



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
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OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO PRESENTS 2018 STATE OF THE CITY

Announcer: Ladies and gentlemen, please find a seat. Our program will begin shortly. Ladies and gentlemen, please silence your cell phones, the speaking program is about to begin. Please welcome, Tyler Bates, general manager for Kings Theatre.

Tyler Bates: Hello, thank you all for being here tonight. I'm very proud to be standing in front of you welcoming you all to the historic Kings Theatre. We are honored to host the State of the City tonight and are honored to have Bill de Blasio on our stage tonight. Since opening three years ago, Kings Theatre had provided many events for audiences from around the world. As the crown jewel in Brooklyn, we continue to host events to bring people together. With the variety of gatherings we've had at Kings, what we value the most are those that service our community. From Thanksgiving dinner, the State of the City address amongst many others, we are proud to be part of Flatbush and greater New York community. I would like to take this moment to thank Mayor de Blasio and his constituents to Kings Theatre for continuously showing support for the arts. Thank you again for joining us for what will undoubtedly be a memorable evening here at Kings Theater. Thank you.

[Applause]

Announcer: Please welcome the Celia Cruz Bronx high school chorus, performing God bless America.

[Applause]

[Choir sings]

Announcer: Please welcome Bishop Annette Rose, Imam Ahmed Dewidar, Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser and Bishop Angelo Rosario for our invocation.

[Applause]

Bishop Annette Rose: Good evening ladies and gentlemen.

Audience: Good evening.

Bishop Rose: I want you to join with me as we invite the presence of God here this evening. Heavenly father, we come before you this evening recognizing your sovereignty, at this great vocation and we thank you for your protection over this city. In spite of everything that we have been through as a nation, we are keenly aware that if it was not for your grace and mercy we would have been destroyed. Indeed, you have been good to us.

As we gather here with your designated person, Mayor Bill de Blasio, who is about to give his State of the City Address, we ask heavenly father for your guidance. Dear Lord, that you would give him the wisdom to make the right decisions for the citizens of this city. Today, we pray for the peace and the prosperity of New York, that it would be indeed like a tree planted by the rivers of water bringing forth fruits in its season. Heavenly Father, bless this great metropolis, the mayor and his family, all New York State officials and the ecumenical clergy, cause to us work together as one for the good of your people. Give to us the spirits of the sons of Ishika, whom you bless with the ability to discern the times and to strategize accordingly. Let there be love and unity among us, as we embrace and forge toward forward into the future together. May we be one nation under God with liberty and justice for all. And Heavenly Father, may our doors always be open to all those who are in need, this we ask in the name of the Lord and we all say amen.

Audience: Amen.

Imam Ahmed Dewidar: Salaam, your Honor, Mayor de Blasio and all who are a symbol here, today we are gathered here as representatives of diverse faiths, community believes and our beloved, the city of the cities, the City of New York. By standing together, we are maximizing the chance to reach almighty God, as simply we may call him Hudah, Dios, God, Dar, Jehovah, Yahweh, Ileoileal or Allah, but we all heed the same God. We come to you almighty today to ask for our sin and our beautiful hilarity, our country to prosper, to bless all our activities to guide our leaders to the right path. The guidance of our individual faiths and political views, to line our hearts and empty our hearts from any kind of emotional disturbance and to labor us to shape our differences and to build our beautiful city, the city of diverse, the city of languages, the city of arts, the city of religions, the city of the cities of the City of the world and of the leadership of our beloved Mayor Bill de Blasio.

I'm inviting all faith leaders by the end of this week in all temples, churches, mosques and other places of worship, on the day of their main weekly prayer to pray for peace, security, tranquility and prosperity for our beautiful America and for our beloved city, the City of the cities, the city of New York. Thank you.

[Applause]

Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser: We pray that you almighty bless and protect Mayor Bill de Blasio, and show him through all evil, grant him the wisdom and understanding in strength and goodness and good health to lead us in righteousness and truth. May God bless First Lady Chirlane

McCray, the leaders of the City Council, the State representatives, the commissioners, all the elected officials, New York's finest, our Police Department are New York's bravest, our Fire Department who put their lives every day in harm's way for our benefit. May God also bless the United States armed forces, who have our back each and every day. Help us vanquish the dark forces of evil of inequity, oppression, of violence and endow us with great strength to create the right world order in which the glorious banner of brotherhood and love will wave over the homes of all your children. In New York there are over 800 languages spoken by significant portion of our population. It's the most linguistically diverse city in the entire world. It's a city in which the great religions, in which the great people from all faiths gather together in unity to celebrate the years of Mayor de Blasio, and in fact Mayor de Blasio himself believes that all New Yorkers deserve a chance to succeed in the greatest city on earth.

I was going on East 87th driving one night late and it was near Third Avenue and I came to a stop light. All of a sudden there's a guy that came out, I think you call him a panhandler. I'm not sure whether it's legal or not legal. But he stopped in front and I slowed down. All of a sudden he holds up a sign and I take a look at it. The sign says, "What is the greatest nation in the world?" Then he turns the sign over and it says, "Donation."

[Laughter]

I tell you one thing, he got a good donation from me.

[Laughter]

The truth is, what the Mayor is calling on all of us to do is to stand up and be counted, to help the poor, to stand for the oppressed, to speak out against injustice, to aid the vulnerable, the marginalized to reach out to the immigrants, our brothers and sisters and to love all of God's children. To quote the ancient prophet [inaudible] "And for you who revere my name, a sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings." May God bless everyone here. Honorable David Dinkins, may God bless you.

[Applause]

All my other good friends, Mr. DA, I didn't forget you.

[Laughter]

May God bless the honorable Bill de Blasio and may we have a year of great health, of great progress and great success.

Thank you.

[Applause]

Bishop Angelo Rosario: He made us so wonderfully – made with all colors, all shapes, all heights and different weights.

[Laughter]

And we thanked him for all he has done and with a he continues to do, how he created us so that we can become one people, one race, all the human race, a race that he loves so much that he gave his only begotten son. Not one religion, one denominations, so that we can become family all over again. He sent the blessed of heaven down to either and he also gave us the government of heaven with all the holy teaching of the angels in care of cherubs so we can be blessed

[Bishop Rosario speaks in Spanish]

God has chosen the Senate Assembly, the Mayor, has chosen all to make one great nation under God, a God that has no denominations, a God that doesn't have a religion, a God that has children and tells us to love, love one another. That's where the peace of great is so great. That we have a power to make a difference –

[Bishop Rosario speaks in Spanish]

That he wants to bless us –

[Applause]

And unite us in one people in the greatest nation that we have ever lived in the melting pot of the world.

[Bishop Rosario speaks in Spanish]

Shalom. I said that because they told me to speak Spanish, but I know most of you can't speak Spanish.

[Laughter]

And my borough president from the Bronx, he speaks 36 languages and nobody knows. He speaks Puerto Rican, he speaks Spanish, he speaks Mexican, he speaks Cuban.

[Laughter]

I say with that may the peace of the Lord be with each and every one of us, let the presence of guide unite us and make the greatest city in his holy name, peace and blessings to each and every one of you.

[Applause]

[...]

Announcer: Please welcome Walter Logan to introduce the First Lady of New York City.

Walter Logan: Good evening. As a transgender activist of color, I find inspiration in the bravery of others like me who have answered the call to activism.

[Applause]

At a young age I answered my personal calling to raise awareness about gender equity, mental illness, trans-phobia and more. As a result of my work, I've learned to appreciate those who do their part to uplift and empower those they serve. Chirlane McCray embodies the spirit of selfless service that changes lives. Through her various initiatives, including ThriveNYC, she has paved the way for new discussions about important issues in New York City. As we prepare to hear about our city's accomplishments over the last year, it's important that we also celebrate one of our city's most passionate leaders. She's an activist, a force for meaningful change, and our First Lady. Please welcome Chirlane McCray.

[Applause]

First Lady Chirlane McCray: Good evening, everyone.

Audience: Good evening.

First Lady McCray: *Buenos noches a todos.* Thank you so much, Walter. Being an activist for other young people is powerful and essential for the survival of our democracy. Can everyone please show Walter some more appreciation?

[Applause]

You know, young people like Walter are coming of age at a very special time in New York City's history. Never before has our city government been so representative of the people it serves. There are more women and more people of color in senior leadership, more policies that put people and families first and more services that reach all New Yorkers. Together, we made New York the biggest, the safest big city in America.

[Applause]

And we're well on our way to becoming the very best big city as well, the privacy, the unity project, the domestic violence task force, our women at Riker's effort and through the Mayor's Fund we are creating more jobs and support for young people, helping more immigrants on the road to citizenship, strengthening families and reaching hundreds of thousands of people with the behavioral health services they need and when our people are threatened by corporate greed, cruel federal policies or unabashed hate, we are a city unafraid to take a stand.

[Applause].

In the midst of a deadly opioid epidemic, we are fighting to save lives with all we've got and holding Big Pharma accountable for the lives they destroyed. And the streets we march in and

the booths we vote in, New Yorkers has fought to protect health care and women's rights, defend our immigrant brothers and sisters and preserve our democracy. Something special is happening in New York City. Can you feel it?

Audience: Yeah.

First Lady McCray: I said, can you feel it?

Audience: Yes!

First Lady McCray: Can you feel it?

Audience: Yes!

First Lady McCray: As the Trump white house has everyone and everything they deem different or unworthy, our City of dreamers and strivers, 8.5 million-strong is a light that illuminates a better way forward. With giant acts of resistance and small acts of kindness, New York city showing the world what we stand for. We are all in this together. We are all one family.

[First Lady McCray speaks in Spanish]

And that means the challenges felt by one group are shared by all of us. They may not be felt equally, but they are shared all the same.

When children suffer from mental illness that goes unaddressed at home and school, they struggle to learn. Left untreated, their illness gets worse. Over time, it effects their relationships with the people around them and hinders their ability to lead a happy and successful life.

When people abused by their intimate partners, the damage goes beyond broken skin and broken bones. There are broken families and broken spirits too. When LGBTQ teenagers are forced out of their homes, they must fend for themselves for food and shelter and live without the loving support of the only family and community they've ever known. When mothers are locked behind bars their children suffer that punishment, too. One of life's most sacred bonds is ruptured. Emotional and academic growth is impaired. And, too often, these children become part of the vicious cycle of incarceration, a cycle of our own making. Together we are taking on all of these challenges. We know the state of our city cannot be separated from the health and well-being of all of our communities. We know our city cannot prosper and thrive if we leave anyone behind. So many of you share our vision. You've been part of this journey over the past four years, and we thank you.

Bill and I, and everyone in this administration are so proud to work alongside you, and we have four more years to go. Yes.

[Applause]

We have four more years to go further, move faster and do more, but first let's take a look at what we've achieved together. We are the safest big city in America and look forward to holding that title for years to come, but I have another hope for this city. I want us to be the fairest big city in America and I know we can do it because we are called in a time of vast overt disparities, to do something different, to be something better.

[...]

Announcer: Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Mayor Bill de Blasio.

[Applause]

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Thank you, everyone. Well, everybody, welcome to the beautiful Kings Theatre in the great borough of Brooklyn.

[Applause]

Isn't this place amazing? And welcome to everyone watching at home this is a time of year we gather to think about this place we love.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

We are all here together as New Yorkers and we feel so deeply about our city. And I have so much I'm thankful for and, first and foremost I'm thankful for my partner in all I do, our First Lady, Chirlane McCray.

[Applause]

I want to welcome and thank the elected leaders of this city. I want to thank Council Speaker Corey Johnson; Public Advocate Letitia James; Comptroller Scott Stringer; all of the borough presidents; and a special shout out to my special Chairman Adams, Brooklyn, the district attorneys, members of Congress, the State legislators and the members of the City Council, let's thank them all for what they do for this city.

And my deep, deep thanks to a man who has served us all so well, Mayor David Dinkins.

[Applause]

Now we have some other very important public servants with us tonight, but their names are not so well-known. However, every day they make a huge difference in this city. And they work at dozens of city agencies making life better for all of us. You'll find their names in your program this evening and if you look in there when you get a chance you will see some incredible stories, people who have made a real difference. There are a few I want to highlight tonight that stand out to me, and the first, this is really something amazing to me, a good man named Joe Caggiano from Staten Island. Joe, where are you? Stand up. I know you're out there, Joe.

[Applause]

Joe is the oldest active duty uniformed employee in all of New York City.

[Applause]

He has made sure that New York City's trash is picked up for the last 52 years.

[Applause]

They don't call them New York's strongest for nothing do, they Joe? The next person I want to highlight is very personal to me, Detective Leo Pereyra – he's got his cheering section there – a 21-year veteran of the NYPD who serves on my security detail. Leo was off-duty some weeks ago and he was waiting for the E train in midtown and he heard screaming down the platform. A woman had jumped on to the tracks. Leo without hesitation ran to where he saw a crowd form and he jumped on the tracks as well to save her life. He made sure she was safe, he made sure she was on land, and he's devoted to the people of this city every day. Let's thank Leo.

[Applause]

Next I want to honor one of New York's boldest who can't be with us tonight, Department of Correction Officer Jean Souffrant

[Applause]

He is as we speak recovering from a terrible attack that he suffered just days ago while working on Rikers Island. I spoke to him and his family on Sunday morning and this is the measure of our public servants, even with everything that he was going through, his concern and the concern of his family was for his fellow officers. I made it clear to him and to his family that we will hold those responsible for this heinous attack fully accountable and we will take the actions necessary to protect our brave correction officers who do so much for us.

[Applause]

We will not allow our Correction officers to be assaulted, period.

[Applause]

There is something else I want to tell you about Jean, Jean is a proud immigrant from Haiti, he lives in Crown Heights, Brooklyn.

He made a tough choice to protect his fellow New Yorkers, even though our president has denigrated Jean's homeland. I want to thank the entire Haitian community. That community gave us Jean, and so many others who contribute so much to this city.

[Applause]

Now, I want to tell you another story, I want to take you back to the afternoon of Halloween last year, and you may remember that it started like any other Halloween, a day families look forward to and kids and parents were preparing for tonight's festivities and in the middle of all that something shocking and something terrible happened. A person filled with evil and hatred tried to strike the heart of this city. Driving down a bike lane on Westside highway he took eight lives and left a dozen more injured. Let's remember something important, that attack came out of nowhere. It could have been much worse if it weren't for Police Officer Ryan Nash.

[Applause]

When the perpetrator jumped out of the van he was driving, Ryan acted quickly and selflessly and ended the threat. Ryan, we all want to thank you.

[Applause].

And I want to salute all the officers who in that moment stepped up and addressed the threat alongside Ryan, from the NYPD officers John Hasiotis, Michael Welsome and Kevin McGinn

[Applause]

From the FDNY, EMT's Anthony Fracchiolla and Jin Huan; and from the Parks Department Enforcement Patrol, Captain Luz Carrion.

They all showed us what our city was made of when they ran toward the danger. And then that night, 2 million New Yorkers made a statement, they came out to the annual Halloween parade in Greenwich Village. They were not deterred, they were not scared and they sent this powerful message to the entire world, New York City, we will not be intimidated and we will not change.

[Applause]

There's one more story I have to tell and it has a painful ending. One night last December a deadly fire broke out in the Bronx and the call came in at 6:51 p.m. The first engine arrived on the scene three minutes later. They were freezing temperatures, they were gusting winds that made fighting a difficult fire that much harder. That didn't stop the brave New Yorkers of Engine 88, Ladder 38. They were the first on the scene and other FDNY units came and joined them to save lives and they all had some help that night from someone who epitomizes what it means to take care of their neighbors, Army private Emmanuel Mensah who emigrated from Ghana five years ago. He was home on leave in that apartment building when the fire broke out. With true New York guts he ran into the fire not once, not twice, but three times to save his neighbors.

[Applause]

Tragically, he did not emerge the last time. His family is here with us tonight, including his father and his sister and three of his cousins and I want us to let them know that we are all their family now.

[Applause]

We have so many heroes assembled with us, have done things that you saw in the papers and things that you'll never read about, except independent pamphlet we gave out tonight.

[Laughter]

Let's applaud all the people who make New York City great every single day.

[Applause].

Three years, 10 months and 15 days, that's how long this administration has to insure that we become the Fairest Big City in America. And we will take on that mission and we will do it with speed and we'll do it with urgency. We do this to ensure a better life for all 8.5 million of us. We do this to preserve the social fabric of the most diverse place on earth. We do this to insure that we're always a place for everyone, that magical openness that has made New York City great is always protected. But we also do this to guard against the threats to our democracy that are growing across this nation. It's our mission to define what a fair and just society looks like, to show it through our deeds and in our everyday lives. To take that quintessentially American egalitarian spirit and make it come alive again. We have to be the keepers of that flame. We have to ask ourselves, if not here, where? We, in fact, have to be the antidote to the sickness that is gripping our nation.

This evening I will paint you a picture of where New York city going and what we need to achieve together, and I hope to make clear what being the Fairest Big City in America means, and I will propose a series of measures that I believe are needed to protect and reinforce our battered democracy. And here is why those pieces go together, because we can't create a more just society if we don't confront the decline of democracy, that we're experiencing in the city and the state, all over this nation. And, equally, we can't afford to become a pseudo democracy because of unsustainable and growing inequality. There is a point at which extreme inequality makes a mockery of a democratic society. That point, sadly, is not too far away. So, let me take you to the task at hand, becoming the Fairest Big City in America. The video you saw gave you the flavor of some of the steps we've taken so far what they mean to the people of this city and when you came in this evening, you were handed this booklet, which conveniently is titled, "The Fairest Big City in America."

This booklet is a simple, straightforward game plan of what we intend to do this year and the years ahead. This is the kind of goal we can all unify around. This is the kind of goal that matters to everyone in this city. 12 points, let me go over them with you.

Number one, how do we become the Fairest Big City in America? By listening to the voices of the people. Nothing comes through louder and clearer, and, yes, we New Yorkers are loud,

nothing comes through more than that daily demand for fairness. New Yorkers aren't afraid of tough challenges. But we want the rules of the game to be fair. So my mandate entire administration is this, make every decision whether about a policy or a judgement, make every decision with this simple question in mind, will this action help make us the Fairest Big City in America? And then apply these decisions with urgency and energy.

Number two, we are going to make the safest big city in America even safer. That's something New Yorkers can do, because we never stop when we achieve something great. We keep going and we're going prove once again that safety and fairness walk hand in hand in this city. Nothing defines the relationship between a society and its people more than how they are policed. If policing is fair it makes fairness possible in all aspects of life, and that's what we have to insure. So here's the formula –

We'll extend and deeper neighborhood policing, which you saw so beautifully portrayed in the video. We'll keep crime low, while keeping arrests low as well. We'll use policing, precision policing strategies to focus on the worst crime and the worst problems and we'll create more trust and accountability by having body cameras on all of our patrol officers by the end of this year.

[Applause]

The beauty of this approach is it keeps getting better year by year. The more we heal the wounds of the past the deeper the bonds become between police and community and the further we go. Number three, now is time to do something great. Now, it's time for 3-K for All.

[Applause]

Thanks to so many people thin room, Pre-K for All is already a reality in this city, and it's been a huge success. And let's applaud the parents and the educators and everyone who helped make pre-K happen.

[Applause]

Again, we're New Yorkers so we choose something great and then it's time to go farther. We're on a very aggressive past to doing something that no major American city has ever done before, providing a great early childhood education for every three year-old for free, that's going make a difference in the city.

[Applause]

Let me explain why this is so essential to a fair and just society, and I'll frame it with a blunt and basic fact. We are dealing with the memories of education that go back to the historical sin and contradictions of our nation. We face an achievement gap today that is rooted in the enslavement of Americans and the pervasive discrimination against people of color over centuries. We know exactly where the problem comes from, but to defeat structural racism and to overcome this achievement gap, we have to flip the script. We have to do something different when it comes to

education, because in truth, we started educating children too late in their development and that exacerbate inequalities already baked into their lives at an early age.

Now reaching all four year olds is a major step forward, but reaching all three year olds will be seismic, huge and lasting impact on the children and their families in this whole city. We will reach all of our children by 2021, and we'll tap into their potential far more than we ever have before and this is one of the most basic building blocks of fairness.

And when I say, fairness, I want you to know that is the animating spirit for our equity and excellence vision for our schools. The simplest way to boil it down is this, we can no longer tolerate a status quo in which there are perceived good schools, Quote, Unquote good schools and Quote, Unquote bad schools depending on where you live. No city in the 21st century can call itself fair, no city can call itself truly great so long as that horrible bifurcated reality exists. So we're taking this challenge head on. Early childhood education is a beginning, but there's so much more to do and we have to move fast. In the coming weeks I will speak to the people of this city about our next big equity in excellence goal, increasing the number of children reading on grade level by third grade.

[Applause]

This is the watershed measure of a child's educational potential and this is where we will make our stand as a city, and I will ask all New Yorkers to join in this effort, our educators and our parents and our community organizations, and our businesses and the faith community this

Number four – and this is one I know everyone can relate to – in the few months the biggest affordable housing plan in the history of New York City got even bigger. When it comes to fighting income and inequality and creating fairness in our everyday lives, nothing is more important than affordable housing. It's not just that this is the number one expense for every family and that the costs of housing defines whether you can live a decent life or not in this city. It's also about a basic question of fairness. Will the people who built this city, the people who were here in good times and bad, will they get to stay in the city they love?

Well, here's how I see it, every time a family is saved from an illegal eviction, every time a family gets their apartment preserved at affordable rent, every time a family moves into one of our new affordable buildings, it's another step towards becoming the Fairest Big City in America. And we will reach more New Yorkers in the next four years than ever before in our history. So they can be New Yorkers for a long time to come.

[Applause]

There's another good way to make sure New Yorkers can afford the city they love, give them better paying jobs.

[Applause]

Now, let me make it clear, I've worked with so many of you in this room. I want to thank the elected officials who are here and so many activists and community leaders, we've all worked together in this city to raise the floor for working people to make sure we have a higher minimum wage and better benefits like paid sick leave and paid family leave, but now we need to go further. A truly just society constantly tries to share the wealth, to do what a slogan from the progressive era of a hundred years ago called for, a very simple slogan, it says, "Pass prosperity around." Well, as this city become more prosperous, we have more jobs than at any other time in our history right that the moment in the city, but we need to get better-paying jobs in the hands of New Yorkers.

[Applause]

There are 700,000 jobs that pay \$50,000 or more and to target them to the residents of all five boroughs is our goal. It means a better quality of life for their families. This alone will reach over a quarter million New Yorkers. These are the things we need to do to make a difference in this city.

Number six, a fair future for our children hinges on protecting our city from the danger of global warming. When you think about your children, you think about your grandchildren, this issue comes into very sharp focus. This is one of the clearest examples of how we and other cities and states need to be the antidote to broken policies in Washington.

[Applause]

When President Trump renounced the Paris agreement, New York City was in the vanguard of a movement that now totals over 300 American cities.

[Applause]

And we are taking matters into our own hands. We understand clearly we have to protect our own people from global warming when our national government fails to do so, and we have to aim higher than ever before. So we're going speed up. You're going to see more buildings required to cut their emissions. You're going see more electric vehicle charging stations around the city. You're going see an all-electric city car fleet, you're going see things that make clear we are not going to ignore this crisis, we're going to address it ourselves.

[Applause]

And while we take positive steps to protect our earth, we're also going after the big corporations that caused this mess to begin with.

[Applause]

Now, my thanks to our Comptroller and our Public Advocate who have been shoulder to shoulder in this effort.

[Applause]

New York City will divest \$5 billion in pension fund investments from fossil fuel companies. \$5 billion tends to get people's attention. And, we are suing five of the biggest petroleum companies to win back money we need to protect our people from the impact of climate change.

[Applause].

Number seven, there are some big fights ahead in Albany and in Washington and New York City will help to lead the way. Starting in 2018 and for the next four years in Albany we will fight for something that should have happened a long time ago, full funding for our schools under the campaign for fiscal equity ruling.

[Applause]

My friends, we are not letting up on this mission. We will make common cause with cities and with rural areas around our state that have been waiting for justice just as long as we have. And, we'll go to Albany to address something that I guarantee you is on the minds of every New Yorker, the crisis in our subways.

[Applause]

Like it or not, only Albany can pass the legislation that can end this crisis. Now, I'll tell you where I stand, particularly in light of the biggest give-away to the wealthy and corporations in our history, the Trump tax plan, I think we should redouble our efforts for millionaires tax.

[Applause]

And the millionaire's tax would allow us to fix our subway and to fund the fair fare proposal, half price metro cards for low income New Yorkers.

[Applause]

So this will always be my goal. Progressive taxation is always what I will fight for, but I also want to be clear to everyone else working on this issue, I will sit down with leaders in Albany anytime, anywhere, to find a solution to the subway crisis. I have only one condition, the money raised in New York City stays in New York City.

[Applause]

As New Yorkers, how do I but it gently, we're nobody's fools. So we need to guarantee the lock box. We need to know the money that is raised will fund improvements to subways and buses in the five boroughs, period.

[Applause].

Now let's turn our gaze to Washington, not always easy to do. In Washington, we are fighting right now for fairness for 30,000 New Yorkers and 700,000 Americans who are crucial to our future, and they are our dreamers.

[Applause].

In Washington we will fight for real infrastructure planning with ample federal dollars so we can fix what's broken and build the economy of the future. But, again, we're nobody's fools, and I assure you we will not fall for privatization schemes that enrich the few and achieve little.

[Applause]

One thing we should look forward to doing, one day, one day pretty soon, after an election, or maybe two elections, we will fight to rescind the Trump giveaways to the wealthy and the big corporations.

[Applause]

And to return our nation to the tradition of progressive taxation that made us strong to begin with. It's as simple as this, we will not rest until the one-percent pay their fair share in taxes.

[Applause]

Number eight, we will fight the opioid epidemic. We will fight the opioid epidemic with the same zeal, the same intensity of which we've taken on homicides and traffic fatalities. Look, it took years of hard work. Our good men and women of the NYPD, neighborhood partners, the Cure Violence movement and so many others, last year, last year homicides were at their lowest level since 1951 in this city.

[Applause]

And it's taken a lot of creativity and some very tough choices. But last year traffic fatalities were at the lowest level in over a century in this city.

[Applause].

So, my friends, what this makes clear to us is it can be done. We're New Yorkers, we can do amazing things. And so we will take on the opioid crisis. We will throw at it the biggest combined effort ever by our city agencies, increasing prevention and enforcement and treatment.

[Applause]

And we'll work at the grass roots to reach families in the throes of this crisis and to get them the help they need. These New Yorkers will know they are not alone. We will help them through this extraordinary challenge. We can and we will take on this epidemic. And one of the ways we

will do it is we will hold responsible those who created it, the big pharmaceutical companies that profited from people's pain.

[Applause]

We have initiated litigation to stop their deadly practices and to win the funds to help more New Yorkers overcome addiction. We will help them to overcome addiction and lead strong lives again.

Number nine, this is one of the biggest changes we're making in this city and it has only just begun and it's called ThriveNYC. ThriveNYC is a particular favorite for our household. Still in its infancy, it has already reached hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers. Now, you know Chirlane McCray, you would know that she does not shy from a challenge and here is the simple audacity underlying our First Lady's vision. She believes every New Yorker should have access to the mental health care they need, simple as that.

[Applause]

And she knows getting people this care will help us address a whole host of societal challenges that will help us with homelessness, incarceration, take on domestic violence. This is fundamental to creating a better city. It's fundamental to fighting inequality.

Here's what we know, New York City now has the most comprehensive approach to mental health of any city in America. And as we deepen our efforts, this will be one of the true building blocks to overcoming decades of disparity and creating fairness. Nothing exemplifies fairness more than universal access to health care.

[Applause]

And that is true whether it is a physical health condition or mental health condition. We need to treat both of them the same way.

[Applause]

We will lead it, because of our First Lady we will be a city where mental health care is accessible to all, every one of us.

[Applause]

Number ten, in this moment in history people are speaking up and they are rising up against the inequities of the past, and we know to be fair, to create fairness we have to take on these challenges. We will use the power of city government to insure one of the simplest measures of fairness, equal pay for equal work.

[Applause]

Through our Commission on Gender Equity, we will systematically root out the very much stitches of the past that have held so many New Yorkers back and we'll continue to show through our strengthened human rights commission that discrimination will be confronted and stopped dead in its tracks. Remember the whole phrase, "Crime doesn't pay"? Well, in New York State today if you commit an act of discrimination, you will pay.

[Applause]

Number 11, as we get safer, New York City, we will also get fairer. Our police are achieving more and more reductions in crime and with fewer and fewer arrests this is a story that needs to be told. In fact, there were 100,000 fewer arrests in 2017 than just four years earlier.

[Applause]

By the way, crime went down, fewer arrests and crime went down.

[Applause]

And the power of this is, this is also one of the ways we reduce our jail population. As I said when we announced the plan to close the 85 year-old complex on Rikers Island, the era of mass incarceration did not begin in New York City, but it will end in New York City.

[Applause]

We have already begun a series of actions that will get us off of Rikers Island once and for all. Everyone who cares about this, everyone who believes this is a matter of fairness, you should join us in Albany to fight for bail reform and for speedier trials.

[Applause]

These are the sing the most important factors in radically reducing our jail population and we need to get them done this year.

[Applause].

Finally, the last item in the booklet, surely not the least, if we're going create a fairer city it means addressing decades of neglect, mistakes of the past and investing in our housing authority and the people who live within them.

[Applause]

Since this administration began, we have invested \$2.1 billion in capital dollars and \$1.6 billion in expense dollars in NYCHA, nothing like that happened in the previous history of the city. Here's what that means in human terms, it means almost a thousand new roofs from residents who suffered from mold and leaks. It means new boilers and heating systems in the

developments that need it the most. It means deepening our efforts to reduce crime and make developments safe. It means faster repairs so people can live a decent life.

[Applause]

I want to make it very plain, our public housing residents are a priority for me, they're a priority for my administration, they're a priority for our city and our city line officials and our borough presidents more than at any other point before in our history. This entire city government is focused on the needs of 400,000 New Yorkers who have not gotten a fair shake for a long time. We will do something different in the city and this is part of how we become a fairer city.

[Applause]

We're going to continue to make big changes through our next generation NYCHA plan, and we're going to show the success that we reached in our largest development, Queens Bridge houses, is what we can do all over this city. We're going to show that real change can come, that safety can be achieved that roofs can be fixed, that Internet access can be provided opportunity opened up. It happened in Queens Bridge houses, and we're going to systematically make sure it happens all over this city for the residents of public housing.

[Applause]

So, again, if you want to know what's going to happen in 2018, you want to know what's going to happen in this second term or this administration, there it is, simple and straightforward. Our goal count be clearer. We have a lot of the tools we need. We've proven they work. We know what we need from Albany. We know what we need from Washington and we're going organize New Yorkers and allies everywhere to achieve those goals. So that's a reason to be optimistic as we embark on this mission, creating a fair city, are some things we can feel very good about. But here's our fundamental obstacle that we have to overcome, you can't fight for greater equality with less democracy. History teaches us that fundamental change, fundamental social change comes from the bottom up, not from the top down.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

[Applause]

As New Yorkers, we have often led America's battles for fairness and equality, and we've been accustomed to winning no matter how long it took, but that, my friends, was before the Citizens United decision by the extreme court, something we had never seen independent history of our nation. That was before big money flooded and dominated our political process. That was before voter participation plummeted amidst very cynical and systematic efforts to discourage people from getting involved. That was before we had a president who denigrates our people and the very institutions basic to our democracy. That was before that same president aligned himself with Russia, which has conducted the most serious external attack on our electoral process in our nation's 240-year history. So if we're going fight for fairness and we're going to fight for

equality, we better fight to save our democracy. We are so far from what the norm should be of an active and inclusive democracy.

[Applause]

We better understand a proud nation our mission is one of restoration. We must re-democratize a society that is losing its way. Now there is some good news. There's a very bright silver lining in the middle of this crisis and it's the extraordinary grass roots energy, which is starting to manifest all over this nation, and certainly in this city and state as well. I think of it as the DIY approach to protecting what we hold dearly. People are taking matters into their own hands and they're creating new approaches, they're throwing their own hats into the ring. The moment is ripe for change and we need to meet the moment. But we're going to have to break free of something that's broken. We're going to have to shake the foundation of a broken status quo right here in our state and in our city. We cannot be the fairest big city in America. We have some of the most unfair and most exclusionary election laws of any state in the country.

[Applause]

We can't lead the way to a restored democratic society if our people are discouraged from voting at every turn. We can't keep doing things the same backward way and somehow expect a better result. No, that won't work. It's time for radical change in New York City and New York State. To borrow a phrase, one I appreciate very much, "This is what democracy looks like."

[Applause]

Today I'm unveiling a 10-point plan which will engage the people in the city directly and it's called democracy NYC, simple concept that we can actually turn the tide and make our democracy in this city strong again. We're asking New Yorkers in every neighborhood to be part of the solution and we're going start by asking people to vote for major reforms. So, let me go over what's in 10-point plan.

Number one, I will use my authority to appoint the charter provision commission and I will give it the mandate to propose a plan for deep public financing of local elections.

[Applause]

Nothing restores the faith of a people more than getting big money out of politics. So we need to build on the decades of campaign finance reform, which has been a great success in this city, but we need to build on it by going even further for the times we're living in now. Our goal is for elections to be funded primarily by public dollars, thereby greatly reducing the power of big money.

[Applause]

And here's something I love about it, more New Yorkers will be encouraged to run for office and candidates will spend their time talking to everyday people, not their big donors.

[Applause]

Number two, I will also charge the charter revision commission with the task of proposing a plan to empower the city government to handle so many of the basic outreach information efforts that the Board of elections has consistently gotten wrong. In the greatest city of the world voters too often find out at the last moment that their poll site has changed. In the most diverse place on earth, good luck getting in the line of translation services when you go to vote. In the digital age the best our board of elections does is send you a postcard to remind you there's an election.

The Board has no coherent vision for how to make voting an easy and positive experience. In fact, the Board still won't approve simple reforms that I proposed and nor will they accept \$20 million I offered them to help make voting better for New Yorkers. You've heard of the notion of being customer friendly? Our voting system in this city is about as customer unfriendly as it could be.

[Applause]

It's not modern, it's not fair and it needs to change now. Who's ready for a change?

[Applause]

Well, you won't have to wait long because under my plan the people will get to vote this November.

Number three, we know that the integrity of our elections is under attack from adversaries outside the United States and I bet a lot of you who felt that chilly sensation just this week when we learned that Russia had successfully penetrated and compromised the voter registration rolls in several states. My friends, that's not a headline from an action movie in the 1980's. It's happening right here in our country right now. In 2016 and 2017 the city of New York provided a board of elections with around the clock threat monitoring and proactive checks on system integrity. We know the people who are trying to steal our elections won't stop. They'll be coming back, but we'll be there to make sure they don't succeed.

My administration will share their cybersecurity city expertise and do what it takes to insure when a voter walks into the voting booth they can be sure their vote will be counted.

[Applause]

Number four this is something different, in the coming weeks I will make New York City's first ever Chief Democracy Officer. The Chief Democracy Officer will be involving the problem of shrinking voter participation, launch a city wide administration campaign and have each city agency to register voters to vote when they come in contact with their local government. So it's New York City, so we like to set big goals, don't we. Whoever will take this job will end up being responsible for registering 1.5 million New Yorkers in the next four years.

[Applause]

Leads me to number five and if you have suddenly started to feel bad for the chief democracy officer and you pictured the individual literally personally signing up 15 million people, no, we're going to have some help. And one of the areas we need to focus on the most is our young people.

[Applause]

Some are in our audience today.

[Applause]

Are you guys ready to vote?

[Cheers]

We'll be reaching every 17-year-old whose eligible to vote in our schools, that's about 150,000 young New Yorkers every year. They're in school every day. That's where they should register to vote so they can start being a part of this democratic society.

We will also launch more registration drives on college campuses in the city and start getting young people in the habit of voting from their very first election.

[Applause]

Now, this leads to number six. We know that registering our young people as early as possible does not always make a voter. We've got to prove to our young people that they've got the power to change the world around them. When people feel empowered they participate. When they can see the impact they're making they come back for more. So starting next school year public school students will learn how to stay civically engaged and to fight for the future they believe in with our civics for all initiative and they will learn in a hands-on way by putting their skills to their test right there in their own school building. We're going to borrow a great idea pioneered by the City Council, participatory budgeting. We're going to give every high school in the city \$2,000 for the students to make the decisions on how to use and we know when students feel the opportunity to make a difference, they will be a beginning of a long lifetime of participation.

We're also going to do something to respond to an ever-changing world. We're going to encourage our students to understand the events that are shaping today's world and the role that every citizen plays with rapid-response lesson plans. We're not going to teach them about things that happened only decades ago. We're going to teach them about today's news and what people can do about it.

[Applause]

Number seven, now, the next step towards a healthier democracy is getting more New Yorkers active in their neighborhoods, but if you want to join your community board or run for a community education council or elected office, it can feel really daunting. It can feel hard to find the information you need. A lot of people don't even really know where to start. So we're going to create an online portal, a one-stop-shop to get you all you need to make a difference in the life of your community.

[Applause]

Number eight, most of the democracy NYC plan can and will be done at the city level, but there are some critical reforms we need from Albany and this is everybody's business and everyone's concern. We want to fix our board of election, the first thing we need to do is we need Albany to approve it. So increase accountability and efficiency, two things we don't have enough of at the board by them powering professional executive plan for the 21st century.

The next is so fundamental to engaging people in their democracy, it happens all over the country, in red states, blue states, small states and big states, but it doesn't happen here. We need early voting in New York.

[Applause]

I was very glad to see the governor propose the resources needed for early voting in his budget proposal. Now we all have to make sure that money is in a final State budget so it can actually happen in this state. We he only need to make it easier to vote absentee, we need to allow same-day registration like states all over the country. And we need to weed out a host of rules that just make it way too hard to vote. My friends, it's time to say enough is enough. Let's make this a place where we can vote again.

[Applause]

Number nine, to strengthen a democracy, we've got to create more accountability for those in power. It's one of the things that gives people heart encouragement when they see that accountability. That's why New York is leading the nation's cities in lobbying disclosure requirements. The people deserve to know who's trying to influence elected officials and their senior staff. This new and improved disclosure website which went live yesterday allows New Yorkers to search for which city officials are meeting with which lobbyists.

[Applause]

And starting March 1st, New York will be the only city in the country requiring that all commissioners and all people who report directly to the mayor disclose every time they have a meeting with a lobbyist.

[Applause]

Number ten, the last item of the plan starts with a surprising sentence, you won't hear it too often, I wish you would hear it more often, but I can only say it once in a while, we actually got some good news from Washington, D.C. Pleased to report to you that President Trump's vastly unqualified nominee to run the 2020 census has withdrawn his name from consideration.

[Applause]

But the fight to make sure that every New Yorker gets counted has only just begun. Given the Trump administration's views of our rich diversity, we must work twice as hard to get a fair shake. Tonight, I'm announcing "Get Counted," the largest census outreach campaign in our city's history and we're going to work with our partners and everyone in government, community leaders, private sector, faith organizations, anyone and everyone who makes sure, who wants to make sure that New York City is seen for all it is and that our people are counted in the eyes of our nation. Getting counted will make all the difference, determines how many congressional seats we get, determines how much Federal money is sent to us. A lot of that money comes from New York City and doesn't come back. So we'd really like to make sure that we get more than we have in the past. When you think about the census, think about it this way, it is entirely about getting our fair share and everyone has to be a part of making sure we are all counted.

[Applause]

So, my friends, that's our democracy NYC plan. And guess what, it will only work if you get involved. There's a very powerful phrase in the recovery movement that can be said about democracy as well, "It works if you work it." So we need you, we need you to go to Albany and demand fair election laws.

[Applause]

We need to you register your fellow New Yorkers to vote. And we need you to vote this November.

[Applause]

And this November you will get a chance to vote for reforms that get big money out and grass roots democracy in.

[Applause]

So why not just start it now. Here's a postcard. Yes, it's low tech, but it works for a crowd like this so here's a postcard. Everyone's here because you care about the City. Please fill this out. It will help to make sure that we can get you involved in so many ways that will strengthen the democracy of our city and the involvement of our people. So I'll conclude tonight with a final thought about the moment we're living in. It's brief, but it's something I feel deeply. We've come a long way, but history has shown us many times gains that were won can sadly also be lost. Some remarkable people struggled for change, gave their all. What they fought for was sometimes taken away later on.

Whether we like it or not, democracy is something each generation must earn. In my entire lifetime I have never felt our democracy as in peril as I did today. I've never seen such rampant inequality as I see today. And it would be easy to cower in the face of these horrible events, two phenomena that threatens and that sadly work together to undermine the lives of our people. I can see it clearly, but I have to tell you, I still got plenty of hope. And I think you should, too. Because what we've learned is the people can demand change and the people can ensure that that change actually happens. We've seen it, right here, in this city. The things we talked about tonight all resulted from the will of the people. A lot of people worked for years, sometimes anonymously, sometimes in a lonelily long struggle, fought for the changes that are now part of the fabric of this city.

And, yes, it can be done, and in the last year we've seen energy and activism like never before. Not only here, just think about what happened all around this country just a few months ago in November. We saw something extraordinary. We saw people defy the odds. We saw people decide this was their society, this was their, their country.

So, here's how I conclude and I feel it in my heart, we are poised at the beginning of a new age, something we've never seen before. We have a new and bolder chapter to write, and its author will be you.

Thank you. God bless you, and God bless New York City.

[Applause]

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