

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 6, 2020, 10:00 AM
MEDIA CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Well, good morning, everybody. I hope everyone has a great holiday weekend. And New Yorkers deserved a holiday, deserved a chance to take it a little easier after everything we've been through. And what a beautiful weekend it was outside. And it is really an example of the fact that New Yorkers have a lot to be proud of, that there was so much to celebrate this weekend. And today, we are entering phase three, which is something else to celebrate, something you've earned by working so hard to get us to this day. But, at the same time, as we are celebrating how far we've come, we have to be real honest about some of the challenges we're facing. I always say, I think it's better to start with the bad news and then go to the good news. So, I want to talk about what happened this weekend. You know, we had a lot of people out there, very peacefully celebrating our nation's birthday and spending time together with family and friends, but we also saw too much violence this weekend. And this is something that we have a lot of work to do to address and is directly related to all the dislocation that's happened over these last four months with the coronavirus.

We particularly saw a concentration of shootings in Upper Manhattan, particularly in Harlem and Manhattan North command. This is something we have to double down on to address. And it's not because of one thing, let's be really clear. There's not one cause for something like this, there's a lot of different pieces. And, again, the fact that the court system is not working, the economy's not working, people have been pent up for months and months, so many issues underlying this challenge. But to address it, it's not just one answer either. It's going to take a lot of different pieces. Of course, it's going to take neighborhood policing, which has helped us get so far. We're going to have to double down on neighborhood policing efforts in Upper Manhattan. It will take the efforts of clergy and block associations and elected officials and civic groups and parents and the Cure Violence movement. We're going to need all hands on deck to address this issue. I'll be joining with community leaders and law enforcement leaders in Harlem via video conference today to focus every resource we have on addressing this issue. And we have to think about all of the tools we can bring to bear here, including how we deploy our police and the approaches they take, how we focus on young people and make sure we pull them away from the influences that are negative around them. We have a lot to do. But I can tell you something about the people of Harlem – the people of Harlem had been through a lot, and not just in the last four months, but over years and decades, and every single time they have fought back. I was up in Harlem on Friday, as we installed the Black lives matter mural. There's tremendous pride. There's tremendous energy in Harlem. There's history of people, making things happen for the better betterment of the community in Harlem, and we're going to see that again. We will never go back in this city and we're going to focus all our energies right now on addressing these issues in Upper Manhattan, and then many other issues beyond. Commissioner Shea, this morning, is meeting with the chief judge for the State and with the DA's for the five boroughs, working on how we all together confront gun violence, how we get the court system

restarted, how we have a truly coordinated effort to fight this back. And I've – I know, I know everyone can and will work together to address this issue.

We've all come together in this city many times before. And what we've done in these last months is particularly notable. This disease, this unseen enemy that threw us such an extraordinary challenge without a roadmap, trying to figure out together how we would fight it back. New Yorkers should be very proud of how far we have come. So now, let me turn to the good news that phase one of the restart has been successful so far. Phase two has been successful so far. Today, we begin phase three and we begin phase three because of the hard work you've all put in. And I'm always going to thank you for it, and then I'm always going to remind you to keep doing what you're doing. The social distancing works. The face coverings work. We have to stick with it. But today is a good day, because about 50,000 people will come back to work and start their livelihoods again. A whole range of personal services will be available again. And we're starting simultaneously a lot of recreation activities in our parks – basketball, handball, volleyball, bocce, all we'll be up and running again. Dog runs will be open again. It will be more of summer again, because we did this hard work to get this far and we cannot let up now.

And as a reminder of what happens when people let up – look around the country, look at the places that unfortunately did let up, that didn't stick to the smart rules, and they are suffering now. And I feel awful for them and I hope they all come out of it soon, but this is why we did not move forward with indoor dining, because we've seen that restaurants and bars, indoor dining caused so much of the resurgence in other states. So, that's something that will be on hold for a substantial amount of time until we can figure out the right way to do that safely.

Now, people are coming back to work and people are engaging their lives again in so many ways. And we see the evidence, which I'll go over with you. And look, it's incumbent upon all of us to make sure we do this safely. The City's going to keep working hard to make sure this has done safely. The MTA has been doing great work. We need them to keep doing it, because more and more people are coming back to the subways and buses. So, I'm going to compare this last Wednesday, July 1st to two weeks earlier, June 17th. And in that two-week phase, subway ridership up 18 percent – now, over 1.1 million riders a day. Bus ridership up 12 percent over the same period – now, also almost 1.1 million riders. Staten Island Ferry ridership up 15 percent – and that's why, starting today, we have gone back to the full rush-hour service that we had before the coronavirus hit. What's interesting is we do see more traffic into Manhattan on the East River Bridges and the Harlem River Bridges – three percent and seven percent, respectively – but very notably, mass transit usage is going up substantially faster than a car traffic, and that's in many ways a good thing and a good sign that people are feeling more and more comfortable and ready to engage. But, again, do it safely with the face coverings, with the social distancing, remembering how important it is to each other, to your family, to yourself, to stay safe.

Now, as we have moved ahead with outdoor restaurant seating, that's been huge success. We are not doing the indoors, as I said, but we've moved forward with the outdoor, and that's been a great success. People have really, really engaged it. Customers have come, the employees have come back to work. People have gotten their livelihoods back. Businesses have been saved. We've been very focused on making sure enforcement is strong at these restaurants that are now open, particularly on weekends, of course. So, we had 700 City personnel, including the Sheriff's Office out in full force over the July 4th weekend. And I just want to say, the Sheriff's Office has been doing tremendous work on many, many fronts. I want to thank the Sheriff and his whole

team. People don't know a lot about them, but what they're doing has been absolutely crucial to fighting back this virus and making sure this city is safe in so many ways. So, thank you, Sheriff, and your whole team. So, a huge number of personnel out where most of the bars and restaurants are – a thousand businesses were inspected this weekend. 85 percent were in immediate compliance. Those that needed to make adjustments, the inspector stayed until issues were addressed. Sometimes that meant moving tables farther apart or dispersing crowds. This is going to be the model from this point on, a huge number of personnel out, addressing issues. But what we see is, overwhelmingly, both the restaurant owners and the customers are doing the right thing. Sometimes people need some help, sometimes they need some reminders, but, overwhelmingly we're seeing people are doing the right thing. Now, the restaurants, outdoors, I said, huge success – over 7,000 restaurants now have the outdoor seating under the Open Restaurant Program. We are going to continue to work with those restaurants to make sure they are able to do a great job for their customers, but also stay safe. So, what we're doing from this point on – any new restaurant that applies not only we're going to do the self-certification, but we're going to have immediately a call from a City official the same day they self-certify to go over the safety rules, to make sure that we address all issues upfront so people know exactly what they have to do to stay safe. I know our restaurant owners want to do things the right way. Sometimes, some extra communication helps, so that's what we're going to do.

Okay. Let's go over today's indicators. And, again, we keep looking at the trend here. It is a really good trend because of your hard work. And please, remember, every day we see progress, it's because of you, but it's also a day to remember we've got to keep at it, because we want to keep reopening and we want to have life come back to as much as normal as possible in this city. We can only do it with your hard work. So, let's look at the indicators. Number one, daily number of people admitted to hospitals for suspected COVID-19, threshold of 200 – today, 62 patients. Number two, daily number of people in Health + Hospitals ICU's, threshold of 375 – today, 276, a hundred less, that's fantastic. And, most importantly, percentage of people testing citywide positive for COVID-19, threshold of 15 percent – and today, the lowest we have ever seen, one percent. So, that's fantastic.

Just to give you a little bit of extra appreciation for what you've all achieved at the height of this crisis, we had 850 people admitted to the hospital for some suspected COVID-19 in a single day. Compare that to the 62 we're reporting today. At the height, we had 71 percent testing positive – compare that to one percent today – a lot to be proud of.

A few words in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, we'll turn to our colleagues in the media. And please let me know the name and outlet of each journalist.

Moderator: Hi, all. Just a reminder that on the phone today, we have Commissioner Doris, Chief Monahan, Sheriff Fucito, and Senior Advisor, Dr. Varma. With that, I will start with Rich from WCBS 880.

Question: Hi there, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: Hey, Rich. How are you doing? How was your weekend?

Question: Well, it was terrific actually. And I didn't burn the hamburgers.

Mayor: There you go. I'm proud of you, Rich.

[Laughter]

Question: So, listen, I did want to ask about the shootings and how serious you see it. And also, if Chief Monahan can chime in about what he sees as the cause of these this uptick, if you will.

Mayor: Yeah. Rich, it's a very serious situation. And I've been talking about it for weeks now, we've been seeing some troubling signs we have to address very aggressively and with the whole community. So, there's no question that, as we're getting into warmer and warmer weather, and we're feeling the effects of people being cooped up for months, and the economy obviously has not restarted to anywhere the extent we needed to, so it there's a lot less for people to do – we have a real problem here. And I think profoundly the fact that our court system is not functioning and needs to function again, underlies all of this. We've got to get things back into gear, it's time to do it. So, we've got a huge problem. We take it very seriously. We also have the NYPD, which has proven itself time and time again, to be able to take on really difficult challenges. Even compared to just a few years ago, you saw even worse realities in this city. So, the NYPD has taken on those challenges, come up with new strategies, deployed personnel in a really smart fashion, and they're going to do it again. But the other thing I'd say, as we turn to the Chief, is, it has to be with the full participation of the community. And that's where I'm going to be working on today with leaders of the Harlem community. We need everyone to be part of the solution. Chief?

Chief of Department Terence Monahan, NYPD: Good morning. Thanks, Rich. When we look at it, as the Mayor said, there's a lot of different things going on. It's a combination of things – bail reform, COVID releases from prison, court shut down, [inaudible] Rikers at a half of where they were last year with a population. You know, I've said this before, the animosity towards police out there is tremendous. You know, just about everyone we deal with is looking to fight a police officer when we go to make an arrest. It is so vital that we get our communities coming together, supporting our cops, speaking off for the police officers that are out there. Their morale is low. You're looking at a lot of the rhetoric that's going out there, which is being done by a small minority of people, when the vast majority do support our police. And it's important that we reach out to our communities, through neighborhood policing, and get them on our side, let them know how they want their neighborhoods policed.

We have heavy quality of life issues throughout the city. We need to deal with our communities and see how they want us to deal with it. A lot of these quality life issues are what led us to be able to reduce crime by addressing these quality of life issues. So, we need to know from the communities how they want their neighborhoods, please. And, again, we've mentioned this insane diaphragm law that the City Council passed. It has our cops hesitant to enforce some of these quality of life issues. They are afraid, if they're making an arrest, that if their knee goes on the back of someone, that they are fighting their life or that they could be prosecuted – that's a problem. It makes our cops take that step back. It's only effective to New York City police officers and peace officers. It doesn't affect any other law enforcement agency within the city. It

is something that really has to be dealt with if we want to be able to move past this. So, it's a big issue to our cops. It's something that has to be dealt with. It's unacceptable the amount of violence that we had this weekend. It is something that we have to deal with, the guns that are on the street, and figure out new ways to get them, get them as they're walking out on the streets and make those arrests

Mayor: Go ahead, Rich.

Question: So, I'm just going to a different topic now. You know, the idea of excluding people from states where you know, COVID is very high – is anything, are there any real moves to enforce that? In other words, is there anything that the NYPD is doing, the Port Authority Police, or is this all sort of a theory at this point?

Mayor: No, Richard, it can't just be a theory. It's a great question. It has to come to life. Look, this is a new world for us to figure out, you know, on a regular basis, because we're going to be at this for a long time, how we are going to identify anyone who comes from around our own country. Originally, as you remember, when we were facing this, we all thought of this as something coming in from Europe, coming in from China. Now it is a question within our own country and we have to figure out a structure that works. It has to involve the Port Authority Police because they're in the best position to act on folks coming in through the airports, for example, but what I think would work – and we're going to work with the State on this – is to get from the State, the names and contact information of anyone that comes in from one of the states with the biggest problems, and then use our Test and Trace Corps to follow up with them the same day and make sure they understand the rules of quarantine, make sure they have everything they need to stay safe, and keep everyone else safe. So, no, this has to come alive and we're working on it right now, how to make it, like, a regular process that works every day.

Moderator: Next we have Shant from the Daily News.

Question: Good morning, everyone. I just wanted to drill in a little more on the claims that the chokehold bill, if I'm hearing correctly, bail reform, have anything to do with the weekend crime spike. I guess for one, are there any suspects or arrestees who may have been out on bail who otherwise wouldn't have been, or maybe Chief of Department Monahan thinks should have been on Rikers and also can someone spell out what the chokehold bill would have to do with the spate of shootings? I mean, how much of a hindrance is that? How does that directly spark, you know, the shootings that happened on the weekend?

Mayor: Yeah. Thank you, Shant. Look, I think we're talking about a couple of different things simultaneously here. I think, from my point of view, the most central issue of what's happening over this last weekend is the fact that the court system is not functioning, that when our police effectuate an arrest, they don't have the same follow through they're used to seeing from the court system. Again, that's why Commissioner Shea is working on that issue, as we speak right now. We've got to get the court system up and running. We've got to get the DAs doing their work so that we can address folks who are violent in communities and are causing harm to their neighbors. I think that's the most central issue here on top of everything else, all the other dislocations that have occurred with the coronavirus.

We can get you whatever information we have on what has happened as a result of the other issues that have affected the equation. But I think what's happened this weekend is for the biggest causes, which is the impact of the coronavirus. We all, regardless of what the root causes is in each case, we have to fight it back. And we are where we are, now it's a question of using all our resources as a city, working with communities to fight it back and get the help we need from the other levels of government to really turn the corner here. Go ahead, Shant.

Question: Yeah, Mayor, I'd love to hear from Terrence Monahan on this. I mean, just because you brought up the chokehold bill, chokeholds are such an offensive tactic to New Yorkers. The argument for the legislation was that it actually strengthens the NYPD. So, maybe, yeah, can you address exactly why that bill or how that bill contributed to the violence over the weekend? And can you say a little more about what's going on in police officers' minds in this climate of protest and reform? Thank you.

Mayor: And, just as we turn to the Chief – again, I don't think the Chief said that he thought the bill contributed to the violence this weekend. I think he was talking about the overall picture and his concerns about how we keep the city safe. So, Chief, I just wanted to frame for you because I didn't hear you say that, I heard you express your broad concerns, but go ahead.

Chief Monahan: Yeah. It's a very big concern about that bill. And it's not the chokehold, we don't have an issue with the chokehold portion of it. The issue we have is the compressing of the diaphragm, if your knee should go on someone's back during the course of an arrest. Anyone who's ever arrested anybody, who's fought and struggled, knows that there's a good chance that your knee may end up on someone's back during the course of a violent struggle and to criminalize that has a police officer concerned about whether or not he may be arrested for his knee going on the back. So, for us, it's the diaphragm portion of that. And we've expressed our feelings to everyone in the City Council. All the DAs have said that there were some problems with the law, the way it's worded. So, it's an issue that our cops are dealing with very strongly. There is some great concern.

As opposed to the idea of bail reform, COVID and courts being closed, it means a lot of different individuals are on the street that should not be on the street. And we have seen them involved in violence, later on today. Inspect – Chief Mike LiPetri will be given a briefing on the crime stats and he will be able to go over some of those numbers for you.

Moderator: Next, we have Juliet from 1010 Wins.

Question: Yes. Good morning, Mr. Mayor, how are you today?

Mayor: Good, Juliet. How you doing?

Question: I'm okay. According to the crime stats, June saw – the month of June – 250 people were shot in the first 28 days of the month, and that's compared to 97 during that same period last year. Where have you been this whole month on this issue? These shootings did not just happen this weekend.

Mayor: Yeah. Well, Juliet, if you'll remember over the last couple of weeks, I've been talking about this issue constantly right here. We have seen an uptick in shootings. It's very worrisome

and where – I don't accept it, we have to fight it back. And that's why we announced that we were moving officers – of course, Summer All Out was part of the strategy. We talked about that weeks ago, we talked about the fact that we're going to refocus resources on the Bronx and Brooklyn North, where we've seen profound problems. Now we see problems in Manhattan North. So, there'll be a focus there as well. A lot more redeployment of the officers from desk jobs, out into the field. We're going to use all the tools – CompStat, precision policing, and neighborhood policing to fight this back. We've had to fight things back before, we're going to fight this back again, but we can't do it alone. We need communities to be fully involved and we need the court system to be functioning to really turn the corner here.

Moderator: Juliet –

Question: Yes, I do have a follow up. Yes, I do. So, where is your message to people of New York to say, where there is crime, there are consequences?

Mayor: Yeah, there always are consequences for crime and that's the way it has to be. And Juliet, we have for now, seven years, fought back crime, lowered crime. We've done it working with communities and we've done it by addressing a whole range of problems and not laying them grow in our communities. Everything has been thrown off by the coronavirus. Let's be clear. People aren't going to work. People aren't going to school. Everything's been disrupted. And most notably our court system is not functioning and it has to, but the message is the same. We are going to fight crime wherever we find it. We fought back crime many a time before in the city successfully, there has to be consequences for folks who commit crime, particularly violent crime. We need the DAs to be more a part of that. We need the court system to work so we can ensure those consequences happen.

Moderator: Next, we have Gloria from NY1.

Question: Thank you. Mr. Mayor, I want to follow up because it just seems like there is a bit of a disagreement between you and the Chief, in addition to what some of the Police Commissioner said on our show this morning. They both seem to blame bail reform COVID releases from Rikers. I just want to know specifically if you do or do not agree with the Police Department's view on this. I hear that you are saying it's a confluence of all these different factors, but they seem to be specifically blaming bail reform and these COVID releases and the chokehold bill. So, can you just speak to the – there seems to be a real disagreement. We have leaders from Manhattan South last night, calling out for help. What's going on here in terms of leadership and really who is in charge?

Mayor: Yeah, Gloria respectfully we, all of us together, have been keeping the city safe now for seven years. So, let's just be a hundred percent clear. It's an extraordinarily difficult time in our city's history, it may be the single worst combination of crises New York City has ever faced. And yet everyone works together every day to address these issues. The City of New York didn't ask for the coronavirus to come here nor for our court system to be shut down. All the things that are affecting us are beyond anything any of us could ever have anticipated. So, we all work together every single day. There's a lot of frustration, Gloria, there's a tremendous amount of frustration. You can imagine for our police leadership and for our police officers, they're working so hard to keep people safe and then even when they arrest folks, they don't see the kind of results that they've seen historically because the system is not functioning. I understand that

frustration. It makes sense that people are going to express it, but I'm sorry, when you ask for a breakout, it's impossible to say which factor achieves which outcome it's everything together is having a really big impact, and we're all working together to see our way through it. That's the bottom line.

Question: Thank you. And if I could ask a different question – I wondered if the administration has at all taken a look on how beach openings one over the weekend in terms of how many people followed social distancing enforcement. What's the administration's take on how it went so far?

Mayor: Yeah, Gloria, I'll get you a more thorough answer. But so far the reports were pretty good. Obviously, a lot of people were really looking forward to the beaches opening. A lot of people came out. We didn't have particularly difficult enforcement issues that I heard about, but I'll check the facts from the last couple of days. My sense, again, is that overwhelmingly New Yorkers understand the rules and they want to follow the rules because they understand it's about their safety and their family's safety and their community's safety. And I think New Yorkers have been pretty amazing throughout. So, as we've dealt with other challenges, from what I've heard so far, the beach openings went really well.

Moderator: Next, we have Nolan from the Post.

Question: Hey, everybody, can you hear me?

Mayor: Yeah, Nolan, how you going?

Question: I'm well, Mr. Mayor. As lots of people have asked you about already, this has been the most violent June that we've seen in a good long while. Shootings are up more than 50 percent for the year, murders are up by more than a quarter. You again, today, append the uptick on the shutdown of the court system, in large part. I have this question from reporters [inaudible] they say there is still no detailed plan for tackling the surge. And, then secondly, you know, the Police Department has attributed a good chunk of this violence to reoffenders who are released from Rikers on COVID, on sort of COVID-related releases. How many of those people have been arrested?

Mayor: Yeah, Nolan. I don't have that fact available at my fingertips. We'll get it to you today. We were dealing of course, with a horrible health crisis. When you think about the months of March and April and particularly in a place where people were confined and we had to address those health issues. But at the same time, we focus all the time on safety. So I respect the reporters who cover the NYPD but the notion of there's no detailed plan, just doesn't ring true. The NYPD always has a detailed plan for addressing any challenge. And I want people to remember that. I understand we're going through a really, really tough time, and it's really picked up in recent weeks. But I don't lose faith in the ability of the NYPD to deal with the situation. I have seen the NYPD overcome much harder challenges. That is the truth. And of course they continued to refine their strategies. That's what they've been doing for the last quarter century. They will do it now. And we are going to be continuing to get more and more personnel out onto the streets where needed the most. And I know it will have an effect. We need the rest of the equation to restart, to really maximize the effect, but I have absolute faith that it will happen.

Question: And then the follow up on Gloria's question, Commissioner Shea went on NY1 this morning and blamed the chokehold legislation – which [inaudible] assigned in part for the uptick of the violence, saying that it's quote insane and it is crippling police officers. The NYPD is refusing to discipline officers who cooperate with the CCRB – who refuse to cooperate with the CCRB. Just hours ago, members of the brass excoriated the Manhattan District Attorney on Twitter, the budget deal that you agreed to with the City Council was described by your Police Commissioner as bowing to mob rule. So Mr. Mayor, who is running the department? And are you with the Commissioner making these statements about legislation you pledged to sign and about the budget deal you've struck?

Mayor: Yeah. Obviously, Nolan again, anytime respectfully, any of you attempt those kinds of questions, I'm just come back really calmly and tell you the obvious truth. This city has gone through so much in recent months and we keep fighting back. And we are making a lot of progress as a city. We've been through a whole lot over the decades, much worse crime situations than we're facing now for much longer periods of time. We fought our way back. It comes from first and foremost, civilian leadership, always working with the leadership of the NYPD to come up with solutions. That's what we're doing right now. So we absolutely, we constantly not only talk, we figure out plans together. That doesn't mean we agree on everything. And I respect that sometimes people need to express their frustrations because they are deep frustrations. They're working so hard to try and keep people safe and they feel there's some real challenges they are up against. I'm not going to tell people not to say what they feel about that. But in the end, we come to a common approach and we implement it. That's what we're going to do over these coming weeks. And we have to get communities deeply involved in that approach. That's always been a key in the past. That's why neighborhood policing was something we all created together and I think that's what's going to help us turn the corner.

Moderator: Next we have Andrew Siff from NBC.

Question: Hey, good morning, everybody. I don't know if you can hear me because I'm on a 7 train. So I'm going to give it a try.

Mayor: We can hear you, Andrew. You're live with the people.

Question: Yeah well 23 people on this train, and 22 of them are wearing a mask. I am wearing a mask.

Mayor: Say again, how many?

Question: 22 out of 23.

Mayor: Very good.

Question: My question has to do with phase three. Now that indoor dining is not a part of it, it's a very incremental phase. And we've already learned from the State that phase four won't include movie theaters and malls. So realistically Mayor, is what we're looking at right now today, the way New York City will be until there's a vaccine?

Mayor: No, I think that's an overstatement respectfully Andrew. I think it's a perfectly fair question, but I don't think that's the whole reality. We have a lot more to learn, to figure out how we're going to address this disease even before there is a vaccine. And look, we're seeing a lot of success so far, I'm knocking on wood. But we have seen obviously, I mean, I went over the indicators today. They're extraordinary and positive. And that says something about the ability of New Yorkers to fight this disease back without a vaccine. And you do see more and more people coming back to work. So I don't think it's, you know, one extreme or another. I think we're making steady progress. I want to see us keep making steady progress. The vaccine will be the absolute, you know, crossing the Rubicon moment. But I think we can make a lot of progress in the meantime.

Question: What would you need to see since you're already at these incredibly low data numbers, what would you need to see or need to know in order to open indoor dining?

Mayor: Yeah. Andrew, when you look at the fact that we got so much data from around the country, indicating that indoor dining, unfortunately, became a real nexus for infection, in a way that other types of economic activity weren't. It just made sense to stay away from it for now. Let's see what happens around the rest of the country. Let's see what happens with our situation. I don't have an immediate timeline now. It's a postponement while we get more information and we see how we do overall. But I want to make sure when we do it that we're sure we can do it safely.

Moderator: Last two for today. Next we have Todd from AM New York.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: Hey Todd, how you doing?

Question: I'm doing just fine. Well, I've been out on the street and I've been talking to a lot of people in the communities. One of the things that came out for me was that – was one woman said to me, she said, you know, everybody's been locked up for a long time. The COVID thing, they're angry. They have no job. They have no school. And, and then you mix in the Rikers people who are in their community and you add in people who are not getting arrested or they're getting arrested and getting released. And she said to me, you know what? It's like letting a Rottweiler off the leash. What do you say to that woman?

Mayor: I think we've been, Todd – we've been dealt a really, really tough hand as a city. And in March and April, it was the health care crisis. In May, we were coming out of it, obviously with the warmer months and as you're right, people were cooped up for all that time. They don't have the normal things to engage their life. We're seeing more and more challenges. But we're going to overcome it. It's going to be tough. It's going to take a lot of hard work, but we're going to overcome it. We have overcome this and much more in the past in terms of dealing with challenges in our communities and having to fight them back. So I know it feels very unsettling for people. It feels unsettling for all of us, but we're going to fight it back.

Moderator: Todd, do you have a follow up?

Question: Yeah. something unrelated. I was down at Coney Island over the weekend and my friend over there, at the Wonder Wheel who says his ride is the most socially distant that you can get. And he says that the City just won't let him reopen. He understands about the other rides and that they may not be socially distant, but he's like, wait a second. They can get on the Wonder Wheel. What do you say?

Mayor: Yeah. It's a fair question. We understand and look, the State rules have been, I think very smart about thinking through the phases and about avoiding things that might create too much closeness with people. And obviously you can understand why amusement parks might be in that category. But he makes a good point that the Wonder Wheel is different and certain pieces of it are different. And so we need to look at the whole thing. So that's a very fair point. And I love Coney Island deeply, and I want to see people there continue to do all the things they've done and keep Coney Island alive. So we'll pursue that with the State to see if there's some way to find the appropriate balance and see what can and cannot open.

Moderator: Last one for today. We have Jeff Mays from the New York Times.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor. I have a couple of questions for my law enforcement colleagues. The first one is the NYPD has been making the same claims about what's driving shootings and crime for weeks now, especially in regards to the bail reform, as we heard the Chief just say. But officials the police officials, the Commissioner, the Chief himself have not provided any hard data or evidence to show how those factors are at play. Why is that? And should they still be making those claims if you and City officials have not provided any evidence as to that being the cause of the crime increase?

Mayor: Jeff look, I'll certainly – the NYPD if they have specific statistics, they should share it obviously. And we'll make sure that whatever's available will be given to you and others. The bail reform, remember there were concerns from the beginning and a lot of those concerns got addressed last April in the legislation in Albany. There were things that happened in the meantime though that certainly contributed. But again, I think the overall reality has to be recognized here. This is not business as usual. When have we ever had the court system shut down? When have we ever had people have no work, no school, no nothing to go to. I mean, this is a really, really exceptional situation. So in terms of trying to pull the pieces together, I don't know how much you can say, well, this piece happened for this reason. This piece happened for another reason. Whatever statistics we have will provide. But I think there's also the reality of people are unsettled by all the dislocation. I think our officers are feeling the effects of so many things happening around them. And I think what the Chief said was important. We got to re-bond the relationship between our officers and our communities. That's what neighborhood policing was doing all the way up to the coronavirus. And we've got to get back to that. It worked, we've got to do it again. We've got to deepen it.

Question: And this question also, if the Chief could address it as well, shooting clearances have fallen almost half in Brooklyn?

Mayor: Jeff, say again? I couldn't hear your beginning.

Question: I'm sorry. Shooting clearances have fallen by half. And in parts of Brooklyn, it's as low as ten percent. And at the same time shootings have been increasing each of the last ten

weeks. And there was some concern from officials about whether police are conducting a slowdown and whether the NYPD is not doing as much as they normally do, because they want to show that they are necessary and sort of address some of the criticisms they've been receiving in this past week? I'm wondering if, if yourself and the Chief can respond to that?

Mayor: I'll start and turn to the Chief. Jeff, first of all, I know our officers are out there doing the hard work, and I know they're out there getting criminals off the streets and guns off the streets. But again, against a backdrop where there isn't enough follow through by the rest of the system. And I know it's hard. Let me, let me hasten to say for everyone in the court system, the DA's office, they're dealing with a lot of challenges too. But we've all got to work it through together, which is exactly what Commissioner Shea is doing as we speak now, trying to figure out what's going to get this whole thing restarted energetically. Because it has to. Particularly as our health care situation has gotten better. So I want to say if any one of us were an officer out there doing the work and then not seeing the follow through, that's a real challenge, but I still see our officers doing the hard work every single day. Go ahead, Chief.

Chief Monahan: Absolutely not. Our guys are not slowing down. The investigations are moving along and it takes time. A shooting investigation, a homicide investigation doesn't happen overnight. As the year progresses you see that number of arrest clearance rate go higher and higher as the year goes on into next year. Plus we never stop investigating a shooting. We have numerous individuals who we are ready to indict on shootings that we are waiting for the court system to open up so we can present the evidence to a grand jury. So that has slowed us down on getting some of the clearances. But absolutely our detectives are out there each and every day, working on these shootings, making arrests. We have quite a few individuals we've identified that we are in the process of finding right now to bring to justice.

Mayor: Thank you, Chief. So let me conclude today, very simple message. We will not go back. When it comes to our health care reality, the Coronavirus, we will not go back. We went through the worst in the nation in March, in April, we fought our way from that to now being a place that people all over the country are looking to as the example of how to deal with this disease. We're going to stick to what has worked. We will not go back. We will not go back when it comes to crime, we're going through a rough patch. There's no doubt. We're going to have to fight it back. But I remember what things were like in this town in the 1990's. I remember how hard it was to fight our way back and become the safest big city in America. We're going to keep that title. We're going to work with communities, police and community together. We're going to fight it back. We will not go back and that's the work we will do together in New York City. Thanks very much, everyone.

###