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**RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOSTS MEDIA AVAILABILITY TO ADDRESS  
QUESTIONS ABOUT PENDING LEGISLATION IN ALBANY**

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Good afternoon, this is a very troubling moment for over two million New Yorkers. Wondering, literally, as the clock ticks down to midnight, what's going to happen to them? What's going to happen to their families? What's going to happen to their apartments? It is unbelievable, to me, that we're on the day that Albany is supposed to not only extend but strengthen rent regulation – and the fate of over two million New Yorkers hangs in the balance right now. I'm going to say at the outset, and I'll say throughout, the people of this city need to make their voices heard right now. They need to tell the senate, the assembly, the governor that we must have action today, not only to extend rent regulation, but to strengthen it. Because we have been losing hundreds of thousands of affordable units over the last two decades, and it has to end. We have to protect affordable housing. We have to stop people being displaced from their homes and their neighborhoods. The hour of decision has come, and it is time for Albany to act.

Midnight tonight – such a fundamental part of people's lives could change. Over two million people, who depended on affordable housing, depended on rent regulation to make sure that they and their family can stay in the neighborhood – all that is in doubt at this very moment. And none of us are taking it lightly because we've seen so much inaction from Albany lately that we have to be worried about the nightmare scenario where these laws actually lapse.

I'm going to speak in a moment about the kinds of actions we will take in the event that there is any breakdown Albany, and any break in tenant protections. But let me just acknowledge those who stand with me now, Vicki Been, our commissioner for Housing, Preservation and Development; Steve Banks, our commissioner for the Human Resources Administration; Raun Rasmussen, the executive director of Legal Services NYC; and Adrian Holder the attorney in charge for civil practice for the Legal Aid Society. These folks are standing with me because the city has put an emergency plan in place to support tenants if rent regulations lapse.

So, I want to first say, we've put together an emergency hotline. Tenants can call 3-1-1 with any concerns they have about what would happen to them and their family if rent regulation lapses. We are very much appreciative that experts from the Legal Aid Society and from Legal Services NYC have agreed to work with the city to ensure that all tenant concerns are addressed promptly. 3-1-1 has already experienced a serious uptick in calls today regarding the rent regulation situation compared to typical days. Obviously, with every passing hour New Yorkers are getting more and more anxious about the situation in Albany.

And we know that there are some unscrupulous landlords who may try to take advantage of this situation. They may try to harass tenants. They may try to misinform them. They may try to suggest that their leases are no longer in effect. We want to make sure that those falsehoods are addressed. So, any New Yorker who needs information can call 3-1-1 and get information and legal support. This is very consistent with a larger effort we've put in place; in the upcoming budget – \$36 million for legal services to stop bad landlords from harassing their tenants. We have a very strong anti-harassment apparatus we put into place, and a tenant hotline to ensure that landlords do not take advantage of tenants in neighborhoods all over the city that are experiencing huge increases in housing prices. But this emergency situation just adds to the concern. We want to make sure that tenants know that any lease they have remains in effect for the term of that lease. And if you see any activities

by the landlord trying to push you out of your apartment, or not providing heat or hot water, or other services, or suggesting that your lease is void – we want that reported immediately to 3-1-1, so we can act. You know, it is astounding in the midst of a housing affordability crisis – something we’ve talked about for years; something I’ve said when I’ve gone around this city, whether I was a candidate for mayor or as mayor the number one concern I hear from my fellow New Yorkers is affordable housing. All Albany had to do was recognize that this deadline was coming years in the making – this deadline was coming, and by this deadline extend rent regulation and strengthen it. Remember, the last time that this came up – the last time that rent regulation had to be renewed Albany actually strengthened rent regulation in acknowledgement of the affordability crisis in this city. Since that time, that crisis has deepened. We’ve lost thousands and thousands of affordable units – that pace, at which we’re losing affordable units continues to grow.

So it’s a housing crisis. Everyone knows it in New York City; everyone knows it in Albany. All they had to do was act by today – renew and strengthen the rent regulation laws – and yet we’re now well into the afternoon and no one knows for sure what’s going to happen.

I want to make clear why it’s so important that we change the path we’re on. As I’ve said, over the last couple of decades we’ve lost several hundred thousand units of affordable housing. Units that went out of rent regulation because the rent laws were not strong enough; units that went out of Mitchell Lama programs and other affordability programs. We can see the handwriting on the wall. This city is getting less and less affordable. So, it’s clear we need to strengthen laws because we need New York City to be a place for everyone, as it has been for generations upon generations.

The assembly passed a bill that very clearly strengthens rent regulation – they did that weeks ago. The governor in the last week or two came out with a clear position, very much like the assembly’s on the need to strengthen rent regulation. Now, it’s time for the senate to act. What the senate has done so far doesn’t respond to the housing crisis in this city. It’s time for the senate to recognize that we need a real response to this crisis. It’s time for the governor to bring all the parties together, and resolve this issue immediately. Things we call for – ending vacancy decontrol; we can’t have so many units leaving rent regulation on a regular basis. That means the law is just not working. We need to end vacancy decontrols, so landlords can’t pull these affordable units out of regulation just because the rent hits a certain level. We need to end the vacancy bonus. This allows landlords to increase the rent by as much as 20 percent, just because the building – excuse me, just because the apartment turns over to a new tenant. We have to end that practice. It’s part of what is continuing to drive up rents so quickly, and make so many units unaffordable. We have to end the ability of landlords to make some kind of improvement in an apartment, and then permanently jack up the rent – not something any of us would do in our lives – if you have to pay for something, fine – recoup that expense. But then you don’t get to keep charging it over and over again.

These are fundamental reforms that we need if we’re going to protect the over two million people in rent-regulated apartments at this very moment.

So, there’s still time. There’s still time for Albany to get it right. They’ve been down this road before. If anyone says, oh, there’s not enough time, remember last time in Albany. They not only extended rent regulation, they improved it and strengthened it. They know how to do it. It’s time to do it.

Every New Yorker who cares about this issue should let the senate know, the assembly know, and governor know that we need them to do their job, and get this done today – and protect the fate of over two million people.

And again, if anyone – if anyone is concerned that they may be put in jeopardy because of the inaction in Albany – that their lease may be cancelled or that they may be harassed, call 3-1-1 and we will get you the help you need.

With that, we’ll take your questions. First, on this topic and then on other topics.

**Question:** [inaudible]

**Mayor:** Look, I – we have, I think, a very fair concept in terms of rent regulation. It says that we have to protect affordable housing for people in this city. And every year, the rent guidelines board looks at the actual cost that landlords have incurred, and determines what kind of increase they deserve based on real costs. Now, in the past, I fear sometimes that was not done the right way, and landlords actually got more increase than they deserve. We came into office, our rent guidelines looked at the facts last year – ended up with a one percent increase for landlords based on the actual conditions they were facing. Remember, in the last year, we’ve seen a great decrease in fuel costs, for example. Those costs go down – there should be less of an increase on leases. If costs go up, that’s a fair reason why the lease should be altered. But the basic framework is fair. It has preserved affordable housing for millions of New Yorkers. And, obviously, the landlords continue to make a profit.

**Question:** Mayor, the Associations of [inaudible] and Landlords today is saying that this is fear mongering, that this has happened before – laws will expire, and they’ll come back in a day or two, or a week or two – that landlords won’t take advantage. Your response to that, and [inaudible]

**Mayor:** Well, clearly, I think it’s different, because we’ve lost so much affordable housing – even since the last time that rent regulation was renewed. So, in other words, if this is a snowball coming down the hill, it gets worse and worse with every passing year. And therefore, we need more serious solutions. As for the claim that we should assume a certain outcome – if the landlord lobby is telling everyone to stay calm and don’t worry, Albany will take care of it, I – I don’t find that overly believable. We’ve seen inaction of a historic nature in Albany this year. We’re down to the very last days of the session, and huge issues have not been addressed. And we’re talking about two million peoples’ lives. I don’t think anyone should take this lying down. We also know there’s been a lot of harassment. I’ll make my statements, but if any of my colleagues want to join in, feel free. We know there’s been a lot of harassment of tenants. That’s why we put \$36 million dollars in the budget to fight against the kind of harassment we’ve seen even without the danger of the rent laws lapsing. So plenty of unscrupulous landlords are out there harassing tenants, giving them misinformation, not proving repairs. We’ve seen it over and over again. Look – I’ve said it before, I’ll say it again, most landlords do the right thing. But sadly, there are plenty who try and take advantage. And that’s why tenants have every reason to be concerned. Also, I think they’re worried about something they’ve never experienced before. If this is not fixed, what does it mean for their lease? That’s the most common question I’ve gotten in the last few days as I’ve talked to everyday New Yorkers – what’s going to happen to my lease? We want every New Yorker to know the lease you have remains in effect for the term of that lease, regardless of what Albany does. I deeply fear that some landlords will portray the opposite to tenants, and suggest that their lease is suddenly void.

Anyone want to add? Good. Okay.

**Question:** How troubled are you by the governor’s efforts in trying to bring this to a close, and how much do you think his efforts in this – in what’s going on in Albany are personally aimed towards you?

**Mayor:** I think when two million people’s lives are at stake, in terms of, you know, their – where they’re going to live, I don’t think this is about the relationship between me and the governor. The governor’s taken the right position here, and I thank him for that. But we need his leadership. The proof’s in the pudding here. We need him to break through this stalemate, and fix this situation. I think he understands that housing for almost two million people – almost one in every nine people in the state of New York – is a matter that transcends personality and ego, and something that just has to be addressed right now.

**Question:** Last week, [inaudible] the Legal Aid Society, as well as Councilmember Jumaane Williams, the Housing Committee Chairman, suggested that if rent regulation were to expire tonight, the governor would declare an emergency [inaudible], at which point the [inaudible] would [inaudible] upon the City Council. Have you talked to the governor about that possibility, and [inaudible]

**Mayor:** I have not talked to the governor about that possibility. And I don’t know if one of my colleagues wants to speak to that. That’s not something, I think, that we have to come to a clear analysis on.

**Question:** The press conference today – you standing up here, your message to New Yorkers – has the feel, in many ways, of the oral briefing during a national disaster, a storm. Can you speak to sort of how your administration at large is dealing with this, and compare it to how you respond to, you know, a major blizzard or a hurricane, let's say. I mean [inaudible] – are there any similarities? Am I –

**Mayor:** Yeah – no, you're right. It does have that feel. But the difference is this would affect many, many more people. God forbid we ever have natural disasters and snowstorms and other problems – but we've been through that in the last years in this city, and there's been some painful loss, and many people effected. But we have not had a disaster that directly and immediately affected over 2 million people. This is an entirely different magnitude, and that's what's so troubling about the whole situation. You know, when you have a natural disaster – unforeseen, uncontrollable – we do our best in every way to prepare and to address it. This is a manmade problem. This is something that has been on the agenda in Albany since the last time that they renewed rent regulations several years ago, so it's been obvious this was coming. The housing affordability crisis has been documented over and over again. It's a matter of consensus that we have a profound affordability crisis. The income inequality crisis and what's happened to people's incomes in comparison to housing costs has been well documented. There's nothing that Albany lacked in terms of warning signs that this had to be addressed. Not only – again – renewed, but strengthened that these laws have to be strengthened or we will continue to hemorrhage affordable housing. So, it is a very bad state of affairs when you have something that affects so many people where there is so much time and so little is done.

**Question:** [inaudible]

**Mayor:** Look, you'd have to ask the folks in Albany what they think is going on. I think there's politics going on. Obviously, I think there is somehow – some weighing of different items that ignores the fact that this particular issue affects over 2 million people and can't be compared with anything else on the agenda right now. This is about whether people are going to be able to stay in their home or not. I don't know what's more fundamental than that. So, in terms of the punditry and the insider politics of Albany, you'd have to talk to people there. But I think every day New Yorkers are looking at this with shock. We have become too accustomed to Washington, D.C. being a place where extraordinarily serious issues go untreated. As much as we've had problems in Albany, we've generally seen some meaningful outcomes. This is, you know, an entirely different situation where something of this magnitude goes unaddressed with just hours to go.

**Question:** [inaudible]

**Mayor:** They are fearful. They don't know what's going to happen next. I think the most typical call we're getting is “what is going to happen? What are my rights? What happens to my lease? Is it still going to be in effect tomorrow?” That's people who are looking for information and they're fearful of something that might put themselves and their families in a bad situation. Again, I don't expect – I pray that there are not many instances of harassment, [inaudible] those to start in earnest before tomorrow. Most of the calls we have right now are people trying to understand what if.

On topic, yes?

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, why should unscrupulous landlords fear the city? What are you going to do? It sounds like you're going to [inaudible]

**Mayor:** Well, we're going to get legal aid and legal services, which I have had the honor of working with these folks for a long time and they're pretty tough and they will use the power of the courts against any unscrupulous landlords and again, if anyone wants to fill in the blank with me, feel free, but we have a lot of different tools at our disposal in terms of enforcement and other work we do with the same landlords, and we're not going to hesitate to be very public about any landlords who act in an illegal and inappropriate fashion. I did that as a public advocate with our Worst Landlords Watch List. We're certainly willing to call out names of people who try and harass tenants in this environment.

Vicky?

**Vicky Been:** Let me just add to that by saying, when people call 311 – if they tell us that their landlord is cutting off hot water or is not making repairs or is harassing them, then HPD will send it's inspectors out. We will work with our anti-harassment tenant task force, which is a combination with the attorney general, with all of the agencies in this city. So, whenever we get information that a landlord is misbehaving in any way, we will do everything we can to enforce the law against them.

**Mayor:** Steve?

**Steve Banks:** I think what's different from time's past like this the partnership and the collaboration amongst city agencies. You've got HPD, which is the enforcement agency in this area; you've got HRA, which holds contracts with the legal services organizations; and you have a partnership – this public private partnership – to really address these situations as they evolve. In the past, it was [inaudible] and here you have a great teamwork that's ready to take the actions that are needed. And behind all that of course is, as the mayor said, this new initiative to address tenant harassment issues and that's why we have legal aid and legal services in place to be able to step up to this new challenge and be at the ready to take action. So, in the past, there was a lot of discussion about what could be done. Now, we are ready to take action.

**Adrian Holder:** Adrian Holder, attorney in charge in from the Legal Aid Society civil practice. I want to just, also, emphasize that what has been described to by the mayor and by the commissioner as this wonderful partnership – it has already been tested, and its already worked and been effective. Whether its dealing unscrupulous landlords who are trying to illegally evict people out of [inaudible] housing; whether it's been dealing with the crisis of mentally ill and formally chemically addicted adults that were in supportive housing through the pathways case that we were able to address. And whether it's been dealing with unscrupulous landlords who are breaking up apartments, and harassing tenants out of their homes – the Legal Aid Society and Legal Services NYC has stood with the city in very recent months to make sure that those things get addressed. And even those buildings that were identified as having horrible conditions, and being pointed out as apartments that were pushing folks out – just the city notifying those landlords that legal services was available to assist those vulnerable tenants with the conditions in their apartment have led to those landlords making the necessary repairs. So, again, this partnership is a very strong one, and it's already been tested and been very effective.

**Raun Rasmussen:** Raun Rasmussen, executive director of Legal Services NYC. I just want to add that what's really important today is that tenants not act [inaudible] and without having the right kind of information about what their legal rights are. That's why we're setting up this hotline in partnership with the Legal Aid Society, and with the city, so that we can ensure that tenants have all the information that they need, so that they don't move out when they don't have to; so they don't take buy outs that they don't have to take; so that they don't take advice in court that leads adverse results for them. So, having legal information right now is the most effective thing that we can provide for tenants. And hopefully we won't need to get into the more [inaudible] fights that we are prepared to get into if necessary.

**Mayor:** And just to clarify, again, I told you there's several different ways we can go at this depending on the situation – working, obviously, with legal aid and legal services. If a landlord is harassing tenants, and breaking the law you have everything from the opportunity to get them fined to even the potential of criminal charges. And that's something we've been working – previously with the attorney general's office – on as well in terms of other instances of tenant harassment. So, there are fines; there are potential, in some cases, criminal charges; there is the ability to publicly shame these landlords – these individual landlords as we've done in the past. So, when I say we'll throw the book at them, it will take many forms, but any landlord that tries to take advantage of this situation – we will go after.

**Question:** [inaudible]

**Mayor:** I will have a few words in Spanish for you. I neglected to do that, I apologize.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, one point of clarification, the hotline that you're talking about – can you give us the number? Is it the same hotline that we're hearing about from the public advocate's office?

**Mayor:** No, it's a separate concept. What we did with the public advocate's office was the worst landlord's watch list, but again, we are able to revive that kind of approach if needed. In terms of the anti-harassment hotline related to the work we're doing in the areas where we expect to be doing rezoning – that can be reached through 3-1-1.

**Question:** [inaudible]

**Mayor:** I'm sorry, I did not know about that. That's a good thing too – obviously, as many different opportunities for people to get information, and support – the more the better. Yes?

**Question:** A number of people have criticized the governor for doing updates on the prison break. Do you think it was appropriate for the governor to be spending so much time outside Albany?

**Mayor:** I don't want to – I don't want to speculate. Obviously, that was an important issue too. I think the bottom line is it's time to get the job done. This is not a news flash that this deadline was coming up tonight. They've been up in Albany for months – the legislature, and the governor – they've had plenty of time to work on these issues. It's time to fix the problem. On topic?

Last call, on topic?

On topic?

Yes or no?

Okay, last on-topic – we're you done?

Good enough. On-topic?

One then two, then we go to off.

Where? What am I missing?

Okay, three and then we go to off.

**Question:** [inaudible]

**Mayor:** I find your question to be leading the witness in the extreme. No, I don't feel helpless at all. We all have different roles to play. The federal government does what it does. The state government does what it does, and the city government does what it does. We are doing everything in our power to provide affordable housing for our people. That's why we have the most ambitious affordable housing plan in the history of this nation – 200,000 units over ten years. We are doing everything that we know how to do to get the people of this city to speak out to Albany. It is never a shock when the state government or the federal governments don't act, but not acting on this level is shocking because it affects so many people. So, I am very confident that we're doing everything that we can do in our power, and that we're also pushing Albany as hard as we can.

Where was I? Yes.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, you may have already, but do you plan to call Governor Cuomo and talk with him.

**Mayor:** I've been in regular touch with Governor Cuomo, and my staff has been in regular touch with his staff – as of yesterday for me, but my staff and his staff are talking all the time.

**Question:** [inaudible]

**Mayor:** I don't go into the details of the private conversations with the other leaders. I've been in touch with all of them in different ways – sometimes directly, sometimes through staff. We have not gotten a clear picture of how they're going to play out the rest of the day. I think that's the simplest way to say it.

Okay, let's go to off-topic.

**Question:** [inaudible]

**Mayor:** I think when we get through this legislative session, and obviously, our own city budget process. I think it'll be an important moment for – for the state government, the city government, MTA, and other stakeholders to have a serious conversation about the future. It's clearly not being addressed on the level it has to be, so we're ready to sit with our partners and try and figure out a way forward. But I can guarantee you that won't happen until we get through these immediate challenges.

**Question:** Speaking of other [inaudible] mayoral control in schools [inaudible].

**Mayor:** I think on mayoral control of schools – the message that has been received in Albany from Democrats and Republicans, from me as the current mayor, Rudy Giuliani as the past mayor, business groups, labor groups – it's overwhelmingly clear that there's a consensus in the city on the need to renew mayoral control of education. I know our leaders in Albany know this. It's not a surprise. Again, this is being turned into a political football. I think the people of this city and the people of the state will not smile upon Albany if they take something that's been so successful and so important to the reforms here in New York City schools, and turn it into a political football – in a way that it has not been previously. We know there were substantial renewals several times under Mayor Bloomberg. So, what I believe is that saner heads in Albany may prevail, because I don't think any of them missed the fact that not renewing mayoral control of education would be a historic failure by Albany. And, if they renew it for only a brief period of time, then it's quite clear they're politicizing something that has, up until now, been a matter of consensus.

**Question:** [inaudible]

**Mayor:** Again, I take each and every one seriously. I constantly monitor. I talk to Commissioner Bratton and Chief O'Neill constantly about the different realities. And each one represents a human being, so it's not a matter of abstraction. We take it very, very seriously. We know we went through a similar reality last year. We know we turned it around. We're absolutely confident we're going to turn this around. We have "Summer All Out" now in effect. It's just starting these last days, but we know it's going to be a huge difference, as it did last year. We have new strategies that are being used – better training, better equipment. It's going to add up. For all of us, we want to see it turnaround right now. But I have great confidence that the NYPD will turn this situation very, very soon.

**Question:** Mayor, there is an auction house in Virginia that is auctioning off a piece of steel from the World Trade Center's [inaudible] tower. It's online. Your reaction to [inaudible].

**Mayor:** I agree with Senator Schumer. I think that's a very inappropriate action, and that's something that should be considered sacred and not subject to an auction.

**Question:** There's a report out today from the Partnership for NYC that details the state of the financial sector. I wonder if [inaudible] concerned with the – not dire situation – but the threatened [inaudible]. There's one recommendation that there be tax incentives to maybe middle earners or even higher earners.

**Mayor:** Well, one I have not seen the report, so I will just speak in broad strokes. I think it's clear to say I am not a fan of tax incentives for the finance industry. I know that was something that was offered in previous administrations. That's not on the agenda for us. I think what we can do to keep the industry strong here conforms exactly with the bigger plans we have in place; continue to improve our schools; continue to create more affordable housing; continue to make this a place that great talent from all over the world wants to come work in. And there's plenty of evidence – and I hear it all the time, by the way, from finance industry leaders – that they're able to attract the finest talent in the world, because people want to be here in New York City. Again, we are having a challenge right this moment with some of the recent crime numbers, in terms of shootings and murders, but overall crime is down – overall crime down now 6.8 percent from the same point last year. So, another part of continuing to have a strong business sector and finance sector is continuing to keep this the safest big city in the country, which it is. So, all of those elements, I think, go into keeping that sector strong here.

**Question:** There's a growing consensus on Staten Island that one of new ferries should be named after the late Staff Sergeant Michael Ollis, who died while protecting a soldier from a suicide bomb in Afghanistan. I just wanted to get your [inaudible]. Have you given any thought to what the ferry should be named after? Do you think the Staten Islanders who died in Afghanistan [inaudible]

**Mayor:** It sounds like a very commendable suggestion. There is a process. We want to respect the process – obviously, the way previous ferries have been named as well. But I certainly that's a very powerful idea.

**Question:** Mayor, on the Waldorf shooting over the weekend – are you troubled at all that, at the moment, prosecution has been deferred in contrast to, for example, the [inaudible] case a couple of years ago – when Mayor Bloomberg came out and said, they've got to throw the book at this guy – if you fire a gun in a public space in New York, you have to suffer the [inaudible].

**Mayor:** I don't know all the details of the case. I have great faith that NYPD is handling it effectively. My understanding is there's a difference between those two cases, in terms of the presence of a gun permit for this state. That was different in this case than the previous. But again, I don't know all the facts. I need to know more before I could pass fuller judgment.

**Question:** [inaudible]

**Mayor:** Well, Summer All Out started literally a few days ago. So I think, again – I feel, as everyone does, we want action. We want results. We want this turned around. I have great faith, because I saw it turned around last year in a similar situation. But I also want to be fair. Summer All Out is a few days old. I think with each passing day and each passing week, we're going to feel the effect of it more and more.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, [inaudible] a series of reports on the city's water system this week. And we found that the cost of water has outpaced taxes – the cost for taxes, fuel, labor over the ten years, for rent-stabilized buildings particularly. And there's some landlords who are looking for a tax break. And is that something you would support?

**Mayor:** My view on the water rate is that it needs to be aligned to the actual cost of running the water system and all the relevant parts of running the water system. And that's what we have put into this budget that we are now talking through with the City Council – a proposal to continue to drive down the increase. The fact is – there are some new and substantial costs related to the water system. And, you know, I'm a homeowner myself in Brooklyn. And obviously, I understand it's my obligation, like everyone else, to pay the cost for that which actually goes to water. But what we need to do is move away from the history where some of the water bill costs actually didn't reflect the cost of water. So we've made additional steps in that direction. It's going to take



us at least several more years to, once and for all, end that, but I think we're moving in the right direction. I don't see any possibility, at this moment, for any kind of subsidies, but I think our job is to continue to drive down that element of the water bill that's not solely about the water system itself.

**Mayor:** If there are two more questions. Yes?

**Question:** [inaudible]

**Mayor:** Please – I'm sorry.

**Question:** [inaudible]

**Mayor:** I – I think I stated it very, very clearly. I have tremendous faith in the NYPD. We went through a similar situation last year. They turned it around very effectively. We've moved hundreds of officers to where the need is greatest. Overall crime still down 6.8 percent compared to last year – lowest number of murders in 50 years last year. I understand, and I find it appropriate, that people need to respond to what each day's news brings, and talk about the specific, immediate trends. But I would also say to all of you –you've got to keep a little sense of history here. If we had the lowest number of murders in 50 years last year, it certainly suggests that this NYPD and this commissioner know what they're doing. Crime down 6.8 percent overall at this point this year compared to last year – those are big stories too. So while we're having some specific problems with shootings – and we know, again, overwhelmingly, sadly, gang and crew related, overwhelmingly in a small number of districts – I should say, precincts – we are going to throw more and more resources at where the problem is. And I'm confident that's going to turn the tide. Last call. Yes?

**Question:** [inaudible] your administration [inaudible] the Fire Department pension data. And the top earner, the top pension, is \$284,000 dollars. So I was wondering if you had any comment on that, given that, you know, fire pensions and [inaudible] are in the news lately?

**Mayor:** I'd need to know the situations of that – the situation of that specific case. Overall, what we've said I think is clear. I want to extend my appreciation to the City Council for joining with us to support legislation that would strengthen our ability to help our uniformed service members when they are disabled in the line of duty, and do it in a fiscally responsible manner. I think this is an example of the council and the Mayor's Office getting together on something that both is fair to the workers and fair to the taxpayers, and the long term fiscal health of this city. And we've provided Albany with a good option, and I'm hopeful they'll take us up on it.

Thanks, everyone.

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