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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON MSNBC**

**Ali Velshi:** President Trump's coronavirus taskforce shared a lot of information just minutes ago about the federal government's latest efforts to contain and combat the coronavirus pandemic in the United States. Joining me now is New York City's mayor, Bill de Blasio. Mayor, I don't remember, the last time I saw you was a few days ago and things have changed so dramatically in that time. You had warned and believed that New York City was going to become an epicenter for this. At this point, we have a lot of cases, we have a number of deaths in New York City. What is your take on what you heard from the President and what we should be doing now?

**Mayor Bill de Blasio** So, Ali, we are the epicenter – not even one epicenter at this point, we're the epicenter. Two-thirds of the cases in New York State are here in New York City. A third of the cases in the nation are right here in my city. And we are seeing really, really troubling things start to happen. We're about 10 days away from our public health system not being able to support coronavirus patients sufficiently for lack of equipment and supplies. So, what I heard in the President's remarks was a beginning of recognition of the crisis, a beginning of sending help where it's needed most. But Ali, you won't be surprised if I say to you, you know, until it arrives, I'm going to really be questioning a little bit because I've heard lots of things from the President over the last three years that didn't end up happening and I've heard lots of things about the coronavirus that changed the next day. So, a step maybe in the right direction. But, meanwhile, he didn't even mention the legislation. And if we don't have literally hundreds of billions for cities, counties, states to handle their exceptional costs – we're being hit by billions and new costs and we're losing billions in revenue just here in this city. And we're not going to be able to pay –

**Velshi:** There is not money, just so you know –

**Mayor:** including red state. And then, there needs to be direct payments to hospitals, or they will not be able to function. So, if the Senate does not in this bill include direct support for the localities who are bearing the brunt and serving people [inaudible] support for hospitals, only support for big corporations, that will be its own disaster.

**Velshi:** It is not – there's nothing explicit in the Senate language right now to support local and state governments or SNAP funds or language to protect workers or emergency leave for protections, as the Senator and I were just talking about. Millions of people – if you didn't file a tax return in 2018 or 2019, many people who didn't file tax returns are because they are too poor to have done so, they will not – they may not be able to get any money. However, Mayor, I think

it's worth remembering, there are major corporations in America. I don't know if you can hear me – it sounds like the Mayor may have lost his audio.

**Mayor:** I can hear you very faintly, I don't know what's going on actually.

**Velshi:** All right. Let me ask you this. How do you measure the bailout, the idea of a bailout to major corporations? Because those major corporations, like the airline industry for instance, which employs 10 million people, like Boeing, which is our biggest exporter in the country by a lot, and defense contractor. How do you understand that they should be given money – loans or bailouts –

**Mayor:** Yeah, I think I got most of your question, Ali. I'm not belittling for a moment that big companies employ a lot of people and that's pertinent, for sure. And I certainly want to see those industries keep going and somehow, you know, getting back on their feet after this. But I think we have to put first things first, Ali. Right now, you've got in my city alone, hundreds of thousands of people suddenly unemployed. As you mentioned, the gig workers and the folks who have very little safety net, they must get money directly in their hands very quickly – real money – or they're not going to be able to afford food medicine, the basics. You know, grocery stores and pharmacies are not just going to give away their goods. There has to be a money basis for people surviving. So, I'm worried especially about that. And I'm also worried about when we're not able – our public hospitals and local governments are literally not able to pay bills anymore to support people. And this is March, it's going to get a lot worse than April and potentially even worse after that in May. So, I would say it's a hierarchy of needs. Start with working people, go to the governments and the hospitals that serve people at the grassroots and then worry about the corporations.

**Velshi:** Mayor, thank you for your time. Mayor Bill de Blasio is the Mayor of New York City. We will have many opportunities, unfortunately, sir, in the next few days and weeks to talk frequently. Bill de Blasio –

**Mayor:** Thank you.

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