



September 1st, 2020

Dear Mayor de Blasio:

New York City is in the middle of a crisis. COVID-19 continues to threaten lives in our city. 700,000 New Yorkers are out of work, and many are at risk of losing their homes because they are behind on rent or mortgage payments. Nationwide protests against racist police brutality have emerged, alongside calls for defunding and abolishing the NYPD. These crises have hurt working class New Yorkers, elderly and disabled New Yorkers, New York's immigrant community and New York's communities of color the most.

Sadly, the response of your administration to this moment of crisis has been one of austerity. This includes planned layoffs of 22,000 city workers, some of whom have already lost their jobs. As teachers [prepare to strike](#) for safe working conditions, 2,800 CUNY professors and staff have been [laid off](#) and 9,000 teachers are [facing layoffs](#). 400 EMTs who risked their lives as Essential Workers are now [at risk of losing their jobs](#). And amidst racist police violence and protests calling for the defunding and abolition of racist police agencies, you do not plan to substantially cut funding for the police while planning cuts to the [agency responsible for overseeing police conduct](#).

These cuts are morally repugnant and unacceptable. Our city must not balance the budget on the backs of its workers, while refusing to hold Wall Street, corporations, the ultra-rich and the racist NYPD accountable. Every dollar that goes to the NYPD, or that goes to the wealthy untaxed, is a dollar taken away from affordable and public housing, child care, school nurses, meals for seniors, and other necessary public services.

As rank-and-file progressives in the largest public sector union in NYC, we are calling on you, Mayor de Blasio, to say **NO to layoffs, and NO to austerity!** Rather, we must invest further in our city. Much as the New Deal promoted investment in public programs and services as a reaction to the Great Depression, a Green New Deal for New York and other public investment is essential to bolstering the economy and improving public life.

Specifically, we demand:

- No layoffs to city workers.
- No backroom deals between the mayor and union leaders without involving the union's rank and file members.
- No labor concessions on our benefits.
- No austerity.
- Invest more in public services, through: 1) taxes on the wealth and income of the ultra-rich, including real estate tax reforms to reduce giveaways to wealthy owners; 2) cuts to the NYPD and to the salaries of senior city leaders to protect the jobs and benefits of lower-paid workers and invest further in city services; 3) more taxes on Wall Street; and 4) renegotiating private contracts and committing to public services and public jobs.
- Endorse the [#MakeBillionairesPay campaign](#), and advocate for State policies that ensure the wealthy pay their fair share of taxes.

Signed,
District Council 37 Progressive Caucus

CC: Henry Garrido, Council Speaker Corey Johnson, City Comptroller Scott Stringer, Governor Andrew Cuomo, New York Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, and Speaker of the New York State Assembly Carl Heastie