

Committee on the Disabled and Special Needs
February 27, 2015

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE ON THE DISABLED AND SPECIAL NEEDS

Room 653, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Friday, February 27, 2015
10:18 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILMAN DENNIS O'BRIEN
COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE L. BLACKWELL
COUNCILWOMAN MARIA D. QUINONES-SANCHEZ
COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS
COUNCILMAN DAVID OH

RESOLUTIONS: 150026 and 150027

STREHLOW & ASSOCIATES, INC.
(215) 504-4622

1 - - -

2 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Good morning. This
3 hearing is called to order. This is the
4 Public Hearing of the City Council Committee
5 on the Disabled and Special Needs. The
6 purpose of this public hearing is to hear
7 testimony on Resolutions No. 150026 and
8 150027.

9 My name is Dennis O'Brien, I'm Chair of
10 the Committee. And I recognize the presence
11 of a quorum of the Committee Members. We
12 have to my right Councilwoman Maria
13 Quinones-Sanchez, to my far left
14 Councilwoman Blackwell, and to my immediate
15 left Councilwoman Bass.

16 First what I would like to do is have
17 the Clerk read title of Resolution 150026
18 into the record.

19 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 150026:
20 Authorizing Council's Committee on the
21 Disabled and Special Needs to hold public
22 hearings to examine the Philadelphia Autism
23 Project's final report and strategic plan.

24 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: And I want to thank

1 Councilwoman Blackwell. At the end of the
2 last hearing where we considered
3 considerable testimony, valuable testimony,
4 she suggested that we report the study out,
5 but I had already adjourned the Committee.
6 So, it was the intention of this Committee
7 to take that formal vote.

8 So if there is no one in the chamber to
9 give additional testimony to Resolution
10 150026 and with the indulgence of my
11 colleagues, is there anyone here to offer
12 additional testimony on that resolution?

13 (No further testimony.)

14 Seeing none, then I will ask my
15 colleagues to briefly go into recess so that
16 we can adopt the Final Report and then go
17 back into the Public Hearing and begin
18 testimony on Resolution 150027.

19 - - -

20 (Brief recess from Public Hearing to make
21 motion and vote on Resolution 150226.)

22 - - -

23 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: The Chair
24 recognizes Councilwoman Sanchez for a motion

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1 on the Final Report of the Philadelphia
2 Autism Project that was considered by the
3 Committee at the Public Hearing held on
4 February 2, 2015.

5 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: I move
6 that the Committee on Disabled and Special
7 Needs adopt the Report for the Philadelphia
8 Autism Project, which was submitted to the
9 Committee on February 2, 2015.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Second.

11 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Seconded by
12 Councilwoman Bass.

13 And has been moved and properly seconded
14 that the Final Report of the Philadelphia
15 Autism Project has been considered by this
16 Committee on February 2, 2015 on
17 February 27, 2015, the issue to the
18 Committee -- by this Committee to the
19 Council, all those in favor of this motion
20 signify by saying aye.

21 (Chorus of Ayes)

22 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Opposed? No?

23 The ayes have it.

24 The motion is carried. The Report will

1 be issued to the Council for the next
2 session of Council.

3 We will now get back into session into
4 the Public Hearing.

5 - - -

6 (Public Hearing regarding Resolution
7 150027 recommenced at this time.)

8 - - -

9 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Will the Clerk
10 please read the Resolution 150027.

11 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 150027:
12 Authorizing council's Committee on the
13 Disabled and Special Needs to hold public
14 hearings regarding the state of educational
15 opportunities and career development in
16 Philadelphia for people with physical,
17 psychiatric, sensory, intellectual and
18 developmental disabilities.

19 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Thank you. I just
20 have some opening remarks and will recognize
21 my colleagues. I will try to keep these
22 under an hour.

23 Good morning. Thank you to everyone for
24 being here today as we examine the state of

1 educational opportunities and career
2 development for individuals with physical,
3 sensory, psychiatric, intellectual and
4 developmental disabilities. Educational
5 attainment and gainful employment are
6 crucial for individuals to live a
7 meaningful, productive and independent life.
8 Yet for individuals with disabilities,
9 educational attainment and permanent
10 employment are often out of reach due to
11 factors such as discrimination, a lack of
12 encouragement to go to school or to work and
13 little support services.

14 What I'd also like to do is concentrate
15 on the wonderful strengths and contributions
16 that individuals with disabilities bring to
17 the workforce and to the educational
18 community. They possess such a wonderful
19 work ethic.

20 And I remember last year there was an
21 individual living with autism when we had
22 all those terrible snowstorms. This
23 individual made it to work when nobody else
24 made it to work, and he did the job of three

1 of his colleagues which became an incentive
2 for his three colleagues that they better
3 show up.

4 But they are focused and they're
5 committed. They're responsible. They have
6 aptitudes in different areas depending on
7 their disability. They have skills in
8 technology. And there is a company SAP who
9 is now very interested in the brains and the
10 minds of individuals living with autism.

11 And they are not only hiring those
12 individuals, but they are committed to
13 clinical assessments and changing the
14 environment workforce so these individuals
15 are wonderfully successful and included in
16 the workforce.

17 And up in the Northeast, there is an
18 aviation -- aerial aviation company that has
19 an individual living with autism. And it's
20 high resolution cameras, sees everything in
21 the margins. But the most remarkable thing
22 that they told me is he improved the
23 workforce because his loyalty, his
24 commitment, all the attributes that I'm

1 talking about here today. But there is no
2 prejudice. There is no discrimination.
3 Everybody feeds off of his positive energy,
4 and he makes toe workplace so wonderfully
5 success.

6 As we look, there is one successful
7 employer that I would like to celebrate, and
8 that's the Philadelphia Phillies. We went
9 to them with Dr. Wendy Ross. We trained
10 over 300 employees. And from Aramark to
11 ticket takers to the security guys to the
12 people that break the fields and fanavision,
13 everybody that you can think of was trained
14 to be autism sensitive as opposed to New
15 York where there is one little section of
16 their stadium that said we are going to put
17 the autism families over here with their
18 family members. Our whole stadium was
19 autism friendly. And we challenged the New
20 York sticking Mets on nationally televised
21 game so we can beat them on the field and
22 can also race to the top of the ladder and
23 beat them on our approach, our inclusive
24 approach, to individuals with disabilities

1 living with autism. And we recognize them
2 as the employer of the year.

3 And initially, the Autism Society of
4 America when they came up with that
5 wonderful idea, Philly said, we don't know
6 if we deserve that because we don't employ
7 anybody. As we were going through the
8 training, it was remarkable how many
9 individuals living with autism were already
10 in the employ of the Philadelphia Phillies.
11 Actually served as a wonderful spirit of
12 inspiration for all of us. And I wish a lot
13 of employers were here today to recognize
14 the wonderful opportunity that is afforded
15 to their workplace that they employ
16 individuals with disabilities.

17 So, different disabilities properly
18 require different supports. And the data on
19 educational attainment among individuals
20 with disability is abysmal. In 2012, only
21 one third of individuals with disabilities
22 obtained a high school diploma or its
23 equivalent. And 22 percent had less than a
24 high school education. This is especially

1 troubling because we know what individuals
2 with disabilities are capable of advancing
3 their education, but many require supports
4 to do so.

5 What is more troubling is we know that
6 education is key to career opportunities
7 that steer individuals away from a life of
8 isolation and poverty. Those with
9 disabilities are no different than those
10 without disabilities in that higher levels
11 of education make them more likely to be
12 employed.

13 In 2012 -- I'm not going to kill you
14 with statistics -- but only 32 percent of
15 working age people with disabilities were in
16 the labor force compared to 78 percent of
17 the general population. Unemployment in
18 Philadelphians with disability is one of the
19 key factors in Philadelphia's steep poverty
20 rate of 12.2 percent which is twice the
21 national average.

22 I look forward to hearing from the panel
23 addressing transition services because we
24 know effective transition services can be

1 the key to ensuring individuals with
2 disabilities are on a career trajectory.
3 These services should level the playing
4 field so youth and young adults with
5 disabilities are given the same chance to
6 benefit from earlier work experience by
7 building their resumes, expanding their
8 networks and gaining soft skills such as
9 effective communication, time management,
10 being a team player and demonstrating a
11 strong work ethic. Working to increase
12 educational attainment and integrated
13 employment opportunities for individuals
14 with disabilities is the right thing to do
15 for many reasons.

16 There is also a legal grounding for this
17 as well under the Americans with
18 Disabilities Act of 1990, the 1999 Olmstead
19 Supreme Court decision and the ADA
20 Amendments Act of 2008. You will hear
21 witnesses today talk about these legal
22 mandates including a recent mandate from the
23 Centers for Medicaid/Medicare services where
24 they will no longer support segregated work

1 settings through their home and community
2 base waiver. It's clear this issue must be
3 a top priority in Philadelphia.

4 And again, I will just go off script.
5 And I will ask individuals to consider when
6 they testify, in case I forget to ask this
7 question, that we have individuals I think
8 that have the benefit of MAWD. When the
9 corporate administration advanced health in
10 Pennsylvania, they're individuals with
11 Medical Assistance Working with
12 Disabilities. If they got a job, they still
13 need those supports. But under the original
14 submission of health in Pennsylvania, the
15 MAWD was taken off the table. You get a
16 job, you lose your supports. Again, to be
17 successful in a job, we want to talk about
18 those incentives and disincentives.

19 The Social Security and Social Security
20 Disability, there are agencies, federal
21 agencies, that are mandated to counsel
22 individuals on those supports so they can
23 maintain a level of support while leaving
24 Social Security. But the fear is with many

1 of our individuals is it's either or.
2 That's why they are subjected to poverty for
3 indeterminate periods of time. Because if
4 they get a job, then they just get right up
5 to that poverty level. If they don't have a
6 job, then they're in poverty.

7 It's remarkable when we talk about our
8 poverty levels in Philadelphia, the
9 disability community is a huge contributing
10 factor to that. It's not just the
11 immigration. The immigrants and others that
12 are not gainfully employed for one reason or
13 another. It's our individuals with
14 disabilities that create that challenge for
15 all of us.

16 So, our witnesses today will share
17 personal experiences. They will identify
18 the key issues. They will highlight what's
19 working in Philadelphia and what barriers
20 exist. And most importantly, will offer
21 concrete strategies for moving forward.
22 Rates of employment for individuals with
23 disabilities in federal, state and local
24 governments are almost identical to rates of

1 employment of workers with no disabilities.
2 15 percent of individuals with disabilities
3 work in government compared to 14 percent of
4 individuals without disabilities work in
5 government.

6 So, it's clear to me that the City of
7 Philadelphia can lead the way in terms of
8 creating internships and permanent
9 employment opportunities for individuals
10 with disabilities. Today's hearing will lay
11 the foundation for this important work.

12 Got any opening remarks?

13 (No opening remarks.)

14 With my colleagues permission, I will
15 call the first panel. Would Rose Evans, who
16 is a consumer and student at Lincoln
17 University; Emily Scott, who is the Program
18 Director and Educational Specialist at
19 Horizon House, Inc; Ed Kelly, who is
20 Self-advocate Employee for SPIN, Inc; and
21 Richard Greenfield, Chief Operating Officer,
22 SPIN, Inc.

23 (Panel assembles at Witness Table.)

24 And I would like to take this

1 opportunity as our witnesses are assembling
2 at the table, to recognize my colleague
3 Councilman Oh who has joined us.

4 Councilman do you have any remarks you
5 would like to --

6 COUNCILMAN OH: No one can say it better
7 than you, Councilman.

8 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Thank you. I said
9 it longer.

10 So, Rose Evans, if you would like to
11 start off whenever you're ready. If you
12 would, would you please state your name for
13 the record and then you can begin your
14 testimony. And please try to move the
15 microphone close to you.

16 MS. EVANS: Good morning. My name is
17 Rose Evans.

18 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Move that a little
19 closer.

20 MS. EVANS: Good morning, Councilman
21 O'Brien, Members of the Committee on
22 Disabilities and Special Needs.

23 Again, my name is Rose Evans. I am a
24 wife, a mother of three daughters and six

1 lovely granddaughters. I am --

2 (Pause to fix sound issues.)

3 MS. EVANS: Once again, good morning,
4 Councilman O'Brien and Members of the
5 Committee on Disabilities and Special Needs.
6 My name is Rose Evans. I'm a wife, a mother
7 of three daughters and the grandmother of
8 six lovely granddaughters.

9 I am dyslexic, and I have been diagnosed
10 with PTSD. But with the help of my support
11 team at Education Plus, I am presently a
12 junior at Lincoln University studying for my
13 bachelor's degree in behavior health and
14 human services.

15 I would like to give thanks to the
16 Creator for bringing us together today so
17 that I may testify and educate at this
18 hearing regarding the state of educational
19 opportunities in career development in
20 Philadelphia for individuals with
21 disabilities. I want to thank Emily Scott
22 and Kathy Copeland to invite me to say a few
23 words about my experiences at -- with
24 Horizon House and the Education Plus

1 Program.

2 From the very first time I walked
3 through the doors of Horizon House in 2010,
4 everyone was very kind and supportive. For
5 example, my counselor Sarah Neil helped me
6 to believe in myself and explained all the
7 opportunities that was available to me if I
8 applied myself. And she also explained to
9 me the values of being a team player.

10 Sarah introduced me to Jerry Howard and
11 Emily Scott. And for the last five years,
12 they have been a resource of constant
13 support for me. They have helped me to
14 improve my writing skills with one-on-one
15 tutoring sessions. They have connected me
16 with the grant programs such as Pennsylvania
17 Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, OVR
18 that I needed to help pay for my education.

19 They have provided the counseling that I
20 needed in order to understand the culture of
21 college environment. And they have taught
22 me the -- taught me to network and utilize
23 other support services such as Learning Ally
24 and Dragon Natural Speech to maintain my

1 academic success. I am motivate, and I am a
2 survivor.

3 I believe that education is the key to
4 success. I am pleased to say that my family
5 and friends are there for me and are
6 constantly encouraging me to complete my
7 bachelor's degree. I am a survivor because
8 I asked and I prayed for the help.

9 In June of 2000, I was on my way to work
10 and I was in a very serious SEPTA accident.
11 In a matter of minutes, my life changed for
12 the worst. I couldn't walk for months. I
13 was diagnosed with post traumatic stress
14 disorder, PTSD. So naturally, I was
15 depressed and suffered from anxiety and
16 panic attacks. It took years of struggle to
17 work through my depression and disabilities.

18 The good news is, I'm here today and I
19 am able to share my story with you all.
20 Because of Education Plus support team, I am
21 able to continue to visualize a promising
22 life at the end of a long tunnel.

23 In 2010, I enrolled in Community College
24 of Philadelphia. I was excited to say the

1 least, but I needed accommodations to help
2 me to move forward such as tape recorders to
3 record lectures, lectures -- tutors to help
4 me understand my assignments and class
5 notetakers -- also, class notetakers along
6 with internet and software access on my home
7 computer. The counselors at CCP was very
8 helpful. They connected me with Horizon
9 House and the Education Plus Program.
10 Together, they provided accommodations that
11 I needed.

12 I transferred from Community College of
13 Philadelphia to Lincoln University in the
14 fall semester of 2013. My education plans
15 are to complete my studies at Lincoln
16 University and graduate in 2016 and, of
17 course, make the Dean's List. My career
18 goals are to use my bachelor's degree in the
19 counseling capacity of working with
20 individuals with disabilities so that I can
21 give back and contribute to society.

22 I will also use my professional skills
23 to teach young people to be passionate about
24 their education because they are our future

1 and our future leaders.

2 I would like once again to thank the
3 Chair of this Committee Councilman O'Brien
4 and the Members of the Committee along also
5 Emily Scott and Kathy Copeland for giving me
6 this opportunity to educate for Education
7 Plus.

8 Peace, love and blessings. Thank you.

9 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Thank you so much,
10 Rose. And what I am going to do is ask all
11 the individuals to testify at once before
12 questions.

13 Emily, if you could identify yourself
14 for the record and then proceed with your
15 testimony.

16 MS. SCOTT: My name is Emily Salkever
17 Scott. I am the Program Coordinator of
18 Education Plus. Good morning, Chairman
19 O'Brien and Members of the Disabled and
20 Special Needs Committee.

21 I have been in the field of mental
22 health for about over 20 years. I've been
23 with supportive employment program Horizon
24 House for about nine years, and I've been in

1 my present position, Education Coordinator
2 for four years.

3 At Education Plus, our overall mission
4 that we strive to enhance the quality of
5 life of vulnerable citizens in Philadelphia.
6 We do this by working -- focusing our work
7 on supporting local college adult students
8 with mental health disabilities to
9 successfully meet the goals of graduating
10 from colleges, universities and technical
11 training institutes in the five county area.

12 Our students range in age from 18 to --
13 well, we really don't have a cutoff. They
14 have a variety of disabilities including
15 depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety,
16 phobias, schizophrenia, schizo effective
17 disorder, input learning disabilities.
18 Often these students also have what they
19 call co-occurring disorders and issues
20 including they might have criminal
21 backgrounds, they might have addiction
22 issues, physical disabilities, vision
23 disabilities. They might have poor social
24 support.

1 We've been in existence at Education
2 Plus for ten years. Right now we have
3 received some funding from the Department of
4 Behavioral Health. We have ten students at
5 present that we get fee for service through
6 the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation,
7 OVR. And we are working on our third
8 three-year grant from the Pew Trust for
9 vulnerable citizens in Philadelphia. It
10 could possibly be our last year with Pew,
11 and we're hoping to expand our OVR students.

12 Anyway, the students with limited
13 resources and disabilities -- students with
14 limited resources and disabilities often
15 feel different than other students. They
16 might not realize how important their voice
17 is in the classroom and off campus. The
18 support we provide the students helps them
19 to level the field, so to speak. We let
20 them know that they are not alone and that
21 we are there to support them and talk if
22 they feel like they don't fit in, if they
23 are struggling in coursework, they want to
24 give up, they might be having trouble with a

1 professor, they don't get along with other
2 students. They just need some
3 encouragement. We encourage, support and we
4 celebrate our students' achievements, as
5 well. Our goal is to work with these
6 students to become increasingly independent.
7 Our goal is really to work ourselves out of
8 a job so they don't really need us anymore.

9 We're a mobile, education and emotional
10 support program for students at all levels
11 of post secondary education. At present, we
12 serve about 40 students at the local schools
13 including Community College of Philadelphia,
14 Lincoln University, Holy Family University,
15 Temple University. I have one student at
16 Empire Beauty School, another at Lincoln
17 Tech. We have had students at Pierce
18 College, LaSalle. Just a lot of the schools
19 in the area and we keep reaching out to
20 more.

21 One thing, Councilman O'Brien, going a
22 little off script. You mentioned about the
23 Phillies organization, how they said, well,
24 we don't really have people with autism that

1 work here. And you said, well, actually you
2 probably do and you don't even know it.

3 And that's how we feel about students
4 that we find on campus that might have
5 disabilities. Some colleges might say, you
6 know, we don't really have a lot of students
7 with disabilities. Well, you know what,
8 they are there and they need that support.
9 So, I just wanted to mention that. Thank
10 you for that story you told.

11 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Thank you.

12 MS. SCOTT: So, let's see. We help with
13 a lot of different things. Some students
14 need help with the work, some don't, time
15 management, organization techniques, social
16 skills, study assistance, transferring from
17 one program to another, finding
18 scholarships, connecting with the Office of
19 Vocational Rehabilitation. We help with
20 housing concerns.

21 Sometimes our students join a homeless
22 or with limited food, and we help with those
23 things, finding resources on and off campus.
24 Including the disability resource centers on

1 the campus and counseling centers. We just
2 help negotiate the academic landscape
3 overall.

4 We help students move through financial
5 aid process and assist with appeals, excused
6 medical withdrawals and other barriers to
7 matriculation. We encourage students to
8 connect with different supportive programs
9 and offices in the City and at their schools
10 to meet their individual needs and
11 interests.

12 In our ten years of support, we have
13 seen over 40 students graduate. Most of
14 these students received associate's degrees.
15 At least a third received bachelor's degrees
16 and several went on to receive masters
17 degrees. Their majors included Education,
18 Behavioral Health, Psychology, Mathematics,
19 Information Technology, Political Science
20 and the list goes on.

21 In the past year, we celebrated -- six
22 students graduated. Other success, we had
23 four students -- other recent success
24 include the fact that four students

1 graduated in May 2014, one graduated in
2 December 2014, two were from Temple, two
3 from CCP and one was from Orleans Institute
4 in electricity.

5 In November, one of our community
6 college students was invited to join Pi
7 Theta Kappa, a national community college
8 academic honor society. She is graduating
9 in May of this year and recently received a
10 academic scholarship offer from a local
11 nursing school program in Philadelphia.
12 We're expecting three more graduates in May
13 and two in August. And I'd like to invite
14 all of you to attend our celebration, hear
15 more personal stories of overcoming
16 obstacles and achieving academic success.

17 Thank you once again, Council Members.

18 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Thank you. Thank
19 you, Emily.

20 I'm just going to throw in little
21 statistical stuff so I don't overwhelm
22 everybody at one time. Paul Chadwick who is
23 at Drexel did a longitudinal -- national
24 longitudinal transitional study. And among

1 children who had been in special education,
2 35 percent of kids with autism attending a
3 two or four year college, 51 percent of
4 those with a speech or language delay did
5 so; 40 percent of those with a learning
6 disability did so; and 18 percent of those
7 with medical retardation did so.

8 And 55 -- this is interesting. 55
9 percent of young adults with autism had paid
10 employment within six years of high school
11 while 86 percent of those with a speech or
12 language impairment, 94 percent of those
13 with learning disability, 69 percent of
14 those with mental retardation. Just little
15 statistical informational I will sprinkle
16 out there for education purposes.

17 So now I would like to ask Ed Kelly who
18 is a self-advocate and employee of SPIN,
19 your testimony, Ed. Would you please
20 identify yourself and begin your testimony.

21 MR. KELLY: Yes. Good morning various
22 members of the Committee. My name is Ed
23 Kelly. And I currently live and work in
24 Philadelphia. Diagnosed in the seventh

1 grade with Asperger disorder.

2 I'd always had a hard time finding
3 direction to follow after graduation.
4 School is all that I really know. But in
5 school they tell you what needs to be done,
6 when to do it and how to do it. And after
7 graduation, there wasn't that guidance so
8 everything sort of fell apart.

9 The open-ended tasks related to
10 applications for jobs and colleges were
11 always difficult because I struggle to
12 motivate myself for completing them because
13 they didn't offer much or any feedback after
14 submission. So, I found transition out of
15 the school environment really just left me
16 at horrible loose ends.

17 I'd always been proficient with
18 technology, computers and such to the point
19 that you presented me with a problem, I
20 would find a solution or get rid of the
21 problem. So, I really wanted to work with
22 computers because it was rewarding to learn
23 new things and apply that knowledge, but I
24 couldn't get connected with the resources

1 that I needed after graduation. So, I was
2 home for just about 15 months with nothing
3 that I was doing.

4 I graduated from Bensalem High School.
5 So after graduation, I lived in Bucks County
6 and tried to connect with the Office of
7 Vocational Rehabilitation. But I met with
8 very little success. Despite the enthusiasm
9 of the person working with me, she was
10 really just trying to push me into a college
11 environment and not really helping me with
12 it at all. Eventually, I dropped out of the
13 program for a while.

14 Then I move into Philadelphia County.
15 And some changes in my personal life brought
16 me to seek out a job again. As it happened,
17 I had a connection at SPIN and I was able to
18 get an interview in October of last year for
19 an internship in the IT Department. The
20 internship wasn't going to pay, but the goal
21 was to get the job experience under my belt
22 so I can apply for other jobs with some
23 experience.

24 As they would have it, though, my

1 interview was over itself. And shortly
2 thereafter in November, I was offered a
3 chance to do contract work which I jumped on
4 right away because it looked great on the
5 resume and I was really enjoying the work.
6 Once again, a few weeks later, I was offered
7 full-time position in the Help Desk in
8 December. And just recently as of this
9 week, I'm working my way into promotion to
10 programming based on how quickly I learned
11 the various systems at SPIN.

12 Having jobs really changed my life. I
13 am doing work that I enjoy with great
14 people. I'm a lot more confident in myself,
15 and I am working through a lot of my
16 anxieties. Grateful to be able to support
17 myself and have the opportunity to advance
18 myself at a pace that I just couldn't have
19 imagined six months ago.

20 I'd like to thank you for the
21 opportunity to speak today.

22 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Thank you, Ed.
23 That testimony has been inspiring.

24 Richard Greenfield, would you like to

1 present testimony?

2 MR. GREENFIELD: Yes.

3 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Please, state your
4 name and proceed.

5 MR. GREENFIELD: Good morning,
6 Councilman O'Brien and Members of the
7 Committee. Thank you for inviting me to
8 testify this morning. My name is Rich
9 Greenfield. I'm the Chief Operating Officer
10 at SPIN.

11 As you know, SPIN was founded 45 years
12 ago to provide services to children and
13 adults with developmental disabilities in
14 the Philadelphia region and now we are also
15 in the Lehigh Valley. Today SPIN serves
16 over 3,100 people in five Pennsylvania
17 counties with more than 1,100 full-time
18 employees. SPIN prides itself on being one
19 of the premiere providers of services for
20 people with disabilities in Philadelphia and
21 in the region. I'm here today to tell you
22 the remarkable story of Ed, our version of
23 it, and his recent employment experience in
24 SPIN.

1 Ed is a high school graduate as he just
2 told us. He was referred by somebody who
3 knew SPIN very, very well and hoped that
4 given the opportunity and some guidance, Ed
5 could develop into a valuable asset in
6 SPIN's information technology development.

7 SPIN partners with many local colleges
8 and universities and traditionally offers
9 internship opportunities for college
10 students each year. I am responsible for
11 administering and supporting internships in
12 our IT Finance and HR departments. As such,
13 I was on the interviewing team for Ed. Ed
14 gave a great interview. And clearly, we
15 began to see the possibility in him.

16 SPIN offered Ed an unpaid internship, as
17 he just mentioned, in the fall of 2014 with
18 our IT Department Help Desk support group
19 where he worked to resolve computer related
20 issues, support issues from employees in
21 customer friendly way. The IT management
22 mentored Ed to ensure he had the supports
23 needed to help him become a successful
24 member of the Help Desk team. Ed thrived in

1 his new position. And as he honed his IT
2 talents, he grew in confidence as he
3 described. And his communication skills,
4 both written and verbal, were improving.

5 When an IT Help Desk position became
6 available, a full-time position, we
7 interviewed many external candidates
8 including Ed and was clear that Ed was the
9 best person for the job. Ed became a full
10 time paid employee after just one month at
11 SPIN.

12 Ed took his new position seriously from
13 the beginning. He worked hard to learn
14 everything he could in the Help Desk field.
15 He listened well. He did independent
16 research and he asked questions of his
17 coworkers in IT and mentors when he wasn't
18 certain about technical issues that he
19 needed to resolve.

20 It quickly became apparent that Ed had
21 great interest and proficiency, as he
22 described, in computer hardware and software
23 programming. When Ed learns a computer
24 skill, he has the ability to apply it

1 correctly in all related areas. Ed received
2 glowing praise from his managers and his
3 fellow employees with whom he helped.

4 Just recently we approached Ed to gauge
5 his interest in becoming a programmer and
6 database administrator. The position
7 requires complex knowledge of computer
8 languages and software code, which are in
9 Ed's areas of skill set. Ed was interested
10 and we decided to promote him into the
11 position with other additional supports
12 necessary to foster his success on the job.

13 We paired Ed with a former programmer
14 and database administrator who will help him
15 with his training. And Ed will also be
16 advancing in his education with software
17 reference books and classes, online classes,
18 in the future.

19 SPIN took a chance in hiring Ed as a
20 young man with little formal training in the
21 IT field. It provided Ed with the necessary
22 supports, guidance and camaraderie. And all
23 of our lives, all of our lives, have been
24 enhanced. Ed has become a valuable employee

1 and provides living example of SPIN's values
2 and mission demonstrating that everyone can
3 achieve a life of possibilities. I believe
4 that there are many "Eds" out there, and
5 many people with disabilities can and will
6 succeed in internship programs and
7 apprenticeship programs given the
8 opportunity and with the right supports in
9 place.

10 A non-traditional internship opened the
11 door. It clearly was not available to Ed
12 previously. It is my hope that many other
13 organizations would consider SPIN's approach
14 and open doors for other exceptional people
15 with disabilities.

16 Thanks again, Chairman O'Brien, for
17 inviting me today and to Committee Members
18 for allowing me to speak about Ed and his
19 great job here at SPIN today.

20 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Thank you so much.

21 Rose, I just want to thank you for your
22 wonderful testimony and the insight that you
23 gave us as to how important the programs
24 like Educational Plus were to your success.

1 And Emily, I'd just like to ask you,
2 what are the biggest barriers that you face
3 in your work as you -- in addition to your
4 testimony?

5 MS. SCOTT: Okay. So, I guess one
6 barrier is -- well, one -- there's so many
7 barriers.

8 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Specifically, those
9 with psychiatric disabilities and how we can
10 help them with success.

11 MS. SCOTT: One thing is feeling
12 confident. I believe that some students
13 might not feel if they speak up in class,
14 that what they say is going to be on point
15 or just trying to convince them to engage in
16 the class and maybe work in groups sometimes
17 and have the dialogues of academia and talk
18 about ideas, so encouraging them to have
19 that voice is really important.

20 But psychiatrically, also another
21 problem comes into play when something
22 happens and their studies fall and they need
23 extra psychiatric help or they might need
24 counseling or if they end up not going to

1 class. That's often a big barrier. And
2 having to get them back on track.

3 Another barrier is if they have had
4 issues in the past, they might have had a
5 psychiatric break when they went to college
6 when they're 18 or something and then they
7 left everything and then they have all these
8 loans and other stuff and payments, things
9 that are due and they've grown
10 exponentially.

11 Helping them to write financial aid
12 appeal and to fight the bureaucracy to get
13 back to where they can go back to school to
14 get them to alleviate some of those debts
15 that they have built up is a big one.

16 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Just like to follow
17 up with that as a theme. Obviously, I am
18 not going to get all the answers to all the
19 question that we have here today. It's
20 clear that more and more individuals with
21 psychiatric disabilities are enrolling in
22 college. But there is a startling statistic
23 that 86 percent of them withdraw without the
24 appropriate supports.

1 And, Mr. Greenfield, I've been involved
2 with SPIN for some time with the Losinnos
3 when they started it. And how I am so happy
4 with how it's grown over the years. I think
5 we are all wonderfully uplifted by the
6 experience that you and Ed have described
7 here today.

8 And I think one model going forward is
9 looking at and assessing an individual,
10 which you obviously had knowledge of Ed.
11 And you looked at his abilities. So, you
12 gave him an entry level job and allowed him
13 to be successful with all the supports. And
14 again, as you said, I think that's wonderful
15 how we're -- that employers look at as we
16 try to make Philadelphia the first
17 disability-friendly city on the planet.

18 And, Ed, I think it's -- you sharing
19 your personal experience, I know that's a
20 challenge. I know that personally it's
21 challenging to put everything out there.
22 But I think it's important for all of us to
23 recognize that when you went to, I believe
24 it was, Community College and they just

1 wanted to push you off at whatever
2 educational setting. And here you find a
3 wonderful partner who recognized your
4 wonderful talents, allowed you to be
5 successful and inviting you to become more
6 and more part of the organization.

7 And I was with Tim Schreiber in Special
8 Olympics. And there were breakout sessions
9 over a year ago. For the first time,
10 Special Olympics has done the same thing
11 that you've done in SPIN. They look at the
12 organizational chart and they look at people
13 with special needs and how they can
14 incorporate those individuals in meaningful
15 jobs in their organization. By doing that,
16 then they remove the challenge.

17 Why if it's so easy to employ people,
18 why don't you do it yourself. You're doing
19 that and I applaud you for that and thank
20 you for sharing that. And do you have, Ed,
21 anything else you want to say about your
22 experience with SPIN?

23 MR. KELLY: That pretty much sums it up.

24 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Thank you.

1 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you,
2 Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to make a
3 couple comments.

4 First, I wanted to start out really by
5 thanking the folks who are on the ground who
6 are doing the work that's required to make
7 services like SPIN and other programs at
8 Horizon House work because my sister worked
9 for SPIN for many, many years. And, you
10 know, this is not an occupation that's for
11 anyone or everyone. It really does take an
12 individual with a certain level of
13 understanding and caring and really wants to
14 make a difference.

15 I wanted to, number one, say thank you
16 to all the folks who are on the ground and
17 doing the work. Like I said, it's really
18 not for everyone.

19 Second thing I just wanted to mention is
20 that for, you know, both of your stories in
21 terms of living with dyslexia and also with,
22 you know, autism, you know, it takes a lot
23 to tell your story. And so, I really
24 appreciate you being here and, you know,

1 telling what experience you have, what
2 you've gone through, how this has affected
3 you and your life and your family.

4 One of the things that I've heard from
5 both of you over and over is the necessary
6 support that has enabled you to be able to
7 be so successful. And so, it really does
8 resonate with myself and with the rest of
9 the panel as we think about how can we be
10 helpful, what can we do and how can we
11 support your support network, as well.
12 Those are some of the things that I think
13 that we'll be able to take from this hearing
14 and really find ways to try to be helpful.

15 And also, you know, as you mentioned
16 your internships, that's something I think
17 that, you know, as Members of City Council,
18 that's one of the tangible things that we
19 can do as individuals to be helpful. And
20 so, I look forward to working with the
21 Chairman to make things like that happen
22 here at City Council.

23 Thank you for being here.

24 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Thank you very much

1 for your testimony. We would like to bring
2 up the second panel.

3 (Second panel approaches Witness Table.)

4 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Andrea
5 Con-sig-nee[phonetically pronounced]?

6 MS. CONSIGNY: Con-seen-ya.

7 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: I'm sorry?

8 MS. CONSIGNY: Close enough.

9 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: No. Tell me what
10 it is.

11 MS. CONSIGNY: Con-seen-ya.

12 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Con-seen-ya. Thank
13 you, Andrea. And Kimberly Caputo. Did I
14 say that right? Got it.

15 Andrea is the Director of Employment
16 Services at SPIN. Kimberly is the Deputy
17 Chief, Office of Specialized Services for
18 the School District of Philadelphia; and
19 Kathleen Fogel is the Business Services
20 Supervisor for the School District Office of
21 Vocational Rehabilitation.

22 Andrea, would you please state your name
23 for the record and proceed with your
24 testimony.

1 MS. CONSIGNY: Hi. I'm Andrea Davies
2 Consigny. Good morning, Councilman O'Brien,
3 Members of City Council and other
4 distinguished guests. I am Andrea Davies
5 Consigny, Director of Employment Services at
6 SPIN, a nationally recognized provider
7 organization whose mission is to provide the
8 highest quality people-first services and
9 supports for children and adults with
10 intellectual, developmental and autism
11 spectrum disabilities so that each may
12 achieve and enjoy a life of possibilities.

13 For more than 45 years, SPIN's mission
14 and values-led services have supported
15 thousands of children, adults and families
16 to live inclusive lives in their
17 communities. It is SPIN's culture to
18 develop and provide services that are
19 person-centered, family focused, outcomes
20 oriented and culturally relevant. SPIN's
21 inclusive services incorporate current
22 leading practices delivered by highly
23 qualified and dedicated professionals. SPIN
24 is guided by its four pillars: People

1 First, Professionalism, Performance

2 Excellence and Productivity.

3 The SPIN Employment Services has a
4 proven track record of assisting people with
5 various disabilities to find and maintain
6 community employment. Community employment
7 is defined as employment in integrated
8 community-based setting where employees earn
9 pay at or above the minimum wage. The 140
10 people supported by SPIN Employment Services
11 all have intellectual disability. And
12 additional, approximately 40 also have
13 diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder and
14 another 50 have a co-occurring mental health
15 diagnosis. 39 percent of people supported
16 by SPIN Employment Services are between the
17 ages of 21 and 31. This statistic
18 demonstrates the success of recent efforts
19 to increase access to services for
20 transition-age people. However, there are
21 still much needed to be done to increase
22 opportunities for meaningful work experience
23 while in school and secured buy-in from the
24 local business community.

1 I would like to share some additional
2 statistics with you to further illustrate
3 the impact of successful employment for
4 people with disabilities. 96 out of 140
5 people supported by SPIN are currently
6 employed and others are actively seeking
7 employment. Some of those 96 hold two jobs.
8 These individuals earned a combined total
9 income of \$458,980 last year. On average
10 the 96 people supported by SPIN earn \$8.58
11 per hour, \$1.33 above minimum wage. Work 50
12 hours per month and have been employed at
13 the same business for 40 years.

14 Each of these talented employees have
15 shown with proper supports and
16 opportunities, they can be a valuable
17 reliable asset to the Philadelphia business
18 community. For most of us, a full life
19 includes employment, defines our passion,
20 our values, our financial security, our
21 relevancy. Employment gives us a reason to
22 get up each morning and an opportunity to do
23 work in which we can take pride. Employment
24 is essential to full citizenship for all of

1 us including those with disabilities.

2 Employment for people with disabilities
3 has many other positive impacts that
4 includes self worth, building relationships
5 and improves access to community resources.
6 As full citizens, people with disabilities
7 in the labor force have a positive financial
8 impact on Philadelphia's economy, generating
9 income that is ultimately returned in the
10 form of tax revenues and the purchases of
11 goods and services to boost the economy.

12 Employees with disabilities are valued
13 members of the workplaces when they are able
14 to earn wages that are consistent with wages
15 paid workers without disabilities. Finding
16 employment for anyone can be difficult, but
17 for people with disabilities, it is
18 daunting. The urgency in expanding current
19 programming efforts in Philadelphia to
20 better support transitioning aged youth and
21 adults with disabilities is conveyed in the
22 following statistics.

23 According to statistics released by U.S.
24 Bureau of Labor Statistics in July 2013, the

1 nationwide unemployment rate was 7.2
2 percent. For people with disabilities, the
3 unemployment rate was 13.6 percent among
4 those who were looking for work, nearly
5 double the national average.

6 A 2009 report, Indicators of Labor
7 Market Success for People with Intellectual
8 Disabilities, by Smith and Butterworth in
9 2009, reports a significantly higher
10 unemployment rate for those with an
11 intellectual disability at 72 percent, with
12 the unemployment rate for those with an
13 intellectual disability who also received
14 supplemental security income at an even
15 worse 89 percent.

16 As shocking as these statistics are,
17 these challenges are further magnified for
18 those job seekers who are from lower income
19 families. The National Longitudinal
20 Transition Study-2, which had been
21 previously mentioned, cited that in
22 comparison to similarly skilled,
23 higher-income youth, lower-income youth with
24 autism spectrum disorder have a rate of

1 disengagement after high school transition
2 of 79 percent versus 45 percent for those
3 higher income. The National Longitudinal
4 Transition Study defined disengagement as
5 lacking paid employment, lacking college
6 enrollment, and/or lacking opportunities for
7 social participation, which could include
8 work-based learning opportunities.

9 Concerns for low income family who are
10 impacted by an autism spectrum disorder and
11 intellectual disabilities are especially
12 high in Philadelphia, which is one of the
13 poorest large cities in America and has
14 recently been identified as having the
15 highest percentages of individuals living in
16 deep poverty, defined as living on less than
17 half of the federally established poverty
18 limit.

19 Given this data and other research
20 regarding employment, these groups are in
21 great need of assistance to become employed,
22 stay employed and become more independent
23 and productive members of the Philadelphia
24 community.

1 Transitioning-age students with
2 disabilities are more successful post
3 graduation if they have had meaningful
4 employment experience while still in school.
5 Work-based learning or internships are
6 examples of a path to success. Through
7 these experiences, students have an
8 opportunity to spend part of their school
9 day working in the community. Students are
10 encouraged to link their interests, talents
11 and skills into vocational themes. While
12 school-based employment instruction is
13 meaningful, students learn the best in real
14 working environment outside of school.

15 Work-based learning provide students
16 opportunity to get a better understanding of
17 how the business world operates and to gain
18 greater insight into what their personal
19 career aspirations are. SPIN has provided
20 contracted work-based learning services to
21 multiple Philadelphia charter schools with
22 positive long-term outcomes for the
23 students. Through the combination of SPIN's
24 classroom-based employment preparation

1 curriculum, the Career Development Series
2 and Work Based Learning experiences in the
3 community, students were better prepared for
4 life after school. Students who participate
5 in this program have become competitively
6 employed or enrolled in secondary education,
7 with one student receiving a full
8 scholarship.

9 SPIN's 80 business and community
10 partners have embraced the benefits of
11 hiring people with disabilities. The
12 employment of individuals with disabilities
13 adds to the diversity of their workforce and
14 the general enrichment of their communities.
15 Philadelphia needs more business leaders to
16 champion this cause and carry the message
17 forward.

18 One area with great potential is
19 employment within city offices. While there
20 are many opportunities for employment and
21 student internships within the City of
22 Philadelphia, the Civil Service Exam and
23 inflexible job descriptions post a
24 significant barrier to people with

1 disabilities gaining employment with the
2 city. In my professional experience,
3 applicants have been denied the assistance
4 of an employment specialist during the Civil
5 Service Exam, which is considered a
6 reasonable accommodation under the ADA.

7 To improve the employment picture for
8 people with disabilities, it is essential
9 that Philadelphia expand current
10 programmatic efforts within its schools to
11 include real work experience for our
12 students with disabilities in partnership
13 with city offices and departments or other
14 community partners. This begins by setting
15 the expectation for work early and helping
16 students to discover their unique talents
17 and capacities. It requires that teachers
18 are given the resources to not only connect
19 with the business community, but the
20 staffing to support students within the
21 community.

22 Far too often, students have graduated
23 high school without adult services in place
24 to support employment, and they have no

1 other option but to sit at home losing both
2 motivation and skills that they and their
3 teachers have worked to achieve throughout
4 their educational career.

5 Students who are given the opportunity
6 to discover their employment goals through
7 coordinated supports while still in school
8 have succeeded in challenging themselves,
9 reaching their outcomes and becoming
10 independent with the support and planning
11 from their teachers, families and community.

12 To achieve this outcome for more
13 Philadelphia's youth and young adults, we
14 must do more now together.

15 Thank you for this opportunity.

16 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Thank you so much.

17 We would like to ask Kimberly Caputo to
18 present testimony. First, identify yourself
19 for the record.

20 MS. CAPUTO: Good morning. I am
21 Kimberly Caputo for purposes of the record.
22 Good morning, Chairman O'Brien and esteemed
23 members of the Philadelphia Committee on
24 Disabled and Special Needs. I thank you for

1 providing me with an opportunity to provide
2 you with information relating to transition
3 services for school-age students with
4 disabilities in the School District of
5 Philadelphia.

6 I am the Deputy Chief for the School
7 District of the Philadelphia's Office of
8 Specialized Services. The Office of
9 Specialized Services provides program,
10 operational and compliant support to school
11 teams in the 214-plus public schools that
12 are part of the School District of
13 Philadelphia portfolio as well as support to
14 the 80-plus charters within the Philadelphia
15 geographic boundaries. Our work with
16 respect to transition is connected to the
17 federal and state regulations relating to
18 the education of students with disabilities
19 that arise from the Individuals with
20 Disabilities Education Act or IDEA.

21 Teams across the Philadelphia public
22 school system right now today are supporting
23 slightly over 19,000 students with
24 disabilities through the delivery of an

1 Individualized Education Program or an IEP.

2 For each of the students, this IEP is
3 individualized and is a program educational
4 plan that will assist that student in
5 reaching his or her goals in school both
6 academically and behaviorally.

7 With respect to transition services,
8 there are approximately 7,500 8th to 12th
9 graders currently in the Philadelphia public
10 school system with disabilities. These
11 disabilities range to include speech needs,
12 learning disabilities, behavioral
13 challenges, hearing and vision impairments
14 and, of course, students with autism which
15 is a spectrum disorder.

16 In that same grade band of 8th to 12th
17 grade, there are also students with more
18 significant cognitive impairments such as
19 moderate to profound intellectual
20 disabilities, cognitive impairments coupled
21 with autistic features in the areas of
22 communication, sensory challenges and
23 functional routines. And multiply disabled
24 students whose needs are reflected in a

1 multitude of ways including challenges with
2 mobility, vision, communication and
3 activities of daily living.

4 Having said all of that about
5 disabilities, I think as most aptly
6 demonstrated by the wonderful testimony from
7 Ms. Evans and Mr. Kelly, this is not about
8 students and their disabilities but rather
9 their abilities.

10 Disabilities should not define an
11 individual and they should not limit
12 expectations or drive a predetermined
13 outcome for post-school endeavors. An
14 important aspect of every student who has an
15 IEP and their educational program is, not
16 surprisingly because it is the same
17 important aspect for a non-disabled student,
18 the area of transition. Transition has a
19 specific meaning in the Individuals with
20 Disabilities Education Act. But for these
21 students and their families, the legal
22 definition aside, it means the same thing.

23 Students with disabilities, like their
24 non-disabled peers, want the same

1 opportunities. Whether that is to enter a
2 four-year college, a two-year college, a
3 vocational or trade school or to go right
4 into the wonderful exciting world of
5 employment. Some students with disabilities
6 want to be able to navigate their community
7 independently after their school period has
8 ended.

9 An IEP team beginning at age 14 --
10 although in Philadelphia, we like to begin
11 it in 8th grade -- sits with parents and an
12 entire team to talk about the instructional
13 programming that will be necessary to help
14 the student reach those goals. As I said,
15 legally we are required to begin that
16 conversation at age 14 which is 9th grade.
17 We, in Philadelphia, begin that conversation
18 earlier starting in 8th grade because there
19 is a very big transition for students at
20 that time. We consider the transition to
21 high school a big transition, an important
22 transition and the first step in many ways
23 to the larger transition in life.

24 Teams meet both in 8th grade and in

1 later years to review and develop students'
2 specific goals responsive to academic
3 assessments, career interest and aptitude
4 inventories, parent information and student
5 information. We can never forget the
6 student and his or her voice in terms of
7 what goals he or she has and what interest
8 he or she has as a framework to how we as a
9 team move forward.

10 Once students reach high school, we work
11 very hard to provide, as my colleague Andrea
12 indicated, a host of school-based activities
13 to help students develop the soft skills
14 that will hold them in good stead with
15 respect to employment. Schools across this
16 district, high schools have students working
17 in school stores. They are supported in the
18 administrative offices of our schools. They
19 work with facilities personnel as a first
20 step.

21 In subsequent years, the School District
22 of Philadelphia employs 13 itinerant
23 vocational teachers. They are assigned
24 throughout the comprehensive high schools.

1 Their job is to liaison and connect on
2 behalf of students on their case load to
3 employers within the community. Some
4 students will go right out to work and, as
5 you heard in previous testimony, engage with
6 the world of work beautifully. Some
7 students may need to further develop some
8 preliminary skills such as navigating the
9 community, utilizing public transportation
10 independently. An itinerant vocational
11 teacher will help them meet those goals.

12 While in Philadelphia, many students
13 with disabilities connect to our career and
14 technical education opportunities. Across
15 the district, those opportunities are
16 designed to be open and accessible by
17 students with disabilities. Research
18 establishes that graduation rates are higher
19 for those students who are engaged and
20 enrolled in a CTE program as opposed to
21 their peers whether they are disabled or
22 non-disable, who are not enrolled in CTE
23 programs. Research also indicates the
24 dropout rates for students who are enrolled

1 in CTE programs are lower than those
2 students who are not enrolled in CTE
3 programs.

4 I would also like to take this time to
5 acknowledge the very valuable School
6 District of Philadelphia partnerships that
7 are working every day to advance the work
8 experience for many of our students with
9 disabilities. Prime example of that
10 partnership is the School District of
11 Philadelphia's partnership with the Marriott
12 Bridges Foundation. Since the year 2000,
13 the School District of Philadelphia and
14 Marriott Foundation for People with
15 Disabilities have worked together also in
16 partnership with OVR to bring services to
17 students with disabilities while in high
18 school. Through this partnership, Bridges
19 and the School District of Philadelphia have
20 developed a unique program specific to each
21 students' disability.

22 Since it's inception, this program has
23 facilitated the successful transition into
24 competitive unsubsidized employment for over

1 1,200 students with disabilities.

2 Currently, students are earning hourly wages
3 right now. They are from the following high
4 schools: West Philadelphia, Arts Academy of
5 Benjamin Rush, South Philadelphia,
6 Roxborough, Overbrook, Northeast High
7 School, Lincoln High School, Martin Luther
8 King, Furness, Frankford and Fels. Each and
9 every one of these students is a student
10 with a disability, but this program
11 underscores their abilities.

12 These students are gainfully employed,
13 making a wage right now in a whole host of
14 employment opportunities across this city.
15 Places like AC Linen Supply, Aramark, UPS,
16 ShopRite, the list goes on, Toys R Us, the
17 Marriott Courtyard, Philadelphia University,
18 Holy Family Home. Again, the list goes on
19 because these students have potential and
20 they have something to connect with a value
21 in our community.

22 A second partnership that we are
23 particularly proud of is the SEPTA Travel
24 Accessibility Program. This is a

1 partnership between SEPTA, the School
2 District of Philadelphia and the University
3 of the Sciences. As I explained in my
4 earlier remarks, a very first step in
5 gainful employment is being able to navigate
6 back and forth between your school, your
7 home or your place of employment.

8 Many students with disabilities ages 14
9 to 17 across high school continue to have
10 challenges with that navigational skill.
11 And through the partnership with SEPTA, we
12 are able to help these students develop
13 tools to help them navigate public
14 transportation, thus empowering them and
15 maximizing their independence as they
16 transition into the real world.

17 A second also related partnership is
18 that with the SEPTA CCT Accessible Travel
19 Center. This is right local down the street
20 in Suburban Station. This is a tremendous
21 resource. School teams and teachers travel
22 every day to this center with students with
23 disabilities. And in this safe, sensory
24 appropriate environment students learn

1 through simulated buses, rails and subway
2 cars to begin to safely navigate this
3 incredibly large and very diverse city.

4 We also embrace the Work Ready Program
5 through the City of Philadelphia and the
6 City of Philadelphia Future Tracks Program
7 where right now five students with autism
8 are gainfully employed and working through a
9 sixth-month program that will certainly hold
10 them in good stead.

11 Finally, I cannot ignore our important
12 agency partner, the Office of Vocational
13 Rehabilitation. OVR assigns a
14 representative to School District of
15 Philadelphia comprehensive high schools.
16 Through the OVR representative who serves a
17 liaison between school teams, the agency and
18 their families, a student can prepare for
19 graduation. The representative can help
20 identify students who may be eligible for
21 services post graduation including workplace
22 skill building, job coaching and direct
23 internships.

24 In closing, I want to emphasize that we

1 are working everyday to expand existing
2 school-based opportunities through
3 internships as well as partnership
4 opportunities in the area of transition for
5 students with disabilities. This is a harsh
6 financial landscape and it is very
7 challenging. But inroads are being made
8 each and every day. And of those inroads we
9 are very, very proud.

10 I thank you for this opportunity and
11 particularly the hard work of Councilman
12 O'Brien in championing the rights of
13 students with disabilities. Thank you.

14 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Now, Kathleen,
15 would you please identify yourself for the
16 record and proceed with your testimony.

17 MS. FOGEL: Good morning. I'm Kathleen
18 Fogel from the Office of Vocational
19 Rehabilitation.

20 Can you hear me?

21 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Yes.

22 MS. FOGEL: Good morning, Chairman
23 O'Brien and Committee Members. Thank you
24 for the opportunity to talk with you about

1 the Pennsylvania Office of Vocational
2 Rehabilitation or OVR as most know us, and
3 how our work advances the employment and
4 career opportunities of individuals with
5 disabilities, some special initiatives we
6 are implementing and where we see some
7 needs. It's my hope that closer
8 collaboration with this committee and other
9 Philadelphia stakeholders might offer
10 opportunities for improvement and allow us
11 to better serve people with disabilities
12 that will lead to greater success in
13 securing career an employment opportunities
14 that will lead to self sufficiency and
15 independence.

16 Allow me to introduce myself again. I
17 am Kathy Fogel. I am the Business Services
18 Supervisor for the Philadelphia District
19 Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. I'm
20 here on behalf of my district administrator
21 Wayne Trout who unfortunately had a schedule
22 conflict. I have over 30 years experience
23 in the field of rehab. In addition to my
24 Masters degree, I'm a licensed professional

1 counselor and a certified rehabilitation
2 counselor.

3 Let me begin by giving you a brief
4 summary of what the Pennsylvania Office of
5 Vocational Rehabilitation is all about.

6 First, we are a statewide program with
7 21 offices across Pennsylvania charged with
8 providing counseling, training and
9 employment services to adult with all types
10 of disabilities that present barriers to
11 their ability to enter into or maintain
12 employment. Because I know of this
13 Committee's interest in what OVR does for
14 persons with disabilities in Philadelphia
15 specially, I am going to provide data and
16 facts for our Philadelphia office only which
17 serves only residents of this city.

18 We have a budget of approximately
19 \$6 million annually and a staff of 40
20 Master's prepared counselors who are
21 specifically trained to assist persons with
22 all types of disabilities. Each year
23 approximately 1,700 new individuals that
24 apply for services, of which 1,500 are

1 determined eligible. On average, we are
2 working with about 4,500 customers at any
3 one time. Of that number, about 65 percent
4 or are individuals who have primary
5 disability of mental impairments, which
6 would include individuals who have brain
7 injury, autism, intellectual disabilities,
8 learning disabilities, drug or alcohol
9 impairments or mental illness.

10 About 20 to 25 percent are individuals
11 with physical impairments such as
12 amputations, multiple sclerosis, multiple
13 dystrophy, cardiac conditions and orthopedic
14 problems. The remainder are individuals
15 with sensory impairments such as deafness,
16 hearing impairments or blindness.

17 Approximately 35 percent of our
18 customers are transition age, which we
19 define as individuals who are between the
20 ages of 17 to 24. And on average, about 500
21 customers exit out of our program and
22 successful rehabilitated, meaning they are
23 working in integrated employment earning
24 above minimum wage and have been on the job

1 for at least three months. The average
2 hourly wage is \$12.46 compared to \$21.40 for
3 non-disabled individuals. It generally
4 takes about two and a half years from the
5 time a person applies to OVR to case closure
6 as employer. Our success rate for
7 individuals with disabilities who are
8 transition age is about 41 percent higher
9 than the national average.

10 What kind of services do we provide? We
11 offer evaluation services, counseling and
12 placement as for non-cost services. Based
13 upon individual need, we also provide
14 restoration services, soft skills employment
15 training, job skill training from entry
16 level on the job to college level training,
17 job coaching, home and work site
18 modification, transportation services, et
19 cetera; essentially, those services needed
20 to overcome barriers to getting and keeping
21 a job.

22 We also provide services to other major
23 customers, the business community. Our
24 services to employers who include business

1 services, OVR is at the national, state and
2 local level. But we do not work alone. We
3 have collaborative relationships with a
4 variety of public and private entities to
5 improve the service delivery system. These
6 include our partners on the Workforce
7 Investment Board, the Careerlinks, the
8 School District, the City Offices of Mental
9 Health, Substance Abuse and Intellectual
10 Disabilities to name a few.

11 We also work with community-based
12 organizations like JEVS, SPIN, AHEDD,
13 Goodwill Industries, Elwyn, Workplace
14 Technology, the Academy, Marriott Bridges
15 and Pennsylvania Institute on Assistive
16 Technology, also Horizon House Education
17 Plus Program supporting young adults with
18 mental health diagnosis navigate
19 Philadelphia Community College and
20 post-secondary training programs. Also ABO
21 Haven, Incorporated Cashier and Customer
22 Service Short Term Program for placement
23 program founded by grocers looking for a
24 better way of doing business.

1 We also had Philly Future Track as a
2 collaboration with the community marketing
3 concepts and the City of Philadelphia to
4 employ 18 to 24 year olds who are residents
5 of Philadelphia, have a high school diploma
6 or GED and are eligible to work in the
7 United States and the opportunity to
8 participate in the six-month paid program
9 consisting of five work days including
10 career readiness training.

11 In Philly Future Trackers who work on
12 teams claiming to beautify our streets while
13 attending regular sessions to improve job
14 prospects for the future. Presently, OVR
15 has five individuals with autism
16 participating in this program.

17 Initiatives that OVR is moving forward
18 with includes Business Services and Early
19 Reach Program. OVR wants to increase
20 employment opportunities for people with
21 disabilities. President Obama recently
22 signed into law the Workforce Innovation and
23 Opportunity Act on July 22, 2014. The
24 Rehabilitation Act is included in the

1 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.
2 Our Business Services initiatives support
3 services that gave job seekers with
4 disabilities the opportunity to secure good
5 jobs. Job placement and job preparation
6 workshops are held monthly. Job ready
7 customers work on applications, resumes,
8 interview skills, disclosure and networking.

9 Business Services representatives from
10 OVR network with employers at events, be it
11 Chamber of Commerce or job fairs to match
12 our pipeline of talent with employer needs.
13 The Early Reach Program assists Vocational
14 Rehabilitation with providing pre-employment
15 transition coordination activities such as
16 partnering with schools and local workforce
17 development programs to support specific
18 transition activities. Early Reach
19 coordinators provide presentations at local
20 schools to students and meet with parents to
21 educate them about the services OVR offers
22 to individuals with a disability.

23 OVR has a youth On-The-Job Training
24 Initiative. It is program for youth ages 16

1 to 25 and provides on-the-job training to
2 support transitioned youth practice, work
3 skills opportunities for real work
4 experience and transition from secondary
5 school to post-secondary education and
6 competitive employment. Employers can be
7 reimbursed for a time limited business while
8 they train the individual.

9 For example, OVR can reimburse them at
10 90 percent of the hourly salary for three
11 months, which can be reimbursed by OVR.

12 Other opportunities in coordination with
13 education officials include Career Path
14 Program at Children's Hospital where 27
15 internships and placements have been in the
16 past three years at CHOP. Also, Marriott
17 Bridges transition high schools with
18 significant learning disabilities into
19 competitive employment.

20 OVR always had and continues to have a
21 strong collaboration with the Philadelphia
22 schools public, parochial and charter
23 schools. We have liaison counselors
24 assigned to work at many of the schools to

1 make students and parents aware of the
2 services OVR offers to individuals with
3 disabilities.

4 However, as with any program, there are
5 areas that we need to improve upon such as
6 getting more employers to become aware of
7 the talent pool of persons with
8 disabilities. We need businesses willing to
9 provide volunteer experience, job shadowing,
10 mentoring and internships and paid
11 on-the-job experience opportunities. Many
12 youth have this opportunity, but the real
13 need is to provide individuals with
14 disabilities these opportunities to have a
15 real, part time or full time work. More
16 exposure to the world of work will assist
17 with developing the skills required for real
18 work.

19 Another area to improve upon, a program
20 specifically directed to reentry services
21 for young adults with disabilities who are
22 reentering the workforce with a juvenile
23 delinquent background. As stated
24 previously, the youth on-the-job training

1 initiative is an avenue for businesses to
2 provide this opportunity for real work
3 experience for this group. OVR continues to
4 work in collaboration with the Philadelphia
5 School District, Bureau of Autism, City of
6 Philadelphia Office of Developmental
7 Disabilities, the Department of Mental
8 Health and various other agencies. No one
9 has a lot of money. And working
10 collaboratively addresses resources in need.

11 Thank you for this opportunity to
12 provide you with employment needs of
13 individuals with a disability.

14 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Thank you very
15 much. I would just like to reiterate, Kim,
16 we had 19,000 IDEAs?

17 MS. CAPUTO: Yes.

18 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Absolutely
19 overwhelming.

20 MS. CAPUTO: Yes.

21 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: And dealing with
22 that with the underfunding situation.

23 And, Kathleen, you're in charge of a
24 significant amount of responsibility in

1 terms of individuals working with at any
2 given time, the diversity needs of those
3 individuals. I congratulate you for what
4 you are doing.

5 And, Andrea, I think you pointed out the
6 challenges of the Civil Service System. I
7 think they are even more significant than
8 what you are alluding to that in various
9 departments that are specific to autism, the
10 job descriptions that individuals with
11 autism apply for, those job descriptions
12 will now allow them to assume those
13 positions. They don't find the supports
14 necessary to be successful. And I really
15 believe that there has to be a real far
16 reaching review of the entire Civil Service
17 System and definitions of those jobs so that
18 our individuals can be more appropriately
19 consider for opportunities. And that may
20 mean writing more expansive definitions and
21 incorporating into some of those definitions
22 some of those supports.

23 So I will just ask you, is there
24 anything that you would look to add after

1 you heard your colleagues testify or if
2 there is something that you would like to
3 shout out to the bigger employment world
4 employers that -- you had something you
5 wanted to say?

6 Don't be afraid to testify on this.
7 This is what we want.

8 MS. CONSIGNY: I would say the largest
9 barrier is just the belief that everyone
10 with a disability can work. Too often we
11 hear, yeah, you know, people with
12 disabilities can work but not me myself.
13 Helping people to understand that there are
14 so many resources, assistive technologies
15 out there, agencies, funding systems that
16 can help them achieve their goals. And so
17 helping people believe in themselves,
18 sharing success stories so that people with
19 disabilities, their family and the business
20 community can see that this works and it's
21 been very successful I think is the largest
22 thing.

23 For employers to realize that this isn't
24 a burden. I think a lot of people want to

1 do the right thing as a business owner and
2 help their community, but they don't know
3 how. And it seems really overwhelming to
4 them. And so, I think the more stories we
5 can share from employer perspective as well
6 to help other employers feel more
7 comfortable about it would be beneficial.

8 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: I think the idea of
9 profiling individuals with their strengths
10 and their interests and then looking at the
11 individual employers with their entry level
12 positions and matching those to that will
13 raise facilitation.

14 Did you want to --

15 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I just want to again
16 thank you for your service for what your --
17 the service and the commitment that you are
18 really providing. And, you know, all you
19 hear nowadays is cut, cut, cut. There is no
20 funding for this, there is no funding for
21 that. It's good to hear that there is a lot
22 of collaboration with other member providers
23 to make sure that the needs are met. I just
24 wanted to really thank you for thinking

1 outside the box as a result of necessity.

2 But if you have anything you want to add
3 in terms of other departments that you are
4 working with and how do the, you know, how
5 does this all flow? I know that if there
6 was, you know, more funding then, obviously,
7 it would be a whole lot better. But in
8 light of the situation and, you know, the
9 budgets that we have to deal with now, could
10 you just really briefly give us some idea
11 of, you know, how do you work
12 collaboratively? What does that look like?

13 MS. CAPUTO: Thank you. It's a great
14 question and it is absolutely borne of
15 necessity.

16 Collaboration looks very individualized.
17 The parent, at least at a school level, is a
18 pivotal part of that collaboration. We at
19 the School District will make known external
20 community-based resources either through
21 resource directories or by sharing
22 information. Sometimes those resources are
23 actually co-located in schools, which is
24 wonderful. It gives the parent an

1 opportunity to actually meet someone as
2 opposed to looking at a resource directory.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Do you provide those
4 resource directories to elected officials
5 and other offices? I am just wondering if
6 it's something that we could have access to
7 as we have, you know, a lot of need that
8 comes through our offices. And it would be
9 great if we could also refer appropriately.

10 MS. CAPUTO: It's an excellent,
11 excellent idea. We work very hard to load a
12 tremendous amount of information, anything
13 that the Office of Specialized Services
14 disseminates out to schools. And we work
15 with Elwyn and OVR. People inundate us with
16 directories and training sessions. We will
17 send that out to -- through conduits into a
18 school, but we will also load it onto our
19 website that is accessible by parents.

20 I will absolutely ensure that
21 information is communicated back into the
22 City Council because I know you do receive
23 constituents. And everyone sending the same
24 message and getting the information out I

1 think would be a tremendous, tremendous
2 benefits to families. They are not alone.
3 They should never feel isolated. For as
4 many challenges as the School District feels
5 as well as our partners as well as the City
6 itself.

7 It is a rich city. There are a lot of
8 people working very, very hard and thinking
9 very creatively about how to address needs
10 when every dollar is just so very, very
11 precious.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And that's important
13 to somebody like myself. If someone, you
14 know, just walked up today and said my child
15 has X, Y and Z issues, you know, I would
16 really have to think and to go back and try
17 to figure out, you know, where do I begin
18 because there is -- we are rich in
19 resources. But having it at our fingertips
20 would be really helpful for Members of City
21 Council and for state legislature, members
22 of Congress, U.S. Senate. You know, just
23 every office should really have, you know,
24 some sort of information and maybe even a

1 training if you -- I don't know if you all
2 offer that. But maybe a training --

3 MS. CAPUTO: We will do it.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: -- to all City
5 offices so we can again get the information
6 out.

7 MS. CAPUTO: Yeah. I would just --

8 MS. FOGEL: That's what I was going to
9 say.

10 MS. CAPUTO: I would just say, and
11 hopefully in closing, say that from my point
12 of view and from teachers' point of views
13 and from parents' point of view, it's about
14 ability. It is ability label aside
15 challenge aside because we all have
16 challenges. Every single one of us has
17 figured out how to navigate given the
18 challenges that we experience. And that is
19 the same for a student or an adult with a
20 disability.

21 When looking upon these individuals, it
22 is about their abilities and what they bring
23 to the table. Creatively thinking about
24 internships and mentorships and

1 apprenticeships whether they are paid or
2 unpaid particularly for school-age kids can
3 make a huge, huge difference.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Absolutely.

5 MS. FOGEL: I just wanted to share that
6 OVR has a program, the Early Reach
7 Coordinator, that goes out to the schools of
8 Philadelphia and works with students 14
9 through 16 to work with the student and the
10 parents to -- students with disabilities to
11 let them know what services OVR provides and
12 their resources that they may need, not just
13 the liaison counselor that they work with
14 when they are, you know, 17 and ready to
15 graduate or 18 and ready to graduate. And
16 this is a great cost service that we
17 provide.

18 Also, the On-The-Job Training Program
19 will provide employers the opportunity to
20 hire a student maybe for the summer. It's a
21 90 percent they get reimbursed an hourly
22 salary -- an hourly wage, but they don't
23 have to -- then they can go back to school.
24 This is an opportunity for businesses to

1 hire a student for the summer or
2 afterschool. And the student gets an
3 opportunity to make some soft skills, real
4 work experience.

5 And hopefully, what I would like to do
6 is be able to reach out to more employers.
7 And how this opportunity here can provide
8 that, I'm not really sure. I know we are
9 providing testimony for -- about students
10 with disabilities. But if there is any way
11 that we can through like Council --

12 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: That would be great.

13 MS. FOGEL: Find out what kind of work
14 you folks would be open up to for students.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Well, I would like
16 to work with Chairman here to try to figure
17 out what employers are, you know, that are
18 doing healthy business for the City of
19 Philadelphia that we can lean on and
20 encourage, you know, strongly encourage to,
21 you know, really think about, you know, what
22 is their policy, do they have a policy and
23 how, you know, how is that connecting with
24 the work that you all are doing? Is it

1 connecting at all?

2 I don't know. I don't know how many of
3 the big companies here in Philadelphia that
4 are operating and doing very well -- I can
5 call out a few by name, but I'm not going to
6 just because I don't know what their policy
7 is. But, you know, I think this is a time
8 to have them not only share their policy but
9 to promote it, you know. This is a
10 wonderful thing. Let's talk about it.
11 Let's promote the great things that we're
12 doing.

13 Thank you.

14 MS. CONSIGNY: I'm sorry. I just have
15 one more thing to add. I'm part of the
16 Philadelphia Transition Coordinating
17 Council. So, it is a grass roots effort
18 that started up last year. And it is people
19 from various agencies, provider agencies
20 like myself, people from the School District
21 of Philadelphia and people from OVR as well
22 as people with disabilities, business
23 partners. We're just kind of looking to get
24 everyone to the table to talk about how can

1 we practically solve the issue here and stop
2 talking about, well, there is a barrier or
3 that's a barrier. Get down to how can we
4 collaborate and work together. If anyone is
5 interested in that, it's
6 transitioncounselor.org.

7 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Thank you so much.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you.

9 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: We would like to
10 bring up the third panel.

11 We would like to bring up Julie Foster,
12 who is an attorney with Public Interest Law
13 Center of Philadelphia; Charles Horton, Jr,
14 the Executive Director for Accessibility and
15 Compliance Specialist, Mayor's Commission on
16 People with Disabilities; Tracy Katz, the
17 Coordinator of Business Development Network
18 for Training and Development, Chair of
19 Employer Relations Workgroup, Employment
20 First; and Mark Salzer, who is Professor and
21 Chair of Department of Rehabilitation
22 Services -- or Sciences at Temple
23 University. The Director Temple University
24 Collaborative on Community Inclusion.

1 I would like to give Julie Foster an
2 opportunity to present testimony. I know
3 you have to be in court, so -- but I notice
4 we are little out of order. Ask you to
5 present your testimony and then we will
6 provide questions for you and then hear
7 testimony from the other members of the
8 panel.

9 I do have one question. I will load it
10 up front Julie, if that's okay. I'd like to
11 know your thoughts on how you can provide
12 input on the Pennsylvania State Plan in
13 response to the CMS mandate of integrated
14 employment given that the plan currently
15 fails to mention supported employment as a
16 strategy? So with that, Julie, would you
17 please identify yourself and present your
18 testimony.

19 MS. FOSTER: My name is Julie Foster.
20 I'm an Independence Fellow --

21 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Pull the mic as
22 close as you can.

23 MS. FOSTER: I'm an Independence Fellow
24 at the Public Interest Law Center of

1 Philadelphia. I thank you very much for
2 taking up this important issue of employment
3 for Philadelphians for people with
4 disabilities.

5 To answer your question regarding CMS,
6 actually the Pennsylvania put out a revised
7 transition plan in the period through the
8 end of March. There is an opportunity for
9 everybody to review the -- it's the
10 community-based waiver that provides the
11 Medicaid funding that the Center for
12 Medicaid and Medicare services have mandated
13 services providing integrated settings. And
14 each state is required to submit a plan on
15 how they are going to transition their
16 services to become compliant with that rule.

17 Pennsylvania has just issued a revised
18 version of its plan. This is the third
19 revision now. And those comments are open
20 to the public and available.

21 What I wanted to talk about today --
22 well, in part by way of introduction, the
23 Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia
24 has long represented individuals with all

1 kinds of disabilities including visual,
2 intellectual, deafness and physical. My
3 project is to represent and advise low
4 income individuals in employment
5 discrimination matters. I have fliers if
6 anybody is in need of disability-based
7 employment discrimination services. They
8 are free.

9 The Law Center has been importantly
10 involved in cases in representing
11 individuals with intellectual disabilities
12 in autism to move out of institutions and
13 into the community with the closure of
14 institutions such as the Pennhurst and
15 Embreeville. The Supreme Court Olmstead
16 decision was built around many of the cases
17 we have tried. But that experience in mind,
18 we are greatly concerned about the needs for
19 individuals with disabilities to have
20 meaningful employment and real access to the
21 community.

22 As the Chairman mentioned, only 22
23 percent of individuals with disabilities in
24 Philadelphia are employed. Employment is

1 essential to people with disabilities as per
2 all Philadelphians to escape poverty. It is
3 particularly important for people with
4 disabilities. It's a key tool to gain
5 independence, dignity and to fully
6 participate as a member of the community.

7 One major barrier to employment to
8 people with intellectual disability and
9 autism are challenges in accessing
10 employment services. The first challenge is
11 obtaining funding for services, which are
12 principally provided through the Medicaid
13 waiver system. Currently, there are more
14 than 14,000 people on the wait list for
15 Medicaid Person/Family Directed Support
16 waiver. Second, once you get on the waiver,
17 most individuals end up in sheltered
18 workshops or adult day program where adults
19 with intellectual, developmental and other
20 disabilities spend their days segregated in
21 workshops that are laboring for below
22 minimum wage and have no interaction with
23 non-disabled peers or very little.

24 Such segregated settings violate the

1 Supreme Court's interpretation of Title II
2 of the ADA in Olmstead. The Court held that
3 segregation constitutes discrimination. The
4 ADA mandates the provision of services in
5 integrated settings where appropriate. Yet
6 85 to 90 percent of vocational services in
7 Pennsylvania provided segregated settings.
8 The most recent state sponsored survey of
9 independent monitoring for quality report
10 found only 8 percent of respondents were
11 employed in an integrated setting.

12 Last January, as we noted, CMS issued
13 its regulation. And Pennsylvania's
14 transition plan currently does not
15 articulate any specific goals in increasing
16 support of employment services in the
17 community. Philadelphia can lead the state
18 implementing an employment first policy.

19 Can you do this? Can you direct, train
20 and support the Medicare waiver county
21 service coordinates for people who are
22 actually connecting individual with the
23 services, to have them prioritize employment
24 service for individuals receiving these

1 waivers. You place the default of
2 dependency and segregation and create
3 presumption in favor of competitive
4 employment for all.

5 A second major reason Philadelphians
6 with disabilities are excluded from the
7 workplace is employment discrimination. The
8 ADA and Pennsylvania Human Relations Act
9 prohibit employers from making employment
10 decisions based on disability and mandate
11 employers provide reasonable accommodations
12 for otherwise qualified individuals with
13 disabilities. Successfully implementing
14 reasonable accommodations requires a
15 proactive engagement on part of both the
16 employer and the employee. In some
17 instances, employees do not clearly
18 communicate their need for accommodation,
19 don't understand their rights to an
20 accommodation or fear retaliation.

21 For example, I have one client come to
22 me after she was fired for tardiness because
23 she didn't know how to request an
24 accommodation.

1 Similarly, employers cannot always
2 understand their obligations or know about
3 resources for accommodations in the
4 workplace. Many of the cases I see could
5 have been remedied ex ante by better
6 communications, understanding of obligations
7 and access to resources. Often workplaces
8 are not accessible because employer has not
9 considered whether a particular software or
10 equipment is ADA compliant when acquiring
11 it. In fact, a common barrier is for people
12 with visual impairments and the
13 inaccessibility of online job applications
14 as most of work, lives and commerce become
15 digital, technological accessibility has
16 become paramount.

17 What can we do about this?

18 Well, City Council can take action to
19 communication resources and to mandate that
20 all Philadelphia businesses are accessible.
21 City Council can help centralize and
22 communicate information on disability
23 resources as Councilwoman Bass suggested.
24 Philadelphia has a web page dedicated to

1 disability issues, but it is limited in
2 accessing city services. This information
3 hub could be expanded to provide information
4 on disability employment services in
5 Philadelphia including how to access
6 benefits while working.

7 Councilmembers can also communicate
8 these resources to citizens through city
9 block captain communications, local chambers
10 of commerce and the NextDoor neighborhood
11 site that a number of city agencies are
12 using to communicate with our citizens.

13 Finally, City Council has a legislative
14 opportunity to increase employment
15 opportunities by addressing exclusion in
16 Philadelphia businesses and organizations.
17 First, Council can mandate businesses
18 operating in Philadelphia to comply with web
19 accessibility guidelines provided under
20 Section 508 of the Rehabilitations Act. Too
21 many individuals with visual impairments are
22 excluded from the major daily activities of
23 work, socialization and commerce by
24 inaccessible website.

1 Second, City Council can adopt and
2 implement an Employment First Policy and
3 commit to increasing the number of
4 Philadelphians with intellectual
5 disabilities and autism in competitive
6 employment.

7 Thank you for your time.

8 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Thank you.

9 Cindy, do you have any questions?

10 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I do. I think
11 that's a very good suggestion. And I think
12 that that should be something that we should
13 talk to about. The timing is everything.
14 And so, as we look to have a new Mayor, that
15 should be something that should be on the
16 agenda is a commitment that there should be,
17 you know, an increase in reaching out to the
18 specific disabled community and making sure
19 that we increase our numbers here in the
20 City of Philadelphia.

21 So, I think that's an excellent idea.

22 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: I'm looking for
23 legislative recommendations and we will
24 approach our colleagues for support in

1 drafting and implementing those legislative
2 ideas.

3 MS. FOSTER: Thank you.

4 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Thank you. Good
5 look with your --

6 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: One other thing,
7 also. She said just in terms of having
8 access to the information and, you know,
9 knowing what services are out there even on
10 the city side.

11 I had a community hearing probably maybe
12 almost a year ago. And I had the meeting in
13 my community in Germantown. We had a young
14 man who was in the front who had a seizure
15 all the sudden during the middle of the
16 meeting. And as traumatic as that was, not
17 just for him but for those around us, it
18 became even more disconcerting because he
19 actually was unable to speak and was deaf.
20 And we didn't have the proper resources
21 there.

22 And so, making sure that those resources
23 are available when we have our, you know,
24 public functions, you know, are out and

1 about I think is just critical.

2 Again, wanted to thank her for her
3 comment. It's very important.

4 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Thank you. Now, we
5 ask Charles Horton, Jr. to please state your
6 name for the record and begin your
7 testimony.

8 MR. HORTON: Good morning. Can you hear
9 me?

10 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Good morning. I
11 don't know. Can -- okay.

12 MR. HORTON: Good morning, Councilman
13 O'Brien, Councilwoman Bass. I will lean
14 forward.

15 I'm Charles Horton, I'm Executive
16 Director for Mayor's Commission on People
17 with Disabilities for the City of
18 Philadelphia. And I thank you for this
19 opportunity to speak about Resolution 150027
20 which authorized city hearings regarding
21 state educational opportunities, career
22 development for people with disabilities.

23 These are topics that are very dear to
24 me. Our office knows how important

1 education is to our community and is the
2 true gateway to independence. Therefore,
3 MCPD made education one of the main topics
4 and direction of the commission. The main
5 direction is the topic focus on education,
6 employment, housing and transportation.

7 MCPD believes that our community -- as
8 our community gains higher levels of
9 education, we will become more employable.

10 Education leads to more opportunities to
11 attain jobs that will yield us life
12 sustainable careers and the same quality of
13 life for individuals without disabilities.

14 In turn, educational attainment gives us
15 the availability to purchase and build
16 successful homes to live, raise and grow our
17 families. And in addition, education gives
18 us the availability and finance to purchase
19 vehicles and use any form of accessible
20 transportation available to us to live our
21 lives daily.

22 It is the responsibility of -- it is the
23 responsibility of our community to serve,
24 support and help elevate one another. As

1 such, the Mayor's Commission on People with
2 Disabilities offers the Oliver HM Jordan
3 Scholarship for students with disabilities.
4 We have given over \$100,000 in \$1,000 to
5 \$1,500 awards to over 90 students in the
6 last 20 years; and 30,000 in the last three
7 years alone.

8 Oliver HM Jordan was a former executive
9 director for the Mayor's Commission on
10 People with Disabilities and was an
11 inspiration, role model and steadfast
12 advocate for people with disabilities. We
13 posthumously named this scholarship in his
14 honor to carry his legacy and his work to
15 bring the community of people with
16 disabilities to a higher level of
17 independence.

18 We have encouraged local colleges and
19 universities to give more support and
20 direction to students with disabilities to
21 pursue fields of study to give them more
22 opportunities to become gainfully employed.
23 We have advocated for more accessible
24 housing, on and off campus for students with

1 various disabilities. For the last nine
2 years, MCPD has been fully staffed by
3 individuals with disabilities. We have
4 supported, mentored numerous students with
5 disabilities and/or having family members
6 living with disabilities.

7 These students are active high school
8 and college students pursuing their degrees,
9 graduates and are employed. We have honored
10 businesses and supervisors who have gone
11 above and beyond to employ, support
12 employees and employers with our Access
13 Achievements Awards at our annual awards
14 ceremony. The Access Achievement Award
15 offers outstanding candidates such as
16 private businesses, public agencies,
17 nonprofit organizations, individuals who
18 have made valiant efforts to improve and
19 increase accessibility by successfully
20 removing physical attitudinal barriers for
21 people with disabilities in Philadelphia.

22 The Mayor's Commission on People with
23 Disabilities encourage our community to
24 apply for city jobs because we are equal

1 opportunity employer and we have parameters
2 in place to accommodate starting with --
3 with accommodations starting with testing as
4 for potential city employees and
5 accommodations for existing employees.

6 Furthermore, the City has a Departmental
7 Aide Trainee position. The Departmental
8 Aide Trainee is a position for persons who
9 have been characterized as having physical
10 or mental disabilities as defined by the
11 American with Disabilities Act and has been
12 referred to the EEO of the personnel
13 department or by -- or by organizations such
14 as the Pennsylvania Office of Vocational
15 Rehabilitation or the Office of Behavioral
16 Health and Intellectual Disability to work
17 either full time or part time in city
18 departments and jobs that match the skills
19 and preferences.

20 These types of work include but are not
21 limited to data entry, messenger, basic
22 clerical, miscellaneous office and manual
23 duties. The Departmental Aide Trainee
24 receives on-the-job training with appointed

1 city departments with the aid of job coaches
2 from the referring agencies with the goal of
3 becoming a civil service appointed to the
4 Departmental Aide. The maximum period for
5 employment in this title is not to exceed
6 one year. The maximum number of encumbered
7 employees in this title citywide at one time
8 is not to exceed 15. The Departmental Aide
9 Trainee position is solely requested and
10 funded by employees department. And at this
11 time, we have 13 employees working as
12 departmental aides.

13 In closing, this year we will celebrate
14 the 25th anniversary of ADA. I know the
15 community of people with disabilities did
16 not fight alone to make change in the world
17 to create inclusion as we are -- as we, the
18 community, join together with advocacy
19 groups, individuals without disabilities and
20 our legislators. Therefore, we must
21 continue to work together to remove myths
22 and stereotypes long inflicted on our
23 community. We must make determined efforts
24 to become educate -- to educate ourselves

1 academically, professionally and personally
2 because we are capable of being educated and
3 maintaining life sustaining employment if
4 given the opportunity.

5 I thank you for this time and this
6 opportunity. And if you have any questions,
7 I will be available.

8 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Thank you very
9 much, Charles.

10 Tracy, would you please identify
11 yourself for the record and proceed with
12 your testimony.

13 MS. KATZ: Good morning, Councilman
14 O'Brien and Committee Members. Thank you
15 for this opportunity to testify today. My
16 name is Tracy Katz. I'm with Networks for
17 Training and Development. And I am here
18 also to represent the Philadelphia Office of
19 Behavioral Health and Intellectual
20 Disability Services, DBHIDS, as a member of
21 the IDS Employment First Philadelphia
22 Steering Committee.

23 As part of this committee, I chair the
24 employer relations work group. Jodie

1 mentioned Employment First --

2 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Julie.

3 MS. KATZ: Julie. She mentioned
4 Employment First earlier, and I do think it
5 is something that should carry further
6 conversation.

7 Employment First is an initiative of
8 National APSE, which is the Association of
9 People Supporting Employment First. This
10 association states that employment in the
11 general workforce at minimum wage or higher
12 is the first and preferred outcome in the
13 provision of publicly funded services for
14 all working age citizens with disabilities
15 regardless of their level of disability.
16 Philadelphia IDS has been at the forefront
17 with the effort to increase community
18 integrated supported employment for
19 individuals with intellectual disabilities
20 for over 20 years now. The Employment First
21 Philadelphia initiative is our most recent
22 effort and was implemented in 2010.

23 As part of the Employment First
24 Philadelphia Steering Committee, I chaired

1 the employer relations workgroup for the
2 last three years. The workgroup is
3 dedicated to increasing employer awareness,
4 education and participation in the hiring of
5 individuals with disabilities. We have
6 hosted employer trainings -- you actually
7 stopped in on one a while ago -- community
8 awareness events in Love Park, Take Your
9 Legislator to Work visits with individuals
10 working in the Philadelphia and surrounding
11 counties. Every legislator in the state
12 actually has been invited to a visit
13 including Councilmembers. So if you'd like
14 to make a workplace visit, let me know.

15 And in regards to your question about
16 the dissemination of materials, Senator
17 Kitchen after her visit actually met with
18 myself and some people from IDS and
19 providers to get materials to have
20 available. So, it's out there. And the
21 more people that want it, the more we can
22 give out.

23 Last week we convened the first business
24 to business focus group where 24 employers

1 came together to engage in discussion on
2 strategies to increase awareness and
3 engagement of the Greater Philadelphia
4 Business Community to expand employment
5 opportunities for people with disabilities.

6 The biggest piece of information that I
7 gather in this process is that employers
8 want to be involved in hiring. They just
9 have many misconceptions about the diverse
10 skills that are available to them and the
11 process by which they can source talent.

12 Employers are surprised to learn that
13 hiring individuals with disabilities does
14 not increase liability or absenteeism.

15 Rather, studies have shown that workers with
16 disabilities often demonstrate lower
17 absenteeism and job turnover; thus, creating
18 a business bottom line through increased
19 return on hiring and onboarding investment
20 just as you suggested.

21 In addition, the employers were
22 interested in knowing more about how
23 supported employment professionals can help
24 by matching the skills of individuals with

1 disabilities with the unmet needs of their
2 businesses. There is a need for more
3 conversation, networking and information
4 sharing between employers so that those
5 leaders and disability employment, such as
6 Wells Fargo with their Diverse Abilities
7 Program, a host of the focus group, can
8 dispel those myths amongst other employers
9 and share the strategies that have helped
10 them develop a strong disability hiring
11 practice.

12 This group, the focus group, joined by
13 many other businesses will continue its work
14 and conversations at the National APSE
15 Employer Leadership Forum, which is part of
16 the National APSE Conference being held here
17 in Philadelphia in June. FAP is on tap to
18 be on one of the panels. The forum is being
19 co-organized by the President of
20 Pennsylvania APSE Julia Barol and Ed Rogers,
21 the District Director of the U.S. Department
22 of Labor Office of Federal Contract
23 Compliance programs. And I invite you guys
24 to attend that forum, as well.

1 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Congratulations for
2 getting all that out.

3 MS. KATZ: The City of Philadelphia has
4 a diverse population and disability is a
5 piece of a life circumstance of many of the
6 residents. Employment not only increases
7 financial stability, but also self-esteem
8 and confidence which, in turn, increases
9 involvement in the community in general.

10 There are models of excellence throughout
11 the country. And looking at the efforts of
12 the City Of Seattle is a good place to
13 begin.

14 In 2012, the Seattle City Council passed
15 an ordinance authorizing an additional 50
16 positions dedicated within the city
17 departments to use when hiring a person with
18 a developmental disability. I should
19 mention that those jobs -- because you
20 mentioned that sometimes jobs requirements
21 and descriptions don't leave people out,
22 those positions actually have no job
23 description and no requirements. They are
24 50 positions that are dedicated to be filled

1 as needed.

2 In addition, they added a full time, in
3 Seattle, a paid position for a job
4 developer/job coach to work with the city
5 employers to identify and place individuals
6 into these 50 positions. As a result, the
7 City of Seattle has been contacted by other
8 private and public sector employers to learn
9 how to replicate their model. Sure they'd
10 love to talk with you.

11 In June of 2014, when they were
12 recognized as an Employer Awardee at the
13 National APSE Conference in California, they
14 reported that the initiative had added more
15 dedicated openings. And they had realized
16 their 85th job placement within the city
17 departments.

18 Also, another role model for hiring is
19 the Federal Government. President Obama put
20 on his agenda a few years ago that he wanted
21 to increase the percentage of hiring through
22 the Federal Government to 10 percent of
23 people every -- of 10 percent of hiring
24 should be people with disabilities. And

1 they have actually reached that goal as of
2 2012. In addition to the Employer Relations
3 Workgroup, the implement first initiative
4 has workgroups on capacity building,
5 supports coordination, systems and policy,
6 data and transition. And each of those
7 groups have made similar contributions to
8 the efforts.

9 Through the Employment First
10 Philadelphia initiative, IDS funded the
11 development of the data system that provides
12 a myriad of information about individuals
13 working competitively within their
14 communities. I work with that data system
15 and immediately recognized Andrea from
16 SPIN's data. And it did place that,
17 verified that. So, all of the hourly wage
18 and number of hours and people employed,
19 that all came from this data system out of
20 this initiative.

21 This data system is now being looked at
22 by Pennsylvania Office of Developmental
23 Program as a possible way to track
24 employment data across disabilities

1 statewide. In your comments, you might want
2 to suggest that they make sure they have a
3 data system to be able to track progress if
4 you made comments to the CMS.

5 Projects working with support
6 coordinator organizations and with local
7 employment providers such as our statewide
8 employment symposium and supports
9 coordination training have strengthened the
10 commitment and increased knowledge and
11 capacity to creatively support employment on
12 the provider side of service delivery. I
13 might also mention that APSE has a
14 certification for which service providers
15 can sit and become certified. It's after my
16 name. It's called Certified Employment
17 Support Professional. In November we tested
18 and 30 people -- of the 30 that took it,
19 passed that. They are the first 30 aside
20 from three others of us who are now
21 Certified Support Professionals in the State
22 of Pennsylvania. Andrea passed and she now
23 has those letters after her name, as well.

24 Through the initiative an annual

1 mini-grant has been awarded to several
2 providers to increase employment, as well.
3 This year in looking at kind of the field
4 and what's going on, Networks for Training
5 Development will be looking for a provider
6 to transition from sheltered employment to
7 more community-based employment
8 opportunities for the individuals for whom
9 they serve.

10 In conclusion, we know that employment
11 is a key for building stronger and healthier
12 communities. Access to real jobs with real
13 wages is essential if citizens with
14 disabilities are to have meaningful,
15 everyday lives and to be free from poverty,
16 dependence and isolation. I believe that
17 the efforts of DBHIDS Employment First
18 Philadelphia initiative are a strong start.
19 We hope that you carry that torch and work
20 with us to continue that. We are very -- we
21 very much appreciate your interest and
22 support in this endeavor.

23 Thank you for your time, your attention.
24 And I'm happy to answer any questions.

1 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: I'm sure Tracy has
2 as many nice things to say about you --
3 Andrea has as many nice things to say.

4 MS. KATZ: Well, I did her data once, so
5 probably.

6 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Now, we would like
7 to ask Dr. Mark Salzer to please yourself
8 and proceed with your testimony.

9 DR. SALZER: Great. Chairman O'Brien
10 and Councilwoman Bass, my name is Mark
11 Salzer. And I am professor and chair of the
12 Department of Rehabilitation Sciences at
13 Temple University and also a psychologist in
14 Director Center funded by the National
15 Institute on disability, independent living
16 and rehabilitation research --

17 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Thank you for
18 bringing Kathy.

19 DR. SALZER: Thank you for recognizing
20 her terrific skills, as well -- center on
21 community inclusion of adults with
22 psychiatric disabilities.

23 Approximately 5 percent of Americans
24 have a serious mental illness including

1 schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and major
2 recurrent depression. These individuals
3 experience lower educational attainment in
4 the general population which ultimately
5 affects their career trajectories and
6 partially explains why only 15 percent are
7 employed at any point in time and why any
8 overwhelming majority live in poverty that
9 leads to homelessness and involvement in the
10 criminal justice system.

11 There are many misconceptions about
12 career interests and abilities of people
13 with psychiatric disabilities and whether
14 work is beneficial for them. The data
15 clearly shows that people with psychiatric
16 disabilities would, could and should work.
17 It's the same for other disability groups.
18 Getting this message out would be my first
19 recommendation for the committee.

20 People with disabilities are affected by
21 the same labor market factors as everyone
22 else. These include labor supply factors
23 such as their skills, knowledge and
24 backgrounds and labor demand factors which

1 refers to the desire among employers to hire
2 employees who experience disabilities.

3 College and vocation, specific
4 post-secondary education, imparts critical
5 skills in our fast moving labor market. As
6 mentioned earlier, people with psychiatric
7 disabilities experience challenges in this
8 area.

9 Efforts to enhance educational
10 attainment include better supporting
11 transitions from secondary to post-secondary
12 educational settings for young people with
13 emotional and behavioral disorders. This
14 would include assistance with obtaining
15 financial aid, obtaining basic study and
16 time management skills and getting connected
17 to campus resources prior to employment or
18 enrollment. Enhanced supports are then
19 needed once they are in college, including
20 support in education programs like Education
21 Plus program offered by Horizon House that
22 we heard from earlier today which uses
23 emerging best practice that are showing
24 great promise in increasing educational

1 outcomes for college students with
2 psychiatric disabilities.

3 Moreover, encouraging colleges and
4 universities to do a better job addressing
5 the needs of students with disabilities
6 beyond the minimum required by Section 504
7 of the ADA would also lead to enhanced
8 academic success.

9 For example, Drexel University has an
10 autism support program that provides peer
11 support aimed at enhancing academic, social
12 an advocacy success for their students.

13 Finally, colleges and universities could
14 be encouraged to adopt formal policies where
15 they explicitly state that students with
16 disabilities are welcomed on their campuses
17 and clearly outline steps for how they will
18 support them. The reason for this is in my
19 work with students with psychiatric
20 disabilities, I hear countless stories of
21 students being discriminated against on
22 college campuses with very little support
23 for them.

24 Our center has created a model policy

1 statement as it pertains to students with
2 psychiatric disabilities. All of us have
3 heard about jobs and attain jobs because of
4 people we know. People with psychiatric
5 disabilities have limited social networks
6 that are particularly dominated by
7 individuals who are unemployed. Our center
8 is conducting research to assist religious
9 congregations, recreational centers, civic
10 groups and housing developments to be more
11 welcoming and inclusive of individuals with
12 disabilities. This will result in enriched
13 social networks that can, among other
14 things, lead to jobs.

15 Other strategies for enhancing the
16 skills of people with disabilities as well
17 as their social networks include increasing
18 internship opportunities that also boost
19 their resumes and employment prospects.
20 Furthermore, internships expose employers to
21 the abilities of these individuals creating
22 more demand for their labor. Connections to
23 employers who participate in city funded or
24 organized job fairs could be expanded by

1 requiring these events to have special
2 emphasis on hiring people with disabilities
3 and ensuring that they are widely publicized
4 with groups and organizations serving people
5 with disabilities.

6 Public and private employers should be
7 at the forefront of promoting economic
8 self-sufficiency for individuals with
9 disabilities and building demand for their
10 labor. Entities like Chambers of Commerce
11 and union league members could develop
12 partnerships with disability community to
13 increase targeted employment opportunities.
14 One caution regarding this approach,
15 however, is to make sure that job
16 development for people with disabilities
17 focus on the full range of the labor market.
18 All jobs are honorable, but it's too often
19 the case that people with disabilities are
20 steered to entry level, low wage, poor
21 benefit jobs that do not maximize their
22 capability. Tax incentives and other
23 policies could also be used to build demand
24 for employing people with disabilities.

1 Finally, research has shown that people
2 with psychiatric disabilities and those with
3 other disabilities face discrimination in
4 the labor market. Directives aimed at
5 hiring people with disabilities across the
6 whole range of city jobs and building on the
7 city's broader nondiscrimination and
8 employment initiatives as it affects all
9 contractors should ensure that people with
10 mental health conditions and other
11 impairments do not face discrimination in
12 seeking jobs with businesses and agencies
13 that have contracts with the city.

14 To maintain a longstanding, focused
15 attention on this critical issue an advisory
16 board could be established that is led by
17 consumers and families with administrative
18 support and responsibility provided by the
19 Department of Behavioral Health and then
20 also consist of mental health provider
21 agencies, city and private employers in both
22 the City's workforce development agencies
23 and the nonmental health training entity
24 that abound in the City. The charge to this

1 board would be to promote broader services
2 and supports for those with mental health
3 conditions who want to work that achieve
4 employment results. An annual report to
5 City Council could be required in which
6 credible data on the employment of people
7 with psychiatric disabilities would be
8 provided along with strategies that have
9 been implemented that move the system
10 forward and toward full employment.

11 Work has tremendous health, economic and
12 social benefits to individuals with
13 psychiatric disabilities. Adopting these
14 types of strategies are critical for
15 ensuring that we do not lose another
16 generation of individuals with psychiatric
17 disabilities and other disabilities to a
18 lifetime of frustrated idleness, despair and
19 poverty.

20 In closing, I would like to thank this
21 Committee and especially Chairman O'Brien
22 for bringing substantial attention to
23 numerous issues facing individuals who
24 experienced disabilities and for the

1 Committee's leadership in pursuing solutions
2 to ensuring that people with disabilities
3 have the opportunity to live satisfying,
4 fulfilling and meaningful lives in the
5 community like everyone else.

6 Thank you.

7 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Thank you so much.

8 Doctor, I like your suggestion of the
9 advisory board and the annual report for
10 behavioral health.

11 Do you have any suggestions on how to
12 create something of this nature on all
13 disability groups or would your
14 recommendation be to create a city-wide
15 board to address all the stakeholder groups
16 in one group? Or would you create boards by
17 disability type?

18 DR. SALZER: Yeah. You know --

19 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: It's a long
20 question. I'm just trying to think --

21 DR. SALZER: I think one board would be
22 great. The issue is within the mental
23 health system we have a lot of concerns that
24 mental health providers and policy makers

1 aren't focused enough on employment to
2 people with psychiatric disabilities.
3 Having targeted initiatives in that area
4 would be very important, but there could
5 certainly be a cross-disability group that
6 does the same thing. And it really drills
7 down the data from every, you know,
8 disability area. So certainly, a broad
9 cross-disability committee could be
10 established.

11 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: I will follow up
12 with you on that.

13 Tracy, I'm very interested in the
14 Seattle project. Would you be able to
15 interpret that for us on how we could apply
16 those principles here?

17 MS. KATZ: You know, I know about it
18 because they spoke at National APSE last
19 year. Basically, I -- and I think I sent
20 Katy the 2012 report.

21 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Got it here.

22 MS. KATZ: That describes a little bit
23 more. You know, I think because so many
24 people get discouraged and don't apply for

1 positions because of requirements and job
2 descriptions, creating positions that can be
3 filled as needed and then hiring someone to
4 work within the city to kind of identify
5 where there are needs in the departments and
6 kind of creating almost customized positions
7 and then filling those with people that can
8 do those jobs. It not only helps the city
9 departments become more efficient, it, you
10 know, provides employment for someone.

11 So I think that was the key to -- they
12 emphasized that that was one of the keys to
13 their program was that it was -- it was an
14 approved job position, but it didn't have a
15 description. It just kind of sat there
16 until the job coach, job developer
17 identified a part of the city -- departments
18 that wanted to hire someone. And then it
19 became a little more flushed out what it
20 would look like.

21 Is that helpful?

22 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Oh, yeah. I think
23 all of this wonderful recommendations on how
24 we can follow through legislatively.

1 Charles, your scholarship program, we
2 witnessed that when we came over to your
3 annual luncheon. And the strategies on how
4 to employ individuals as department aides,
5 does that come from their individual
6 budgets? Or how do you -- how can we --

7 MR. HORTON: Well, the Departmental Aide
8 Trainee Program, it comes from the
9 individual budgets. And it also comes from
10 the department itself needing someone to
11 fill those different types of positions.
12 There are 15 Departmental Aide Trainee in
13 the program. They have 15 a year. But you
14 don't have -- the departments, the
15 individuals don't have to stay in that for
16 the whole year to be appointed to the
17 departmental aide. And we can have as many
18 people as we want in that departmental aide
19 in the city at any time. There is no
20 specific numbers.

21 So within that program, we have 15. But
22 we can always expand it.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I had a couple
24 comments. Charles, you know -- I see

1 Charles everywhere. He's at concerts. I'm
2 not even kidding. I see him everywhere I
3 go. It's always good to see you.

4 I did have a couple of questions for
5 Mr. Salzer. And one of the comments that
6 you made was about making recreation centers
7 more welcoming. As the chair of Parks of
8 Recreation, I am very interested to see if
9 you had any specific thoughts on that.

10 One of the things that I have done as
11 the chair is for every park or for ever
12 recreation center playground in my district,
13 which is the 8th District, that we have
14 touched, we made sure it includes things
15 that are for the disabled community. And I
16 remember going out to the northeast to visit
17 for a ribbon cutting for a playground that
18 was done in Councilman O'Neill's district.
19 And it was, you know, it had a lot of
20 features that were designed for children
21 with autism and other, you know,
22 developmental delays and also for children
23 who had physical disabilities who might not
24 be able to get on the traditional playground

1 swing and all those sorts of things.

2 And so, you know, as we were talking
3 about it, we realized that the cost for
4 those items really was not significant in
5 terms of being above the cost of other
6 playground equipment for children. And so,
7 one of the thing that we have done in my
8 district is that every playground recreation
9 center that we touch, we added those
10 elements automatically. And so, you know,
11 we make sure that there are different colors
12 and textures and things that would resonate
13 for children who have those particular
14 delays.

15 But if there other things that you think
16 that we should be doing to make them more
17 welcoming, I'm very curious as to what you
18 think -- you know, what your thoughts are.

19 DR. SALZER: Right. So thank you very
20 much. Actually, the City of Philadelphia
21 has done a great job with making
22 recreational facilities really accessible
23 for many people with disabilities. Our
24 centers concerns are primarily focused on

1 adults with psychiatric disabilities. And
2 there is tremendous discrimination towards
3 adults with psychiatric disabilities,
4 schizophrenia and bipolar disorder in
5 particular. One thing that we have been
6 doing with recreation centers, community
7 centers, also gyms, those kind of things is
8 try to help them become more welcoming,
9 accepting of people with psychiatric
10 disabilities, trying to put them in contact
11 with our mental health centers, help them
12 create more opportunities for people with
13 psychiatric disabilities feel more welcomed
14 at the center, not necessarily special
15 events but making sure that they have
16 activities that are appropriate for them,
17 that there is the appropriate supports and
18 communications with the mental health
19 centers.

20 Our concerns we are hearing from some
21 people who say that they don't get welcomed
22 at these places. And that's -- those are
23 some of the things that we are trying to do
24 to address those issues.

1 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. Thank you.
2 That's something that we can definitely look
3 into in terms of, you know, working with the
4 Departments of Parks and Recreation to find
5 out how we can make sure that our rec center
6 leaders are in tune with this need and are
7 properly addressing it. That is something
8 we can certainly do.

9 Also, you mentioned that some
10 universities have gone above and beyond when
11 it comes to, you know, making those with
12 autism and other delays feel welcome and
13 ensuring success. And can you point out
14 briefly who is doing what? We can deduct
15 who is not doing what.

16 DR. SALZER: I wish I could give lots of
17 examples. Really Drexel has been in the
18 area of autism.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Temple, maybe?

20 DR. SALZER: Temple has a great Office
21 of Students with Disabilities --
22 Disabilities of Resource Services. But I
23 would say the head of that group is terrific
24 and doing the best he can. There can

1 certainly be more resources that Temple
2 makes available and other universities make
3 available to support students with
4 disabilities, especially promoting peer
5 support, promoting opportunities to
6 encourage students with psychiatric
7 disabilities.

8 Students with psychiatric disabilities
9 are the largest disability group in colleges
10 and universities. And they are also the one
11 group that these Offices of Students with
12 Disabilities constantly say that they
13 struggle with trying to figure how to
14 support them. Most of the accommodations
15 that they are familiar with are appropriate
16 for people with physical, sensory
17 disabilities. They are starting to come
18 around a little bit with students with
19 developmental disabilities in particular.

20 They constantly struggle for supporting
21 students with psychiatric disability.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Just a thought is
23 that -- couple of questions. First, is that
24 it might be helpful if we gave them some

1 guidance. Maybe we should develop a list of
2 suggested things that are universities could
3 do. And, you know, they can determine how
4 long it will take them to implement, you
5 know, the different measures. But I think
6 rather than waiting on them maybe we should,
7 you know, gently suggest what they can do
8 that would be helpful immediately and what
9 they can plan for longer term. Maybe that
10 is something that we can put together.

11 DR. SALZER: Councilwoman Bass, I
12 would -- we would be thrilled to be there
13 and support that work and do whatever we
14 can.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: That would be great.
16 And the other thing in terms of, you know,
17 the psychiatric disabilities is, you know,
18 one of the things that strikes me is that
19 you often hear about, you know, someone who
20 has schizophrenia and something that just
21 resonates in my mind is.

22 I heard over and over well, you know,
23 Susan went off to Temple and she was there
24 for a couple semesters. And when she came

1 back, she was different. And so, we know it
2 usually strikes I believe in later teen
3 years, which is, you know, your college
4 years.

5 And so, for universities to, you know,
6 find a way to pay attention to those kinds
7 of thing and take more of a proactive
8 approach to, you know, that something is
9 going on with the student. Not this, oh,
10 they're just college students and all over
11 18 so they're all on their own but really
12 paying attention. So that if there is
13 something that, you know, there are warning
14 signs that are there, the universities could
15 step in and maybe get early treatment which
16 would be, you know, helpful and also with
17 the diagnosis and reaching out to the
18 parents and say, hey, they think could be
19 something is up here.

20 There may be privacy laws. I understand
21 that might interfere. There has to be a way
22 for the universities to be more proactive
23 when it comes to those sorts of things when
24 we know it happens at 18, 19, 20.

1 DR. SALZER: I would say actually Temple
2 University does have a program like that
3 that reaches out to -- for opportunities to
4 reach out to student who are experiencing
5 some challenges, somebody makes the
6 recommendation. In that sense, Temple is
7 doing a great job. But there are some
8 additional supports and preventative efforts
9 that could definitely done.

10 And it's not just suicide -- it's not
11 just schizophrenia or the first episode of
12 schizophrenia. The suicide rates are very
13 high on college campuses. Every college and
14 university that I know could definitely do a
15 better job with addressing depression and
16 suicidal ideation. Actually, I know that
17 the University of Pennsylvania has done --
18 developed some peer support type of
19 initiatives where students are reaching out
20 to other students on campus who might have
21 mental health challenges especially related
22 to depression.

23 But we definitely can do some more
24 organized things. But it's also again not

1 just of the treatment or getting access to
2 services, it's helping students feel
3 welcomed and embraced. I actually just
4 heard -- I had a commentary published in the
5 Inquirer on Monday about asylum. Some of my
6 colleagues here in the city have called for
7 return to asylums for people with
8 psychiatric disabilities.

9 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Some people think
10 City Council is an asylum.

11 DR. SALZER: And I heard from a student
12 who experiences bipolar disorder and she
13 talks about her experience feeling not
14 welcome on a particular campus here in the
15 City. And I, you know, dozen of those types
16 of story.

17 So, we definitely can do a better job.
18 And people are living -- Councilman O'Brien
19 was talking about 86 percent of people with
20 psychiatric disabilities, our best data so
21 far, withdrawing. That is not acceptable
22 and that will affect us. City of
23 Philadelphia does have a lot of people with
24 serious mental health issues and a lot of

1 people who are unemployed. And I don't
2 think I've ever met anybody with serious
3 mental illness, and I've been in asylums.
4 I've never met anybody that couldn't work to
5 some degree. And we can do a better job.

6 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: I appreciate that.
7 And it's a onion with so many different
8 layers. And I think our universities and
9 our academic centers are wonderfully willing
10 to participate in. Sometimes it's just
11 trying to find the right way of getting in
12 there.

13 I used to have to department heads that
14 said, Benny, if you write what you want to
15 do with autism, we'll do it. I haven't had
16 to write, obviously, but I met with some
17 Presidents of universities saying that is
18 our job. We bring the people in, and we
19 will instruct them on how to build that
20 conversation.

21 We took an adult service model to
22 Chestnut Hill. And when I walked into the
23 room, there was 40 people the President had
24 assembled. I thought I was in the wrong

1 room. He said no, these are all for you.
2 We worked for three years and we took the
3 special ed, the nursing, and the social
4 workers and we created an undergraduate
5 program and a graduate program.

6 But the other thing that always
7 challenges me as we look at individuals with
8 disabilities and we all seek to make them
9 more independent. And a response to that
10 often is giving them more services where
11 they feel less independent. So, I think the
12 hard work is how we can make, as you just
13 alluded to, how they can feel more welcome
14 on the campuses, that they feel very
15 comfortable in incorporating those support
16 services as part of their network by
17 applying to the workplace. And the
18 strategies have to be -- I think those
19 strategies have to be more focused and how
20 we merge the individuals with those supports
21 so that they recognize that asking for this
22 doesn't compromise my independence. It
23 actually enhances it.

24 It's a fine line. But I think you've

1 given us -- all the people that have
2 testified here today have given us wonderful
3 insight. There's a lot of work to do and
4 there's very specific initiatives that you
5 have recommended for us that are going to
6 take some time for us to digest in
7 legislative form, expand dialogue on how we
8 can translate this or transfer into
9 operation as Councilwoman Bass said into our
10 universities.

11 I think we are unique have our 75
12 institutions in this area. There is nobody
13 that's better positioned to move this
14 conversation forward and inspiring our
15 wonderful partnerships we have had with
16 School District, DBHIDS and Behavioral
17 Health in our Philadelphia Autism Project, I
18 think they are touchstones that allow us to
19 build dialogue going forward in a very
20 ambitious way.

21 So, I would just say that the work is
22 just beginning. You just scratched the
23 surface and invited us to participate in a
24 meaningful dialogue of these issues going

1 forward. And I think my colleagues would be
2 most receptive in trying to pick up that
3 charge and move forward with it.

4 Do you have any other questions? I
5 thank you very much for your testimony and
6 look forward to looking into those
7 initiatives and seeing how we can move them
8 forward into best practices. Thank you.

9 And is there anyone else that would like
10 to testify here? We are under a, I think we
11 have to get out of here very shortly. We
12 are borrow this room from the court systems.

13 MR. BARNUM: I actually have a question.

14 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Yes. Would you
15 please come up, identify yourself just for
16 the purposes of.

17 MR. BARNUM: My name is Harry Barnum. I
18 work for Community Resources Incorporated.
19 During some presentations, we talk about
20 appointments, we talk about schools and also
21 parents of children in IEPs. There is such
22 a focus on disabilities. And for many
23 years, many years there are people talking
24 about disabilities without focus on

1 deafness. There has been so little focus on
2 deafness. There's been a lot of focus on
3 retardation, people who can hear, people
4 with other disabilities. For years there's
5 been no services for deaf people.

6 And when the lawyer spoke about before
7 was evidence of this, that there haven't
8 been a lot of approach about deafness in the
9 other presentations. I'm here with clients
10 who are wondering why there is so much focus
11 on community people here and none of the
12 deaf community. (Audience raises hands to
13 show presence.)

14 As you can see, a large number of people
15 here. There has been a lot of people but we
16 haven't seen a lot of action. Please excuse
17 me, I wanted to speak you directly that the
18 time is now to start acting and sharing with
19 the disability in the community. Public
20 resources and OVR, there's money going to
21 schools but there are issues for
22 communications for deaf people at these
23 institutions.

24 So, Liberty Resources has been writing

1 programs to address these issues. And OVR
2 should provide funding for these things. We
3 need the support so we can improve the
4 skills for the community. And as you see,
5 we have our presentations here and there has
6 been no support. What are we to do?

7 The Liberty Resources has been provided
8 very little funding for this program in
9 improving our community. I hope you will
10 please support us. Thank you.

11 (Councilman raises hands, shakes them in
12 applause.)

13 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Come forward.
14 Would you please identify yourself.

15 MS. LEVIN: Yes. I'm Trudy Levin. I'm
16 a self-advocate, been so for more than half
17 of my life. And for people with invisible
18 disabilities and traumatic brain injury,
19 epilepsy, brain surgery, just sort of a
20 number of experiences starting at 19 and I
21 am now 47. And there has been no true help
22 that for me and my drive and determination
23 and faith in God. Without those, I wouldn't
24 be here literally and my God gifted art, or

1 I would not be here. The discrimination has
2 been ridiculous, especially for those of us
3 with epilepsy. I did not hear one person
4 mention that word.

5 Those children with autism, 30 percent
6 of them have epilepsy. Adults, even young
7 people can end up with strokes, brain
8 cancer, higher risk for traumatic brain
9 injury, also -- I know the cause of mine --
10 for epilepsy. Discrimination towards trying
11 to get jobs with that, forced to lie on
12 application and lie on interviews. The
13 applicant I have been, there is no reason
14 to. Why should I have to lie?

15 There is 40 different kinds of seizures.
16 It's the oldest, it's the largest neurologic
17 disorder in the world. The oldest illness
18 and it's enough. Some of the greatest
19 people who make differences in this country
20 in the world have it and have it. And
21 silence doesn't heal or make a difference
22 for anybody. Might even find a cure for it.
23 Science made a difference for cancer, breast
24 cancer. It's what made a difference for the

1 diabetes. Even with diabetes, one of the
2 scariest side effects of diabetes is
3 seizures but too many CEOs and employers
4 think of liability instead of using their
5 brain. And that right there, the brain, is
6 where the epilepsy is and it's nothing to
7 take for granted. So, these employers and
8 the CEOs need to start using their brains
9 the right way and start learning. That if
10 we're living this and surviving this, you
11 should give us a chance and hire us and not
12 hold it against. Because we survive these
13 things.

14 And the near death experiences, the
15 strength that it takes to do it -- I also
16 survived breast cancer just almost a year
17 and a half ago. That didn't scare me, but
18 my brain meant more. Your breasts don't do
19 anything for your reading, your writing,
20 your comprehension, nothing. Your memory
21 does nothing like that. I hear so many --
22 so much and here is my story.

23 I had them cut out because I know that
24 the chemo, the radiation could be more

1 damaging. It's just been enough. And I
2 heard that gentleman also mention suicide.
3 That's one of the highest things for people
4 with this. I was one of the people starting
5 23 years ago who wrote to the politicians.
6 Called them about trying to bring in a group
7 for epilepsy for all those football players
8 and ice hockey players and boxers and tell
9 them those things are games, but the brains
10 ain't toys and enough already. The brain is
11 too much. It's not replaceable. You only
12 get one. That's all you have to work with.
13 It's what does everything. Even with all
14 this technology today, takes the brain to
15 make it work.

16 All of us, each and every one of us with
17 these disabilities all the different kinds
18 that we have, all the different levels, how
19 you accommodate and how you adjust to it, it
20 takes the brain. Growing up, I always have
21 such passion and respect for Helen Keller.
22 I always believe that those that are blind
23 can see better than those that can see.
24 Anyone who wants to discriminate against any

1 of us with disabilities should be ashamed
2 and embarrassed. No one person with
3 disability should ever feel that way. I am
4 trying to get the name changed to "unique
5 disabilities" because each and every one of
6 us are so unique. It happens at any time,
7 any age.

8 Like I said, my began at 19. I was on a
9 side street and someone crashed into me. I
10 had no idea what degree it was going to
11 change my life. I'd gone to college, had an
12 associate's degree, graduated with honors,
13 was tutoring others. Then five years later,
14 whoop, epilepsy began. Everything changed.
15 I couldn't read. I couldn't write, but I
16 didn't stop trying.

17 And then I had 2 inches of my brain cut
18 out and again I needed therapy, but I never
19 stopped trying. And everyone left me when I
20 needed them most because they feared what
21 they didn't understand. I'm still here for
22 a reason. The reasons, I don't want to see
23 anyone going through what I went through,
24 that's the lack of awareness and care, help

1 and support and respect, period, because we
2 are the most discriminated against. And we
3 are the biggest minority in this country.

4 And it's enough already. More than enough
5 because I can't stand it and it's not right.

6 Last thing I ever wanted to be doing is
7 be living on disability. I had health
8 insurance before it came into my life. When
9 it turned into epilepsy, my health insurance
10 said goodbye. I had no choice to make my
11 life, my health, my priority. Had to get on
12 disability and I had to fight for that like
13 crazy. And believe me, because without it,
14 I wouldn't be alive. You don't live without
15 health insurance when you have illnesses.

16 That's a fact.

17 Now with Obamacare, and I helped with
18 that, I campaigned for plenty of
19 politicians. And I even helped with
20 Obamacare making all the phone calls.
21 Anyone who has a problem with understanding
22 that, please, I let them know if you have a
23 car, it's a law for that to be insured. If
24 you have a problem with understanding that,

1 your life is more valuable than that car.
2 That car is replaceable. You're not. Get
3 over it. Until it happens to you, don't
4 take it for granted. Value it.

5 I can't tell people enough, health is
6 your greatest wealth. Please. It's enough.
7 Right down to the fact -- also I have it
8 written down because my memory is on the
9 phone.

10 Also, the assistance and service that
11 has been put on freeze, people like me is
12 invisible. After my brain surgery, I needed
13 to get speech therapy and occupational
14 therapy and any type of service I should be
15 able to have is on freeze for cognitive
16 assistance, as opposed to the kind that is
17 open right now, the other right now is on
18 freeze. I can't remember the proper word.
19 I believe it's cognitive that's on freeze
20 they say for financial.

21 The only plans open are for people that
22 need physical help in taking showers and
23 doing things like that where I can do some
24 of the stuff on my own, but I need help with

1 other things. Looking at me, judge me by a
2 cover, please. I can guess at how you go to
3 a library. Think you know about a book.
4 You don't know a thing about me through
5 reading. You are going to judge it by a
6 cover and the other. My reading, my
7 writing, I can't do a thing like this even
8 seven years ago. Can't say a word right
9 now.

10 So with that cognitive organization --
11 side of the assistance that has been on
12 freeze, I can't remember the name. I wish I
13 had it today. I would have had a lot more
14 written, but I had no idea. I would love to
15 know when this is going to be happening next
16 month more and more. Because this city,
17 this country, this world -- I should say the
18 city and the state and this world, this
19 country needs it. Forgive me. Things like
20 that like that gentleman was saying about
21 one of these people were saying about how we
22 can say words and say things. I had so many
23 doors shut on me because I misunderstood.
24 I'm just speaking the best I can and getting

1 words out as best I can. Because I couldn't
2 even speak six years ago, seven years ago.
3 I couldn't even dress myself. I can dress
4 myself, but I couldn't remember how to dress
5 myself with style or anything like that.

6 So great to remember how I wrote, which
7 hand I wrote. But it's drive and
8 determination. I would try my darndest to
9 be helpful and inspiration and living proof,
10 but it's not -- because nobody wants to give
11 us chances. And each and every one of us
12 with disabilities, I am sure the majority of
13 us, we want to be working. Say that to
14 people who don't have anything like this,
15 that people on disability, it's so easy for
16 them. No, it's not. The last thing we
17 want.

18 We don't want to not be working. We
19 want to be able to have rights to have lives
20 and make money. We have to have health
21 insurance or we wouldn't have lives. We
22 have rights. It's just enough. We have
23 hardest jobs 24/7 we have applied for. The
24 way I see it, as God chooses the strongest

1 for these kind of jobs. It's takes strength
2 beyond. Like you were saying before
3 somebody you know who works it, there are
4 people who don't take lives for granted who
5 value lives because you can't take a single
6 thing with you when you die. While you're
7 here, value it.

8 I came from money, family with money.
9 They thought money was more important,
10 that's why they ran from me. I know the
11 differences. Life is more valuable.
12 Working helps so much. This -- I ended up
13 with depression and bipolar. On top of it
14 all because of all the frustrations that
15 happens with this, ignorances exists in the
16 city, the state and country. The ignorance
17 is disgusting. Absolutely disgusting. It
18 needs to change. It's enough already. It
19 sicker than any of our sicknesses.

20 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Thank you. I would
21 thank you very, very much for your testimony
22 here today. You touched on a number of
23 themes. But I think the most important one
24 is that this is a civil rights issue. And

1 it is the new civil rights, and we all have
2 to be aware of that.

3 When I first started advocating for
4 individuals with disabilities, I fought for
5 the approved private schools. They were the
6 ones with cerebral palsy, autistic and down
7 syndrome and mentally ill. And I can tell
8 you that it changed my life. It made me a
9 better person. Made me a better legislator
10 and certainly a better an. I say that all
11 the time.

12 I first met deputy secretary who wanted
13 to do something for brain injuries and he
14 actually did me a big favor by saying
15 there's no room for you advocating for
16 autism because we have to do this first.
17 That gave me a discipline. That instructed
18 me that or enabled me that we have to
19 advocate for everybody with a disability
20 because individuals have multiple
21 challenges. And it did force me to go out
22 and create services for individuals with
23 autism because there are other systems that
24 are out there. There wasn't anything there.

1 Our goal is always to build systems that we
2 can reach back and help other disability
3 communities in our efforts.

4 The seizures are something that are
5 across disabilities. And I'm very much
6 concerned about the behavioral or the
7 chemical restraint that we have instead of
8 functional behavioral analysis that we have,
9 apply chemical remedies. And we don't know
10 often what the effects of these drugs have
11 on individuals and in combination of those
12 drugs have. So certainly, our school of
13 pharmacology have to be incorporated in the
14 discussion so that we can better recognize
15 those effects.

16 But I will also tell Harry and all the
17 other disability groups that as long as I'm
18 being criticized for favoring one group over
19 the other, it's like everything else, I'm
20 probably doing my job. But this
21 conversation is something that is very
22 personal to me. It's -- I know Cindy and so
23 many of the council people. This is a
24 conversation that deserves all of our

1 efforts. And I think as we explore
2 Obamacare, there are great opportunities
3 under -- as we looked at the Mental Health
4 Act and as that's incorporated in the
5 Obamacare, there are great opportunities
6 extension of other services and financial
7 resources through Obamacare. We are going
8 to lead the charge as we always should in
9 Pennsylvania to lead the country on these
10 forward looking and progressive instruments
11 and tools.

12 But I want to thank everybody here today
13 for the wonderful testimony that you've
14 given. And thank you very much for sharing
15 your personal --

16 MS. LEVIN: Can I say one more thing?
17 Cognitive facilitator I feel is what needs
18 to be corrected and needs to be found for.
19 As far as your thing for medication, I
20 also -- I help mentor students. And I'm
21 living proof what medicine can attempt.
22 Because medicine, please, we know for
23 epilepsy, we can -- that is all needed to be
24 legalized in the state already.

1 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: I want to thank
2 everybody for being here today. And -- yes?

3 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I just want to add
4 really quickly. So, for the young lady who
5 just spoke, Trudy -- so, I did want to thank
6 you also for your statement in terms of the
7 term of disabilities which I never felt
8 comfortable with, and the term of unique
9 abilities which is something that I am going
10 to try to incorporate into my vocabulary
11 with folks. I think it's much more
12 appropriate.

13 I also wanted to say really quickly to
14 Harry in reference to his comments on, you
15 know, the deaf community. And really want
16 to make sure that it's, you know, something
17 that we don't forget about. So, please any
18 ideas or suggestions or conversations, we
19 are certainly open to having and want to
20 make sure are included in our thought
21 process. Looking forward to having those
22 conversations.

23 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Is there anyone
24 else here to testify?

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1 Seeing no one else, the business before
2 for this Committee on Disabled and Special
3 Needs today, Public Hearing on Resolution
4 No. 150027 is recessed until the call of the
5 Chair. Thank you all very much for your
6 attendance.

7 (Public Hearing recessed at 12:54 p.m.)

C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I, hereby certify that the proceedings and evidence noted are contained fully and accurately in the stenographic notes taken by me in the foregoing matter, and that this is a correct transcript of the same.

ANGELA M. KING, RPR
Court Reporter - Notary Public

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