

Transcript: Mayor Eric Adams Delivers Remarks on Small Business Week in the Bronx

May 6, 2022

Commissioner Kevin Kim, Department of Small Business Services: Making some acknowledgements here. We've got Mayor Eric Adams in the house. And he's coming down right about now. We've got Borough President Vanessa Gibson in the house. We've got Council Member Marjorie Velázquez. Is she here somewhere? All right. She'll be here as well. I want to acknowledge over a dozen of our sister agencies here to help support. We've also got community partners here as well. And here's the mayor. Can we give him another round of applause, please?

[Applause]

Commissioner Kim: I want to really start by thanking the people here in the community, Mohammad Side, who helped provide 500 meals today, who runs a food cart out in Times Square. We've got the Street Vendor Project who's supported us all week long with meals. We've got representatives from YAMA. We've got the Morris Park BID executive director, Dr. Camelia Tepelus here. We've got the Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation. The Bronx Chamber of Commerce, Lisa Sorin is here. We've got Zade Naji and Dr. Debbie Almontaser, YAMA board members. And then at the end, we've got a dance troop. And so I hope you'll all stick around.

Commissioner Kim: Now, we are so excited to be celebrating day five of our Around the World in New York City tour to celebrate National Small Business Week. And the reason why we chose the Bronx as our grand finale is several reasons. Number one, this is also to help kick off Bronx Week, which the Borough President Gibson will be leading. We are also here because we know that we want to highlight the immigrant communities. And there's no better place than literally to do that here in the Bronx. And we're also commemorating Eid. So Eid Mubarak, for everybody who's observing.

Commissioner Kim: As we went through the city, we went day one in Brooklyn, Marcy Plaza, Bed-Stuy. We went day two, Staten Island. We were in day three in Chinatown. Day four yesterday, we celebrated Cinco de Mayo in Little Columbia and Jackson Heights, Queens. And wherever we went, we heard the struggles and stories of small business owners. But at the same time, we heard about the hope. The hope that's out there of businesses that started during COVID, the hope of hearing this mayor, Mayor Eric Adams' vision of putting small businesses at the center of our economic recovery. Already we've had an executive order helping to focus on reducing fines and violations for small business owners so that they, the backbone of our economy, can really lead New York City back in a more equitable way. At SBS, I really do want people to understand what we do, because we know that many of you can't come to One Liberty Plaza where our headquarters are. We have 18 Workforce One Centers throughout the city that can help job seekers.

Commissioner Kim: So if you know people who are looking for jobs, please refer them to Workforce One Centers where we can connect them to job training programs at no cost to them to help connect them to good paying jobs and careers. We've also got seven business solutions centers all around the city that can help businesses launch, operate, and grow. We also are the city's minority women business owned enterprise, MWBE certification agency. So if you are an MWBE, come to us. We can hold your hands, take you step by step to give you access to government contracts. There's \$1.2 billion that was given out in government contracts to MWBEs last year. And we want this community to also partake in that.

Commissioner Kim: At SBS, we are committed to bringing resources out to you. Mayor Eric Adams has said, "We know not every business owner, not every New Yorker can come to us." So look behind us. We have this beautiful mobile RV unit that will come into your neighborhoods. And you never know, the mayor might just pop out of one of them at one time. But if you want this mobile unit, reach out to us, because we will come to you. He wants people to have services that historically have been denied these services. We are going to meet you. We are going to meet the small business owners where you are.

Commissioner Kim: Now, before I turn it over and introduce some of our special guests, I do want to say that even though today is the closing of National Small Business Week, Mayor Eric Adams' administration, we treat every week as New York City Small Business Week. And at SBS, we treat every day as Small Business Day. So we've got the resources. Look at us as your first stop to operate, to grow your

businesses. If you're looking for capital financing, if you're looking for commercial lease assistance, we are there for you. So thank you so much, everyone, for coming. Now, without much further ado, I really want to bring up here your borough president, somebody who has been a staunch advocate for small businesses throughout her public service career. And she's going to tell you all about Bronx Week and everything that the Bronx is up to. Borough President Gibson.

[...]

[Crosstalk]

Commissioner Kim: Thank you. All right. Well, thank you borough president chief. Also helped me a lot by acknowledging other people that I got another sheet of paper to now. So thank you for that. And we do want to point out the deputy borough president was at SBS before she went over. So I think we trained her well.

Commissioner Kim: Next, I'd like to introduce Council Member Marjorie Velázquez. Is she here yet? Oh, there you go. Well, look, she also needs very little introduction in this district. One of the first days on the job for me, Mayor Adams and Council Member Velázquez, we ended up going into a corridor walk. Yeah. And we did a bunch of restaurants. And really we were listening to the store owners, and Council Member Velázquez, who's also on the Small Business Committee is a real true champion for small businesses and a great partner to us. So thank you very much.

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Commissioner Kim: Thank you, Council member. Next I'd like to introduce to you a business owner, the real VIP of today's celebration, Sal Alghati. He has been a Morris Park resident for 30 years. And he opened Tasty Choice in October 2020 during the pandemic. He also owns the New Morris Deli, which has been in the community for many, many years. During COVID, the Morris Park BID had a total of 16 new businesses open and a majority were Yemeni owned. So to represent, Mr. Alghati.

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Commissioner Kim: And now, the mayor who gets stuff done for the Bronx, the mayor who gets stuff done for small business owners, and the mayor who gets stuff done for all New Yorkers, Mayor Eric Adams.

Mayor Adams: Thank you. Feels so good to be up here in the Bronx with our great Bronx borough president, the entire elected chair. Listen, I'm going to spend a lot of time in the Bronx. These are important issues... But I think it's so important, as it was just mentioned, of the power of public safety, the power of public safety, of people, as I move throughout the city and I go to gatherings, to business leaders, and I'm hearing the same thing over and over again. That's why I talk about it all the time. You should not have a store with your hard earned money and someone walking in with a gun, taking whatever they want and walking out. You should not have to deal with the violence that you're seeing throughout the Bronx. The number of shootings in the Bronx and the number of repeated shooters returning to our streets to do the actions again is not acceptable. And I'm not going to ignore the problem that's happening.

Mayor Adams: Public safety and justice can go together. And no one knows it better than you as small business owners. Your concern for your children, your families. The small number of people who are repeatedly causing violence in our city should not be able to walk our streets with impunity, with the violence that they're showing. I need you as business leaders, raise your voice with me on this. Let them know we don't want a city of violence. We don't want to hear the shootings night after night in the Bronx over and over again. So this is not an Eric Adams call. This is a call for the innocent people of the city.

Mayor Adams: I have one question. We hear everyone talking about those who are committing crimes. What about the innocent people that are not committing crimes? When are we going to talk for them? So as your mayor, I'm talking for those who open their gates early in the morning, stay 12, 13, 14 hours, those who work hard, those who give their all so their children can grow up. Those are the individuals I'm speaking for, the everyday, hardworking people of this city that are doing the right thing. They don't jump turnstiles. They swipe their Metrocard. They don't try to steal from a store. They pay the cost of going into the store. They're not carrying a gun. They're protecting their families from those who carry guns. They're not attacking people because of their religion. They know how to live among each other, regardless of our religion. Those are the New Yorkers that I remember. Those are the New Yorkers I'm fighting for. And you are representative of those New Yorkers, and I'm going to be a mayor for you no matter what I do.

Mayor Adams: And to this amazing commissioner and the Deputy Mayor of Maria Torres-Springer, we called on all of our agencies to go in, do an analysis of what we're doing to get in the way of businesses. You should not have stress if a city agency that you pay for walks in your business. You should know that they're there to keep your doors open, not to be creative, to find ways to close your business.

Mayor Adams: And so we're coming out with a complete analysis of all of our agencies. And they came with their ideas, and we said, "That's not good enough. Go back, come with better ideas of keeping businesses open." And this commissioner understands it. As a small business owner, we brought him into the administration to go in, to make sure we get it right so you can keep your business up and operated. New York City has been brutal to small businesses. We talked about how we build the city through small businesses, but we did just the opposite. That stopped January 1st, 2022 when you have a mayor that appreciates you operating, owning, and fighting to keep your small businesses open. I cannot thank you enough. That's why we did this week. We communicated with 2,500 different individuals and small businesses showing them how to navigate government.

Mayor Adams: We're going to be mobile. We're going to come out to you. We're going to communicate. We're going to learn from you. We're going to have a business friendly city. That is the goal because when you hire, you bring the lives of people higher. That is the focus of this administration. And so thank you so much for allowing me to come up to the BX. And all of the electives who are here and are uniform and providing the way of life that we know we should expect. The Bronx has gone through so much for far too long. All of the areas where there are negatives, you appear to be leading. And the next four years, we must turn those negatives into positives. And we could do it together if we are united. And our goal is to be united. Thank you so much. Great job, commissioner.

Commissioner Kim: So now we're going to close, but we want to have you all watch the dance troop that's going to be performing. So thank you all so much for coming today.

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