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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR ERIC ADAMS RELEASES PRELIMINARY BUDGET FOR  
FISCAL YEAR 2024 AND HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY**

**Mayor Eric Adams:** Good afternoon, New York City. When I took office a year ago, I promised to get stuff done for the city. I promised that we would build a safer, more prosperous, and equitable New York, a New York that works for everyone. And my administration is delivering on that promise. For the second month in a row, major crimes are down and we have taken thousands of guns off our streets. Our subways are getting safer. In December, we reached our billionth rider of the year. That is the most rides on the system since 2019.

Our economy is also getting back on track. We have added nearly 190,000 new jobs. We are investing record amounts in affordable housing and tourism is booming. This is the city that New Yorkers want and deserve. This is the city that our responsible and focused fiscal year 2024 preliminary budget continues to make possible.

Before I go into details, I want to acknowledge that we have much to be proud of. Our city has shown its courage, compassion, and “can do” spirit as we recover from the pandemic. Over the past year, we funded and will continue to support programs that benefit everyday New Yorkers. Still, some in our city continue to struggle. And although the economy has been strong, it's slowing. At the same time, we face significant challenges.

I want to be clear. In order to keep moving forward while preserving the programs and services we value, we must be careful and make the best use of our resources. Since day one, fiscal discipline has been the hallmark of this administration. We are focused on governing efficiently and measuring success not by how much we spend, but by our achievements. This budget protects funding for the essential services that continue to keep the city safe and clean, drive equity and affordability, and keep us on the path to prosperity.

We understand that the communities we make today affect our children, our grandchildren, and the kind of city we create for them. With proper planning and foresight, we can ensure that New York City remains a beacon of opportunity for future generations.

We crafted this budget in an environment of economic and fiscal uncertainty. And while our country has made an amazing recovery since the darkest days of the pandemic, the national economy has slowed as the Federal Reserve raises interest rates to tamp down inflation. Most economists predict that it will cool more in the coming months. A slowdown will reduce the revenues that we have used to pay for programs and services that benefit all New Yorkers. At the same time, it will increase demand for city services. As you can see, financial markets declined substantially over the last year. And following two years of extraordinary profits and bonuses, market declines have slowed Wall Street activity, leading to job losses.

At home, our city's economic indicators are mixed. As I mentioned earlier, nearly 190,000 jobs have been added since the start of my administration. While our city's economic recovery was slower in the early part of the pandemic, we have now recovered almost 90 percent of the jobs lost during the pandemic and an annual growth rate that is higher than the country and the state.

Let me repeat. Under this administration, New York City's job growth is moving at a faster rate than the rest of the country. And we currently expect to reach pre-pandemic job levels by next fall. That's a full quarter earlier than previously expected.

However, real estate sales have slowed because of rising interest rates. And although New Yorkers are returning to work, office vacancy rates, the amount of space that is unleashed by companies remain at a record high. This weakens the commercial office market and has a negative impact on the property tax, the city's single largest source of revenue. While we expect office attendance to continue to increase, we're also addressing vacancies through the proposals in our New New York Action Plan. That includes making it easier to convert some offices into affordable housing.

On top of a slowing national and local economy, we face fiscal challenges, new and unfunded needs. The arrival of nearly 40,000 asylum seekers created an unexpected cost of more than \$1 billion this fiscal year. We're conducting a new analysis to determine an updated estimate given the influx of asylum seekers we've seen in recent weeks.

And while I am grateful that our partners in Washington allocated some funding to help us cover a portion of these expenses, this will not come close to covering what we need. New Yorkers will be left footing the bill now and in the future. We continue to push for relief from the state and the federal governments so that we can avoid training our budget and our capacity to provide city services for everyday New Yorkers.

Additionally, our city's healthcare costs are growing significantly. The federal stimulus that has supported our pandemic recovery will decline and sunset in fiscal year 2025. And we are negotiating new labor deals with nearly all of the city unions. These settlements will add billions of dollars to our city's budget.

As the economy slows, so will our revenue growth. This creates the perfect storm. We will still need to support the cost services that New Yorkers depend upon every day, but with fewer resources. In addition, we face billions of dollars in new and unfunded costs related to asylum

seekers, labor deals, and healthcare. So we must be more efficient. We must make smart decisions, invest wisely, and give New Yorkers the most bang for their buck.

The fiscal year 2024 preliminary budget is balanced at \$102.7 billion — \$1.7 billion lower than it was in the November plan. Fiscal year 2023 remains balanced. Out-year gaps are \$3.2 billion in fiscal year '25, \$5 billion in 2026, and \$6.5 billion in 2027.

By staying focused on savings and efficiency, we will bring these gaps down over the course of the financial plan. We balanced fiscal year 2024 by reorganizing additional revenue and savings. We updated our revenue forecast to add an additional \$1.7 billion in fiscal year '23 and more than \$700 million in fiscal year '24. These gains, along with savings of more than \$550 million, allowed us to balance fiscal year 2024.

As always, we have remained focused on savings in this plan. Savings protect our city's economic recovery and have been a vital part of our administration's fiscal strategy from the beginning. Our preliminary budget achieves more than half a billion dollars in savings over fiscal years '23 and '24. This brings total savings in the November plan and preliminary budget to three billion dollars over the two years.

And we accomplished this without laying off a single employee or reducing services. We achieved most of our savings in this budget through the Vacancy Reduction Initiative, which took down more than 4,300 vacant positions citywide in each year of the financial plan. This generated savings of just over \$180 million this fiscal year and \$350 million in fiscal year 2024.

Some will argue that vacancy reduction results in agencies not being able to do their jobs. Don't believe them. There are 23,000 open positions still on the books, which leaves ample room in agency budgets to hire for critical roles.

In this budget, we are limiting spending. Nearly all new needs are self-funded with existing resources. And over fiscal years 2023 and 2024, we paid for nearly half a billion dollars in new needs with savings, with more self-funded by agencies.

One of the most powerful lessons we have learned over the past few years is the importance of setting aside resources for unexpected emergencies. This preliminary budget maintains reserves at a record \$8.3 billion so that we can respond effectively to any unforeseen events.

I'm proud that, despite the many challenges I've mentioned, our budget protects funding for the transformative programs we've rolled out over the past year, like the Earned Income Tax Credit that puts money back into the pockets of working families or the 100,000 paid summer jobs that opened the door to opportunity for our young people, the centers for employers and property owners to develop more childcare spaces so parents can return to work, and violence prevention programs for communities most affected by the epidemic of gun violence.

Since the beginning of this administration, we've also invested substantially in our students. This includes more resources for students with disabilities, for literacy and dyslexia screenings, summer enrichment, healthy food, career pathways, and gifted and talented programs. Even with

federal stimulus money running out, we've kept per student funding at a higher level than before the pandemic.

But as we've said from day one, we need to be fiscally responsible. We need to return to developing school budgets based on a number of students enrolled in a school and the needs of those students. Last year, to protect schools that had lost enrollment from the impacts of funding reductions, we provided additional support on top of the Fair Student Funding formula, \$160 million for fiscal year 2023 and \$80 million for fiscal year 2024.

But we heard from families that some schools need more time to adjust in order to avoid disruptions to students. So despite the fiscal challenges we face, we have added an additional 80 million to that funding pool for fiscal year 2024. This keeps the total at 160 million for another academic year.

Our preliminary budget also makes inroads into the key priorities of my administration. We will continue to attack our housing crisis, create a cleaner and greener city, and promote efficiency in city government.

New Yorkers have been suffering from our housing crisis for far too long. We simply do not have enough homes for those who need them. So we are taking steps to address the problem. We are cutting red tape to make it easier to build and upgrade affordable homes for New Yorkers, and we are assisting our low income neighborhoods with down payments, tenant protections, and more through our Housing Our Neighbors and Get Stuff Built initiatives.

New Yorkers like to move fast, and they deserve a city government that works just as quickly. That is why we are making improvements at key touchpoints. We are implementing a citywide building code that would allow necessary improvements to be made for both residential and commercial buildings. This will save time and money on upgrades and will help New Yorkers live and work safely in their homes and offices.

As a leader in the fight against climate change, we want all our agencies to be a part of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. That's why we've authorized several agencies to hire chief decarbonization officers who will lead the way to a greener future.

And as you know, I hate rats. We're expanding our rat reduction initiative to reduce damage to homes and businesses and improve our quality of life.

Our city uses capital funding to build and maintain the infrastructure we rely on. Capital funding enables us to invest in our city's future by building more affordable housing along with parks, healthcare facilities, and public spaces. It also helps us keep our schools and streets safe, keep our water supply clean, and protect the environment.

In this plan, we are tackling a broad range of priorities. Our investment in the public-private partnership in Willets Point will transform the neighborhood by creating thousands of new affordable homes, a world class soccer stadium, acres of public space, and a hotel. And as a bonus, it will generate nearly 16,000 new jobs.

In DOE, schools across the city, we are investing in safety measures for students and staff. Every student deserves to feel safe at school, and this budget is making it happen.

And on the west side of Manhattan, we are renovating the historic Riverside Park Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument and Plaza. New Yorkers who use the park have long been calling for its restoration.

Traffic safety is public safety, and we are deepening our commitment to Vision Zero and more. Walking and cycling should never result in accidents or fatalities. So we are making targeted improvements to street safety across all five boroughs. This includes safe routes in the Bronx and Staten Island, select bus service in South Brooklyn, and installing and upgrading traffic signals.

And since New Yorkers also rely on our waterways to get around, we will be repairing our marine infrastructure on Staten Island and in Manhattan.

Climate change affects all of us. To reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality, we are accelerating projects that will meet the target set by Local Law 97. New York City is aiming high in the fight against climate change, and we won't give up until we create a healthier and more resilient city for everyone.

The initiatives that I have discussed today play a part in creating the city that all New Yorkers want, a city that is safe, equitable, and prosperous. I know there will be those who say we should do things differently, that we should extend ourselves further, save less, and spend more.

But as mayor, the buck stops with me. It is my responsibility to keep our city on a stable path. Whether it is new labor contracts, asylum seeker costs, or the next unexpected event, the bills will come due. And I cannot allow New Yorkers to suffer or our city's fortunes to see-saw up and down in response. Our discipline and efficient budget keeps us safe and allows us to remain on an upward track. It allows us to continue to protect and build the greatest city in the world, the city that we are all proud to call home: New York.

(...)

**Mayor Adams:** How's it going? I'm sure all of you saw the speech, so you don't have to hear a speech. We'll just open it up to some questions. How you doing, Marcia?

(Crosstalk)

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, so while we listened to your speech and we certainly heard your concern about the fiscal situation, it was sort of short on details about what's going to happen to agencies like police, the Fire Department, education. Could you give us some specifics about what's going to happen to essential services in each department?

**Mayor Adams:** Oh, okay. Jacques will do a detail, because we... Out of the 70 something agencies, to go line by line what the impacts are, we're not going to be able to do that in such a short period of time because I'm going to bounce in a moment. But we are going to go through...

Jacques will go through that. But we were very clear to all of our agencies, no cuts in services which are important. No layoffs. That was very clear directions. We stated this, not only from the time I was elected, from the time I was running. Fiscal responsibility is going to be the hallmark of this administration. Taxpayers deserve a better use of their tax dollars and that's what we're doing.

**Question:** (Inaudible) have to do more with less. Will they have to do more with less?

**Mayor Adams:** It's not more with less. We don't subscribe to that theory of more with less. We have to do better than what we have. We believe there were real savings, and we see that and I think that it is unfair to say that every day, civil servants have not been producing a quality product and they're going to continue to do so. We go into civil service for a reason, to provide a service to the people of this city. And we have been doing that. We have not been just surviving, we've been thriving. And our track record of success and delivery of services is showing that.

What's up Katie?

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, how are you?

**Mayor Adams:** Good.

**Question:** I wanted to ask you, you said that there won't be, that your directive to agencies was that there would be no cuts to services and no layoffs. But I know the libraries, which receive most of their funding through city, the three public library systems in the city, said that if these budget.... The budget cuts that we saw in the November modification that will continue in the preliminary budget... If they continue, there will be actual cuts. Talking about cuts to English language learning classes, cuts to entire days of service. So what is your plan there and can you give us more detail about those specific cuts? Because those are actual service cuts.

**Mayor Adams:** I think my long record of public libraries is just really something to be proud of. From the days of being a state senator to borough president, how I use my capital dollars allocated to the libraries. What we did last year around teen centers. I'm a big believer in libraries. What we're looking at are the vacancies. That is where we're asking and we gave our instructions on those areas of vacancies. We are saying 50 percent that we want them to remove. And that's the same for our libraries. These are tough times and I can't tell you how many times my deputy mayors have knocked on the door and said, "Well, can we spare this agency? Can we spare that agency?" Now we have to send a strong message that we must find more efficient ways of running our city and we could do that. And we're doing that every day.

**Question:** I know you mentioned a few times fiscal responsibility, and you said that your agency spending is basically covered by whatever they saved. On the other hand, the budget has gone up. I think it was \$98.5 billion when you took office and over \$101 billion last year. So could you just kind of explain why the budget is going up if the agencies aren't spending more without saving and if fiscal responsibility is sort of being...

**Mayor Adams:** Yes, thank you for that. Minimum new initiatives, they come with a price tag and we have not put in place extremely costly initiatives. There are a whole lot of things I would like to do, but just as if we're asking everyday taxpayers to properly balance their budgets at home, we have to do the same. And so we have a minimum increase in new needs and new initiatives that we want to put in place, like our summer jobs that we put in place for young people and other initiatives. So minimum new initiatives and that's what you see some of the costs increase. And we had to put money just even dealing with inflation on fuel costs and other costs. So there are areas where there are increase in spending that we have to do.

**Question:** Hey, Mr. Mayor.

**Mayor Adams:** Michael.

**Question:** How you doing? So I wanted to ask you about the statement the Council speaker and Justin Branna put out earlier today. They were talking about the budget modification and at the end of their statement, they said they're basically prepped for a fight on the preliminary that you've announced today. Can you tell us a bit about the conversation you had with Council's leadership and are you concerned with this kind of footing they took right before your preliminary budget announcement?

**Mayor Adams:** No, not at all. I cannot say enough about Speaker Adrienne Adams. Not only is she a high school mate I consider to be a friend, she's a leader of a body of government and there's the checks and balances. And she must speak on behalf of her membership. We had a good conversation here. There were things she agreed on, disagreed on. There's things that she wanted and that's fine with me. I really believe 2022, unfortunately, it was unfortunate that the dialogue got in the way of our success and that is not going to be 2023 for me. I have partners in every parts of government and I consider Adrienne to be one of those partners. I may be the pilot, but she's the co-pilot and we have to land this plane and we can't land it without each other. And we're going to have disagreements. But trust me, we will land this plane and we will have a budget.

**Question:** Thank you. Hi, Mr. Mayor.

**Mayor Adams:** How are you, Dana?

**Question:** I'm well, thank you. I was wondering if you could tell us the current FTE headcount and from what I understand it's lower, it continues to decline, and whether you're at all concerned that the ongoing bleeding of civil servants will impact service delivery even if you're not mandating service cuts?

**Mayor Adams:** You said the... What was...

**Question:** (Inaudible.)

**Jacques Jiha, Budget Director, Mayor's Office of Management and Budget:** It was about 301,000.

**Mayor Adams:** We had a meeting this morning, the first deputy mayor and I had an event this morning with our corporation leaders. Everyone is experiencing headcount. It just amazes me sometimes, the way it is being interpreted that only City Hall is experiencing headcount issues. We had 8 percent. The comptroller's office, as I spoke today, is at 14, 15 percent. The City Council is at 14 percent. Everyone is experiencing headcount issues. And for a number of reasons that we are experiencing that. We are entering a new norm in post pandemic. And so we have to adjust to that new norm of what we are experiencing. And even many of you work from home, so I'm pretty sure even your own establishments are downsizing in some way. This is the new norm. And what we must do, and I tell my team all the time, is we can't sit back and say what our headcount issues are. We have to sit back and say, "How do we adjust to the new norm?" That's what we going to do. And we're going to continue to provide the services the city needs.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor.

**Mayor Adams:** Bernadette.

**Question:** How are you?

**Mayor Adams:** How are you?

**Question:** I'm good. How much money has the city spent to date on the migrant crisis?

**Mayor Adams:** A lot. It's a moving target that continues to move. A few months ago, we talked about the agreement that came from El Paso that they were not going to be sending those large number of migrants here to the city. But trust me when I tell you, our numbers, we are still receiving hundreds of migrants. In the last few days we received, I believe, 800. We're still in this crisis, and so we're predicted it's going to be about a billion dollars during this fiscal year, maybe more. If we open the borders again it's going to increase even more. And it's a lot. And so once we come up with a solid number, it's still moving, it's still shifting. We are opening HERRCs over and over again. So all I can say at this point is it's a lot.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, can you discuss the funding of the Police Department, how it compares to the November modification and how over time it will implicate the budget for the PD?

**Mayor Adams:** I'm going to let Jacques go into the particulars, but some of the money we're getting from our Subway Safety Plan — thank God of the good relationship we have with the governor — some of that money's going to be reimbursed by the governor. We had an issue in this city around public safety. And the successful use of our manpower allowed us to do what we wanted to accomplish, particularly in the second half of the year. We started out rugged. February, I think we were up 40 percent in many of the index crimes. We're down to 20 percent in some of those index crimes. Decrease in shootings, decrease in homicides. Someone told me the other day, "Well, decrease in homicide is nothing to be happy about." Oh really? I think it is. I think it's a lot to be happy about. We are showing real significant gains on the subway system the last quarter. That's why we did the presser the other day. We're moving in the right direction.

I am not going to trade off public safety. We have to be safe. I'm not going to trade that off. We have to not only have real numerical indicators that we're safe, but there's a need for symbolism. New Yorkers must feel safe, and they feel safe when they see that blue uniform. We're going to recruit. We have to use overtime in a smart way, we're going to do that. We decreased the number of officers assigned to our New Year's celebration. We decreased numbers of officers assigned to parades. We are really monitoring how we're spending taxpayer dollars. We have a civilian-ization plan that we're rolling out. We're seeing a very qualitative deployment of police. I've talked about this on the campaign trail. We were not deploying police correctly. We're starting to deploy them better and I'm really pleased with what Commissioner Sewell is doing. And we're going to use whatever dollar I need to keep this city safe, I'm going to do that.

**Question:** Can the director address the specifics of the question?

**Mayor Adams:** He'll do it when he'll do his briefing.

**Jacques Jiha, Director, Mayor's Office of Management and Budget:** There's no increase from November, no.

(Crosstalk.)

**Question:** Mayor, the state comptroller just came out with a statement criticizing that the city isn't doing enough when it comes to the migrant influx.

**Mayor Adams:** (Laughter.)

**Question:** Is there a plan for if the money isn't coming from the federal government, if there's no more financial assistance? And on top of that, the governor also didn't include any money for the migrant crisis here in the city in her budget address or her State of the State. What's your reaction to that?

**Mayor Adams:** Okay. Can you ask the comptroller to show you the letter he wrote to the federal government asking for help for us? Can you ask anyone, where are their letters that they wrote to governmental entities to help New York City? Helping New York City is not saying spend more of taxpayer's dollars. I just want one letter, one tweet, and maybe y'all could find a tweet. Did you see one?

**Question:** Well I'm going to ask for one.

**Mayor Adams:** Right. Can you get him on the cell phone speakerphone and say, "Can you send us the letter that you sent to the federal government saying, "Help New York City?" Or send us a tweet or do an Instagram post with a sign. Do something." I mean, can you believe it? We're the only ones that are saying, "Federal government, do your job." But everyone is telling us to do our job, which we are doing every day. We're doing that every day. We're doing our job. So I need help. And that was one of the number one things I said to all my colleagues, "I need you to join me in telling the federal government, New York taxpayers don't deserve this." And so if he

believes I'm not doing a good enough job then I think he should be part of this team calling for the federal government to do their job.

**Question:** There's some high school students outside protesting, complaining about what they say was almost \$1 billion in school budget cuts, they're calling for those to be restored. Are they being restored? How much of those are being restored, if they are?

**Mayor Adams:** First of all, as a person who has participated in protests throughout my life, seeing our young children involved in civic engagement warms my heart. Just do it on Saturday and Sunday. I would like for them to be in school. But having them engage, having them analyzing the budget, I'm going to go to that school and I'm going to give them an analysis of our budget. We want this civic engagement with our students. I think it's commendable that they are getting involved in these important issues. And they too, I would like for them to do a letter writing campaign to the federal government and say, "We need to be treating New York City fairly around the money that we are putting into the asylum seekers, and we should get our fair share of tax dollars back to the city."

And so I would like for them to stay engaged and I'm really pleased that they were out. I heard them from my room talking about this issue. We know we're doing the right thing around education. Jacques will break that down when he does his analysis. And we listened to Councilwoman Rita Joseph, came up with some good ideas, and we believe we've done some great things around education and we'll continue to do so. But hooray for those students, but just do it on the weekend.

(Crosstalk)

**Mayor Adams:** What's up, Liz?

**Question:** I wanted to ask unions. Does it look like you're setting aside more than the initial 1.25 percent? Correct? And earlier this week in talking about the nurses, you were talking about their sacrifices that they made during Covid. And you know that the municipal workers, police, teachers, firefighters, they're going to make the same argument to you. What does a fair contract mean in this environment, in this context?

**Mayor Adams:** Well that's part of the negotiation and we're not going to do that in the public. But I understand the sacrifice of being a civil servant because I think if you do an analysis of the mayors over the years, I'm probably one of the only modern day mayors that was a civil servant. So when we talk about healthcare, that's my healthcare. When you talk about pension, that's my pension. When we talk about the commitment of being a civil servant, that's who I was. And so I know what they do and we're going to be as fair and fiscally responsible as possible.

So I agree 100 percent. We have a great workforce and we need to treat them with the level of respect that they deserve. And that's why we're being extremely mindful as the Labor Commissioner is sitting down and having these contractual negotiations.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor. Can you mention, or can you talk about the enhanced security measures for school?

**Mayor Adams:** The... Yes.

**Question:** What does that entail when we talk about...

**Mayor Adams:** Yes. Hearing from school officials and students, we heard a uniform concern around the doors in the various entryways. And Chancellor Banks was able to find technology — I'm a technology person — He was able to find technology that allows all the other school doors to be locked, but put a camera with a buzzer system on the front door that allows the school safety agent to sit there and see the person before they let them inside the school. And we're looking to expand this and grow that pilot and put it in all our schools.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor?

**Mayor Adams:** Yes.

**Question:** Also in the comptroller's statement, he talked about raising new revenue, presumably knowing him is talking about raising taxes on the wealthy. Is that something you'd be in favor of?

**Mayor Adams:** That was part of... He mentioned that in our meeting and I shared with him the first order of business is we must get our fiscal house in order and that is what we are going to continue to do. And also shared with him that our city is hemorrhaging high-income earners. We're losing a substantial amount of high-income earners to, for all places, Florida. And we need to be very conscious of that.

You know, you heard my statement that 50, 52 percent of our taxes are paid by 2 percent of New Yorkers. And those tax dollars by those 2 percent of high income earners are putting cops on our street, paving our highways, our schools, museums. And we just have to be extremely focused on... We don't want to continue to have the reputation that we're the highest tax state between California and New York.

And so if there's a need, then it's something we need to sit down and focus on. But he also knows that we don't control income tax. It's controlled by the, it's controlled by the state. And if we do any property tax, we have to be thoughtful, look after those small homeowners when we think this through and we want to get this resolved during this fiscal year. But we need to be thoughtful. We need to spend our tax dollars appropriately. New Yorkers deserve better than how we've been using their tax dollars.

**Question:** Yeah, everyone's got such good questions.

**Mayor Adams:** Okay, we're going to move on then. Who's next?

(Laughter.)

**Question:** The capital funding for housing. Obviously this was a huge issue for the State of the State, big issue last year. Is it the same as last year? I think it was \$2.2 billion per year? Or has that changed in the upcoming year?

**Mayor Adams:** Well, our number of \$23 billion for investment in housing is the highest. And as we said last year, we are doing something with our chief housing officer that has not been done before. Pulling in NYCHA, but we need to build more. We are going to need help from Albany. We also self-examined ourselves and say, "what could we be doing better?" And there was a lot of things we could do better and to encourage and incentivize housing in the city. Our investments are very strong. We believed we need to continue to build, and I think \$23 billion is a real indicator of that.

**Question:** Hi, Mr. Mayor.

**Mayor Adams:** How are you doing?

**Question:** Doing well.

**Mayor Adams:** Good.

**Question:** Good to see you. I have a question. You mentioned in the budget that you only got a fraction of the \$7 million, close to nearly \$800 million from the federal government. How much of that is allocated actually for York City, and how much of that is going to cover the migrants, the cost of migrants right now, percent-wise? How much is that going to cut?

**Mayor Adams:** So we don't know the dollar amount. As I stated, I saw Senator Schumer, Antonio Reynoso's state of the borough, and first of all I thanked him. And we really need to thank Senator Schumer and Leader Jeffries for what they did, because this deal was almost dead of any money coming here. And he was able to pull this off for us. We don't know what portion we are going to receive. They haven't shared that. We were successful, and Tiffany and her team, they were able to successfully push to lawmakers there to get us \$8 million from FEMA and a \$2 million additional from Senator Schumer. But we are hoping we get a lion's share of the over \$800 million.

But let's be clear, that does not solve the problem. We want to be clear on that. That does not solve the problem. The problem is a national problem at our border, and we have to resolve that. No cities in America should be going through this. And my heart goes to El Paso, Washington, Chicago, Houston. I spoke with Mayor Lightfoot who was just furious. She has people sleeping in the basement of her library. She has people who have to remain on buses for hours. There's no more room. And we need to address this issue. So to get, we need these hundreds of millions of dollars of the money we spent, but we have to resolve this issue.

**Question:** How much would you say you want out of that portion that's over \$700 million?

**Mayor Adams:** Uh, \$1.5 billion.

**Question:** I got a follow-up on Morgan's question, Mr. Mayor. DiNapoli said that, "The city has chosen not to reflect the anticipated returning costs associated with the asylum seekers." And then he basically went on to say, "It's something the city should do." So I was wondering, I mean can you respond to that initial critique he put out that the asylum seeker costs haven't been factored in the recurring cost?

**Mayor Adams:** No, and we thank him for his input. I think he does a great job as a state comptroller, but I lean on the person who has navigated me through these storms and he stands to the right of me. Jacques has done an amazing job for the city, and I'm going to continue to follow his advice. He has not led me wrong thus far. If ever I stand up at the podium, he's not standing next to me, it's because he led me wrong. But until then, he is right to the right of me and I will continue to follow his advice.

**Question:** Hi, there.

**Mayor Adams:** Sally?

**Question:** So yesterday, I know you were in Albany, you had a number of meetings, I assume with legislative leaders... Or maybe just two days ago. (Laughter.) Can you share anything about your discussions with the leaders on what you're looking for regarding recidivism and kind of where they stand on it?

**Mayor Adams:** Well, I've said this before, and I'm going to continue to say it. I just believe that there was a disservice last year. There was a real energy that Eric got nothing out of Albany. And it was just so wrong. The list of items that I asked for, there were only two items I did not get out of Albany based on my analysis. And that was one. Class size. I still think that was a mistake. And my belief in having the dangerousness standard, those were the only two things I didn't get.

**Question:** (Inaudible.)

**Mayor Adams:** Do what?

**Question:** 421-A.

**Mayor Adams:** Well, I don't think that was... We need it, but that wasn't a huge item. The items that I came up and advocated for, they were there with me. And you would not think that when you read the coverage, but the reality they were.

And so this year I made it clear when I sat down with the leaders and the members up there on what items are important around recidivists. And I said, "Let's come together. And here we are going to give you the numbers of we believe around 1700 people are recidivists, they're very violent. And they just have made up their minds that they're going to continue to do violence. How do we now zero in on those?"

And Carl made a good point that I really agree with you. You heard me say, "There are many rivers that feed the sea of violence," And Carl said, "Let's look at the totality of our criminal

justice system and come up with real plans of addressing the problems in our criminal justice system." That was music to my ears. We are going to show some of our ideas. He's going to show his. Senator Cousins, majority leader, is also in the same place. I think we're starting off on a real good footing and I think we're going to make some great inroads.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, wondering, what's your response to a Post report a day or two ago about tons of food getting thrown out at the Row Hotel Park in Midtown? Which is bags and bags of food. Migrants using hot plates, et cetera. But we spoke to an employee who said it's just like garbage city. Also wondering how much money is the city...

(Crosstalk.)

**Mayor Adams:** Wait, how we doing this, how we doing this, how we doing this? It's all good, huh?

**Question:** I'm wondering what are your responses to that? And also how much does that cost the city? I wrote the story, so that's why...

**Mayor Adams:** Well, we don't know. I like how you reporters love y'all's stories. We don't know. First of all, I don't know exactly how much, no. First of all, I don't know exactly how much was thrown out. We are going to dig into the reason why, because we should not waste food. We did a survey and asked those who were part of the asylum seekers of, "Give us your thoughts around food." They said they did not want sandwiches. They wanted hot food. We tried to accommodate that. But I guess I'm a little old fashioned man. If our city is giving people food to eat that are in a terrible state, I think that that is a real great effort for the people of this city. And I'm not quite sure if there was a bag of food that was tossed out. I don't know the circumstances around that. And so I would dig into it.

But what we are going to do, we are going to provide food for people. People may have a different cultural taste for certain foods. We can't do that. We can only provide nutritional food for people. And then we'll do an analysis, if people are ordering too much, then they have to make the adjustments. So, we're going to look into it and determine exactly what happened there. I don't know what happened there. I learned about it when I read it in the papers. You wanted to ask something, yea, cause this is your story.

**Question:** Do you know much money the city spends at The Row every day housing and feeding the migrants? And more broadly, we have very few details about specifics. You say that it's costing taxpayers a lot. With all due respect, that's not entirely fair to the taxpayer. What does a lot mean? What is the number?

**Mayor Adams:** I always learned in life, when someone started a sentence, "With all due respect," they're about to disrespect you. Okay, but I heard your question. It's a lot. And my budget director is going to give you some rough estimates. But the danger of giving rough estimates, then it's reported that these are the factual amounts. It's a moving target. It's moving every day. At this time, the only answer I can give you, that it is a lot. And when we could come

up with the right dollar amount because the target has stopped moving so much, then we'll do that. Until then, I can't.

**Question:** Hi, Mr. Mayor. You were discussing the city vacancies earlier. (inaudible) was adding some attorney titles to the (inaudible) recruit list for lifting residency requirements because of those. What else is sort of on your mind for actually filling those (inaudible)?

**Mayor Adams:** And that's a great question. First of all, our passive recruitment system is antiquated. We sit around and for the most part, have people fill out... take the exams or try to fill out. We have to change that mindset. And we are going to be doing a series of things, like we're going to partner with DC 37 to put in place hiring halls. We're going to go and recruit our colleges and recruit at our high schools upon graduation. We are going to have a universal place where people can go, who's looking for a job, and using everything from QR codes to have a centralized place. Because when I walk the streets and I ask people on the subway, "Do you know where to send someone if they're looking for a job?" I'm finding that people don't know the starting place.

And so what I have told the Deputy Mayor Maria Torres-Springer is that we must educate the public with jobs are available, is start selling our product of civil servant jobs that are available. These are good jobs with good benefits, good retirements, good pay. And we are going to start selling our product. We're going to be more aggressive and not as passive as we have been historically waiting for people to come to us. We're going out to them, and let them know what jobs are available in the city.

But again, let's not lose focus. There is a national hiring crisis. Everywhere I go, engineers, attorneys, nurses, there's a crisis of hiring that we must now adjust to. Okay.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, what do you make of George Santos and his future?

**Mayor Adams:** I think that he's now elected to Congress and there's a congressional body that will determine what his future is. And I respect that body and their decision. And then if he stays through the term, he has to go back in front of his voters. And they will determine if he's going to stay in office or not.

So at this stage, it is up to his colleagues to decide what's going to happen. And the outcome of any investigation that outside entities will do, they will decide. I don't think my opinion matters here. He was voted into office. And there are procedures in removing someone from office. And there's procedures, if his action crossed over to into some wrongful doing. We have investigatory bodies that would determine that.

**Question:** George Santos, part of his district does include a small portion of New York City. Do you see yourself being able to sit down at the table with him and work to get more resources for New York City for Congress?

**Mayor Adams:** Yes. Yes, definitely. He's the congressperson that represent parts of the city. And even in the state, there are things we need in the state and also there are things we're going

to need. We're going to need votes on the federal level. So until it's determined that he no longer should serve — right now his name is congressman. And we are not leaving any stone unturned on who we should be sitting down with to make sure New Yorkers get the resources that they need.

Thank you.

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