

FERRER: I grew up in the South Bronx, raised by my mother and grandmother. My first job was shining shoes on the corner of 149th Street and Southern Boulevard. I went to NYU on two scholarships. So I know what it's like to work hard, pay a mortgage, and try to build a better life for your kid right here in this city.

The current administration understands big business, but when you look at its priorities, you gotta wonder whether the administration really understands the lives of everyday New Yorkers.

For three years, this administration has obsessed about helping a wealthy NFL team owner build a new football stadium on the West Side of Manhattan. But what have they done to help average folks who can't afford a multi-million dollar condo and or to send their kids to private school?

I understand the lives most New Yorkers live, and I'm running for Mayor because I want to build a city that works for every New Yorker; a city that gives all our people the opportunity to build a better life.

As Mayor, I want the chance to confront our problems in new and better ways.

We have a crisis in our public schools when over

fifty percent of our kids drop out, and we know where they end up; on a street corner, out of a job and out of luck.

That's why I put forward a bold plan to give our 1.1 million school kids everything the suburban school systems give their kids, and a way to pay for it.

We have a crisis of affordability in housing, with too many New Yorkers squeezed out of the neighborhoods they love, or not being able to find a decent place to live at a price or rent they can afford.

That's why I put forward a bold and comprehensive plan to build and keep affordable -- 167,000 -- homes and apartments, and a way to pay for it.

We have a crisis of good jobs in this city, with forty percent African-American male unemployment and thirty-three percent Latino male unemployment; these are statistics that bring our whole city down. That's why I proposed a bold small-business plan to use their energy to bring down unemployment and help us close the skills gap.

And, finally, we have a crisis in healthcare.

1.8 million New Yorkers don't have health insurance.

Between a half a million and 800,000 New Yorkers, nearly 300,000 of them children are eligible for public health insurance programs, but they remain unenrolled, costing our city

untold hundreds of million of dollars in waste and duplication.

That's why I put forward a bold plan to enroll those children and their families, working families, in programs to keep them healthier and save taxpayers money at the same time.

Now of course, a Mayor has to make the tough decisions, but he has to make the right decisions too. But above all, a Mayor has to make the kinds of decisions that give us hope -- hope for better schools, for affordable homes, for good and decent jobs; hope that gives us bigger dreams, and confidence that New York City is still the place where we can make those dreams come true, for ourselves and for our children.

Thank you.