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**RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO SIGNS LEGISLATION TO EXTEND HEALTH INSURANCE BENEFITS TO FAMILY MEMBERS OF LATE SERGEANT FRANK MUSELLA AND BILL TO STRENGTHEN SCHOOL DISCIPLINE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Good afternoon, everybody. We have several pieces of legislation to act on today.

We're going to begin with Intro 903. It grants me the authority to show our deep respect as a city for one family – and one family that's done a lot for us – and to pay tribute to the legacy of a New Yorker who is greatly missed. This bill will extend health insurance benefits to the family of Frank Musella. Frank was a Sergeant in the Department of Sanitation who passed away this summer while on duty in Staten Island.

I want to thank everyone who has supported this action, including – especially the sponsor of the bill, Councilmember Daneek Miller. Thank you for your leadership.

This city mourned the loss of Sergeant Musella – proud Brooklynite, a devoted family man. We lost him at just 37 years old. And for nearly a decade, he kept New York City clean. He kept us safe. He began patrolling the streets as an Enforcement Agent, worked his way up to Enforcement Supervisor. He took tremendous pride in his job, and I talked to some of his colleagues about what an extraordinary colleague he was. But more than anything, he knew that his world revolved around his family – his wife of seventeen years, Alessandra, who is with us – we thank you for being here – and his two sons, Frank Jr. and Anthony.

This is a small act on our part compared to the enormity of the loss that this family has suffered, but we sincerely hope it provides some measure of relief, a little more sense of security, and demonstrates the respect we hold for Sergeant Musella and the legacy of service that he left behind.

I want to thank Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito for her support of this legislation. And now, I'd like us to hear from our sanitation commissioner, Kathryn Garcia.

[...]

**Mayor:** Thank you very much, Commissioner. Now I'd like to welcome the lead sponsor of the bill, Councilmember Daneek Miller.

[...]

**Mayor:** Well said. Well said. Okay. We're now going to sign this legislation. Let's gather round – Alessandra, please join us.

[...]

**Mayor:** Okay. Next, we have Intro 730, which strengthens our efforts to ensure fairness and safety in our public schools. Lead sponsor, Councilmember Vanessa Gibson, and cosponsor, Councilmember Corey Johnson – I thank them for their leadership.

I look at this legislation very personally. When I was a public school parent –which only ended in June, I’d like to say – I always wanted to know, and Chirlane always wanted to know, that Dante and Chiara were safe and that they were learning in a positive and supportive environment. I think parents in every part of this city seek that, and it’s our obligation to give them that peace of mind and give all our children that opportunity. And we know that our students with disciplinary issues often lack the skills – not the will – they often lack the skills to behave, meaning they have not been shown the right way to handle some of their challenges, and a right way to handle the challenging environment they are in.

We want to help instill those skills, those values in our children. We believe in adopting policies to get to the root causes of disciplinary problems. We’re working to lift up our children and lift up our schools, not to hold them down through overly harsh punishments that cause harm unto themselves.

Thankfully, there’s been some real progress in recent years. Overall crime in schools has decreased 29 percent since the 2011-2012 school year, compared to the school year that ended this last June. And disciplinary action, too – we’ve seen real progress: suspensions down by 36 percent; arrests by school safety division down 68 percent. So there is some real progress overall, but there’s some profound challenges still, including the real troubling disparities in the treatment of our students depending on race and their special needs status.

We’ve assembled an expert group – a leadership team on school climate and discipline that’s provided tremendous assistance to us in thinking about the kind of reforms and changes we need to make. I want to thank the members of the leadership team who are with us here today for the great work you’re doing, and for being so committed to our students.

They’ve recommended a number of ways to further improve our school climate, and Intro 730 is one of the team’s recommendations specifically. The bill requires new reporting, and greater transparency related to disciplinary measures. We’ll be able to better monitor where suspensions, arrests, and summonses are concentrated, so that we can target resources where they are most needed, to get, again, to the root causes. And we look forward to finding and eliminating inconsistencies and disparities in the punishment of students, ensuring that our school disciplinary practices are both equitable and effective.

This work will go hand in hand with a new focus on teaching social, emotional, and behavioral skills. We’ll be announcing some additional steps in this direction in the very near future. Our school communities are so profoundly important to us and obviously to the future of this city. Our children need to feel safe and supported in each and every neighborhood – in each and every ZIP code of this city.

I want to thank so many people who contributed to getting us to this point with this legislation, including Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito; our schools chancellor, Carmen Farina; our NYPD commissioner, Bill Bratton; the chair of the City Council Education Committee, Danny Dromm; and now, again, my honor to introduce the lead sponsor who also happens to be the chair of the Committee on Public Safety – Councilmember Vanessa Gibson.

[...]

**Mayor:** Thank you very, very much. And we are good to sign the bill into law.

[...]

**Mayor:** Now, we're going to talk about – hold the hearing portion of the procedure on legislation that will protect New Yorkers; that will protect the lives of New Yorkers; that will protect the quality of life of our fellow New Yorkers. And this is Intros. 917-A, 885, and 897; they're all part of the city's strong response to a new challenge – the spike of K-2 usage on our streets.

I want to thank the sponsor, Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, and fellow sponsors Councilmember Ruben Wills and Councilmember Dan Garodnick.

K-2 is poisoning so many of our fellow New Yorkers – it's as simple as that. Particularly some of our most vulnerable fellow New Yorkers – residents of some of our poorest neighborhoods; folks who have real challenges, like those who live in our homeless shelters; folks who are struggling with mental illness. This is a scourge that unfortunately has hit those who already had tremendous challenges.

We're using every public health tool, every law enforcement tool at hand for an aggressive response – shutting down the stores of those who sell K-2, connecting back to the sources, and making sure that people who are using K-2 have an opportunity to get treatment and support. And we've been focusing on the neighborhoods where the problem is most severe.

But we needed more. We needed additional tools to do this job effectively, and this legislation – these various pieces of legislation are really coming to the rescue of the people of this city.

This legislation criminalizes the manufacturer of K-2, the possession with intent to sell, and the sale of the drug. Selling K-2 will now be a misdemeanor punishable by up to a year in jail and up to \$15,000 in additional penalties. And the bills make selling K-2 the cause to suspend or revoke a business' license to sell cigarettes, thereby sending a clear message to smaller stores in our neighborhoods – neighborhood delis and bodegas which, unfortunately, in too many neighborhoods have been the common sale point for K-2. They want to stay open – the presence of K-2 will be a reason for them to be closed. And finally, the legislation allows restraining and closing orders to be issued against stores that repeatedly sell K-2 – so, a variety of tools that we've needed.

And all of these new laws send the same message: we won't tolerate K-2 in New York City. We're going to use every tool at our disposal to fight it, and to make it very clear to anyone who engages in criminal activity related to K-2 will be prosecuted.

And there's now real teeth in the laws. When these bills take effect, those who engage in these criminal activities will now be confronting the greatest police force in this country – the greatest police force on this Earth – with laws backing them up so they can do this enforcement work.

I want to thank so many people who helped get us to this day, including Commissioner Mary Bassett of the Department of Health; Liz Glazer, our Director of the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice; again, Speaker Mark-Viverito, Councilmember Garodnick, Councilmember Wills, Councilmember Cohen – all of them. And now, it is my pleasure to introduce someone who's been on the frontline already with the tools we have now, fighting this fight – our Commissioner for Consumer Affairs, Julie Menin.

[...]

**Mayor:** Thank you very much, Commissioner, and I know you will use these tools aggressively, as always. We thank you for that.

I'm just going to say a few words in Spanish. I want to emphasize that we have held the public hearing element of the procedure here today. There's going to be a separate bill signing ceremony coming up in the coming days. Obviously this is a – these bills are of great importance, and there's going to be a separate ceremony to highlight them.

Just a quick summation in Spanish of what we've done today –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, we thank everyone for being present. This concludes the hearing today, and thank you to all for helping us to bring all this legislation forward and take it into law.

Thank you very much.

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