred to all along. And I have talked to the Governor pretty consistently over the last weeks as well. I think it was a very good thing that the supportive housing commitment was put on the table because I think it's something we can do cooperatively that would really make an impact for the people of New York City. And that's the model I've been holding to. When the state comes forward as our partner with resources, I'm going to commend that. I'm going to praise it.

**Question:** You know you pitched – talked about 15,000 units of supportive housing as part of the NY/NY IV agreement. That fell through – the Governor pitched 20,000. [Inaudible] – today the Governor, \$15 minimum wage. Can you give me a sense of what's changing – do you think the Governor is more amenable to some of the things you've talked about?

**Mayor:** Well, look, that's what you do for a living to figure that out. I would say our job is to do the best we can do in New York City. I'm proud of the fact that we've led the way on increasing minimum wage, on increasing benefits like paid sick leave and paid family leave – that we identified affordable housing as an area that needed a whole different kind of approach, and a much greater level of investment. And we, unlike in the past, decided it was important for the city to take on responsibility for our share of supportive housing, and put it on the table – and say this what we're committing to no matter what. I'm proud that we have done those things. I think that was the right thing to do. You know, the Governor's specific thought process and how Albany works is, obviously, for you guys to analyze, but I think we did the things that were right for our people. And I think it certainly was helpful in the process.

**Question:** You spoke last June in your very famous NY1 interview with the Governor [inaudible]. What do you see today in the budget and what you heard from the Governor today – is it cause for concern going forward or do you see this as kind of like a reset in your relationship with Governor Cuomo?

**Mayor:** I think it's a very positive sign, obviously, to see these resources put on the table for New York City; these policies put on the table, which, again, will help the city – will help the whole state. I think it's – it's the kind of thing I look forward to working with the Governor on. So, to me it's always been about finding ways to work together productively; to focus on the needs of our people, and I think today is an example of how that should be done.

**Question:** Do you have plans to meet with Senator Flanagan today?

**Mayor:** We're still working on the timing. I certainly hope to.

**Question:** Do you have any position on mayoral control of the school system or response – it looks like Governor Cuomo [inaudible]?

**Mayor:** Sure. I think it's good that the Governor put his position forward. I said last year, of course, I still believe it, this system has been proven. What we used to have in the previous governing system was literally chaos and corruption. We now have an effective governance system – very proud off the fact that New York City's graduation rate has now surpassed 70 percent for the first time in our history. It's another indication of why mayoral control works. I know my predecessor Michal Bloomberg though so, and he did good work through mayoral control. I hope I have as well. So, I would say this is a system that should be locked in for the long term or certainly extended on a longer basis, but I appreciate that the Governor put forward a specific number.

**Question:** Just to go back, Mayor, to the homelessness shelters – what is your understanding of how this process is going to unfold?

**Mayor:** Which piece?

**Question:** The review of the shelter –

**Mayor:** The audits?

**Question:** The audits.

**Mayor:** Yeah. Yeah. Well, we obviously are waiting for details on that, but look, we did our own Department of Investigation report. We have been working consistently to follow up on everything we found. We found a number of violations – about 83 percent of those have been solved. We're still working off those now. We have announced an ongoing inspection process that will take us up to February 15<sup>th</sup> – 24-hour turnaround, if there's any kind of complaint, we must inspect at that shelter within 24 hours. If it's the kind of issue that can be addressed immediately like extermination, that's a 24-hour requirement. We brought in the Coalition for the Homeless to act as an independent monitor. So, we've put a series of pieces in place – and new funding in place to address shelter conditions. As you know, Comptroller Stringer has already done some reports in this area. I see it as an extension of that process. If there's going to be additional review that helps us identify problems, we can certainly work with that. The important thing is we need resources to help us address the problems. We've, again, shown – New York City has anted up on all issues related to homelessness in many ways in the last months. We wanted to see the state come together with us in that process, and, again, pending further review it does look like the resources beyond the supportive housing – that there's also this continuing of care money, which would help us a lot to address homeless services and the specific needs of shelters.

**Question:** So, does Comptroller Stringer get to go into a shelter and/or have his team go in and say this has not been repaired, and this needs to be shut down?

**Mayor:** My full understanding of what's being put forward today is no different than the existing reality. Meaning, Comptroller Stringer already has done reports on shelter conditions. He certainly has that right as the Comptroller of New York City for anything that the City of New York funds. I think that's absolutely consistent. What the Governor said is he offered a vision of how to respond after that – those findings, if they are negative findings. I think that's an entirely different matter that has to be worked through. Look, our goal – and I think when you heard the Governor list out the possibilities – our goal is to fix problems. And if providers

can do a good job, we just want to help them get the problems fixed and move forward. I agree, in any area, we may find some providers who have to be replaced, and I'm certainly willing to do that, but how you do that – how that is achieved, I don't think any of that has been put together yet.

**Question:** [inaudible] costs for the city. Did you raise that with the Governor today in the meeting?

**Mayor:** Again, I have had a conversation with the Governor about my concerns. I didn't have the details of what it meant if we're talking about things like Medicaid and CUNY, but I expressed very clearly my concern not only in terms of the initial dollar figures, but how those dollar figures grow over time. And that we needed a full accounting of what it would mean and what's the rationale – and that we would protect the interests of the city; and, again, our students, of those who needed health care in our city. So, to say the least, that's going to be an ongoing process when the budget process – when we get a full sense of it if we think it endangers our fiscal health. If we think it's not fair, we're certainly going to follow through.

**Question:** [inaudible]

**Mayor:** I don't want to characterize emotions. I made my point; I think he understood my point.

**Question:** I just wanted to ask you about the funding of the education of prisoners? Do you fundamentally agree with that?

**Mayor:** Yes. Yeah, I think, look, I think – I appreciated that part of the speech that we – in this country we can't talk enough about the fact that mass incarceration has become a cancer, and that we have to undo it. It has had massive human consequences. So, I appreciated the Governor laying that out and talking about some of things we have to do to fix it. Certainly, helping those who have been incarcerated to get an education and to be viable when they come back into society makes a lot of sense. So, that's something I support. I'm going to give you two your last call, and then I'm out of here. Go ahead –

**Question:** One thing not in the speech –

**Mayor:** Let's stay on the speech.

**Question:** This is with horse-drawn carriages, and I'm wondering –

**Mayor:** Okay, we're not doing anything but the speech – we'll get you another time on that. Speech? Yes?

**Question:** Mr. Cuomo today, in his book that he sent out, also has a bail reform proposal. Do you know what's in that yet?

**Mayor:** I have not. You know, mine is that I want to give the ability to judges to factor in the dangerousness of the suspect in making bail determinations. And I wanted to require the dangerousness to be considered in diversion judgements. So, I haven't seen that proposal, but I've said very clearly, we're certainly going to work hard for bail reform.

Thanks everyone.

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