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COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

3

COMMITTEE ON LAW AND GOVERNMENT

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Room 400, City Hall

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

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Tuesday, December 5, 2006, 10:30 a.m.

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10 Bill 060854 - Amending Chapter 17-1400 of the
11 Philadelphia Code entitled "Competitively Bid
Contracts; Financial Assistance."

12 Bill 060581 and Res. 060596 - Providing for
13 creation of Youth Commission.

14 COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT:

15 William K. Greenlee, Chair
Carol Campbell

16 Wilson W. Goode, Jr.
Jack Kelly

17 James F. Kenney
Blondell Reynolds-Brown

18 Frank Rizzo
Daniel J. Savage

19

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1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060854

2 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Good
3 morning, everyone. The Committee on Law
4 and Government now, the in session.

5 For the for the record, we have
6 a quorum: Myself, Councilman Savage,
7 Councilman Goode, Councilman Rizzo.

8 Would the clerk of the
9 committee, Mr. Boyle, please read the
10 title of Bill No. 060854.

11 THE CLERK: An ordinance
12 amending Chapter 17-1400 of the
13 Philadelphia Code entitled
14 "Competitively Bid Contracts, Financial
15 Assistance" by revising the threshold
16 for in terms of eligibility for certain
17 contracts and finance assistance, all
18 under certain terms and conditions.

19 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
20 you.

21 I would like to note also for
22 the record the presence of the Vice
23 Chairman of the committee, Councilman
24 Kenney. I'd like to thank Councilman
25 Kenney and his assistant Tara

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060854
2 (indiscernible) for helping me get all
3 of this together in my first committee
4 hearing as chair.

5 This is Councilman Goode's
6 bill, and the Chair recognizes
7 Councilman Goode.

8 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you,
9 Mr. Chair.

10 I'd like to (inaudible, off
11 mic.)...

12 Section 17-1404 of the
13 Philadelphia Code drafted by the Law
14 Department. This bill creates
15 Subsection 17-1404(1)(d) to incorporate
16 new campaign-finance provisions
17 unanimously passed by City Council and
18 signed into law on November 16th into
19 that section of the code.

20 New provisions legally take
21 effect on December 16th and were adopted
22 by the independent Board of Ethics
23 yesterday. Therefore, this bill's
24 intent is as a technical amendment that
25 would create consistency within the code

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060854
2 related to campaign contribution limits.

3 I note there's testimony here
4 from Susan Kretsge, Deputy Managing
5 Director, who's been instrumental in
6 no-bid contract law, and she she's here.

7 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Is there
8 anyone here to testify on this bill?

9 (Witness comes forward.)

10 MS. KRETSGE: Yes, sir.

11 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Please
12 identify yourself for the record. Good
13 morning.

14 MS. KRETSGE: Good morning,
15 Chairman Greenlee and members of the Law
16 and Government Committee. My name is
17 Susan Kretsge, K-R-E-T-S-G-E.

18 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Ma'am,
19 pull your mic a little bit closer,
20 please.

21 MS. KRETSGE: And I'm Deputy
22 Managing Director with the City of
23 Philadelphia.

24 Thank you for this opportunity
25 to testify to the proposed amendments to

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060854
2 Chapter 17-1400 of the Philadelphia Code
3 governing non-competitively bid
4 contracts and financial assistance.

5 On February 1st, some dramatic
6 changes to Chapter 17-1400 of the
7 Philadelphia Code took effect. These
8 changes proscribed a complex set of
9 requirements for the procurement of
10 non-competitively bid services.

11 They dictated how city agencies
12 could solicit and award these contracts.
13 They determined how vendors interested
14 in a non-bid contract opportunity with
15 the city would apply and the changes
16 implemented required reporting.

17 They also established
18 eligibility requirements for vendors
19 interested in a non-competitively bid
20 contract with the City of Philadelphia
21 based on a level of campaign
22 contributions.

23 On July 1st of this year, these
24 provisions regarding the eligibility
25 requirements that required reporting

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060854
2 were extended to those applying for or
3 receiving financial assistance through
4 the approval or authority of the city.

5 In order to implement these
6 changes, the City established an online
7 process called e-contract Philly that
8 would allow us to post the notices of
9 contract opportunity. It was also the
10 vehicle that vendors interested in
11 applying would use, and it was where the
12 City would post contract renewals and
13 contract awards.

14 Since February 1 of this year,
15 we've had close to 1300 vendors register
16 with e-contract Philly. We posted 175
17 contract opportunities and 130 contract
18 awards. Vendors have submitted 650
19 applications for advertised contract
20 opportunities, and another 384 have
21 submitted disclosures for contracts that
22 did not require advertisement.

23 Also, since February 1st, the
24 City has posted five different reports
25 on contracting and financial assistance

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060854
2 on this website.

3 In accordance with Chapter
4 17-400, vendors and financial-assistance
5 applicants and recipients are required
6 to disclose campaign contributions for
7 the prior two years. Those
8 contributions made after January 1st of
9 2006 are considered when making an
10 eligibility determination.

11 Currently, if an individual
12 makes contributions that are greater
13 than \$2500 during the calendar year to a
14 candidate for nomination or election to
15 any City office or to an incumbent, then
16 that individual is ineligible to receive
17 financial assistance or a non-
18 competitively bid contract greater than
19 10,000 during the candidate's or
20 incumbent's term of office.

21 For businesses, the campaign
22 contributions in excess of \$10,000
23 affect eligibility for financial
24 assistance or non-bid contracts that are
25 greater than \$25,000.

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060854

2 As proposed in Bill 060854, if
3 campaign-contribution limits for
4 individuals and businesses change due to
5 a candidate making contributions from
6 his or her own resources greater than
7 \$250,000, than the eligibility
8 thresholds for financial assistance or
9 non-competitively bid contracts will
10 increase in a corresponding manner.

11 This legislation will maintain
12 the current consistency between
13 campaign-finance legislation and rules
14 governing non-bid contracts and
15 financial assistance. Maintaining this
16 consistency will obviously be of great
17 help to the vendor community and
18 certainly to city staff when
19 understanding and applying the rules.

20 And this bill, like the
21 companion piece that did change campaign
22 contribution thresholds, will address
23 issues of equity.

24 The Administration supports
25 this bill and believes that these

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060854
2 changes to 17-1400 should be made.

3 Thank you.

4 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank you
5 for your testimony.

6 Are there any questions from
7 members of the committee?

8 (No questions.)

9 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Seeing
10 none, thank you very much.

11 Is there anyone else to testify
12 on this bill?

13 (No response.)

14 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Seeing
15 none, we will move to the next bill and
16 resolution.

17 Mr. Boyle, will you please read
18 Bill No. 060581 and Resolution No.
19 060596.

20 THE CLERK: Bill No. 060581, an
21 ordinance providing for the submission
22 of the qualified electors of the City of
23 Philadelphia of an amendment to the
24 Philadelphia Home Rule Charter creating
25 a Youth Commission, as approved by the

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 resolution of the City Council; fixing
3 the date of a special election for such
4 purpose, prescribing the form of ballot
5 questions to be voted on; and
6 authorizing the appropriate officers to
7 publish notice and to make arrangements
8 for the special election.

9 Resolution No. 060596,
10 proposing an amendment to the
11 Philadelphia Home Rule Charter creating
12 a Youth Commission and providing for the
13 submission of the amendment to the
14 electors of Philadelphia.

15 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
16 you.

17 This bill and resolution was
18 sponsored by Councilwoman Reynolds-Brown
19 and the Chair recognizes the
20 Councilwoman.

21 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:
22 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23 On June 15, 2006, I introduced
24 legislation that would create a Youth
25 Commission for the City of Philadelphia.

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581

2 Under this proposal, a question
3 would be placed on the ballot on
4 Election Day, May 15, 2007, asking the
5 voters to decide whether the Home Rule
6 Charter should be amended to create a
7 Youth Commission with members between
8 the ages of 12 to 23 who have an
9 understanding of the needs of young
10 people or experiences with children and
11 youth programs.

12 Why a Youth Commission?

13 To bridge the gap between young
14 people and government;

15 To bring young people into the
16 city's government public policy-making
17 processes;

18 To provide young people with
19 opportunities to impact policy decisions
20 that ultimately affect their lives;

21 To educate young people about
22 the political process; and

23 Lastly, to develop youth
24 leadership skills in the political
25 arena.

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581

2 The purpose of such a
3 commission is ultimately to engage our
4 young people in the governmental
5 process.

6 The commission would advise and
7 make comments to City Council, the
8 Mayor, and departments and agencies of
9 the city regarding proposed ordinances,
10 policies, and other legislative matters
11 affecting our children.

12 The commission would reflect
13 the diversity of the city and would be
14 composed of 21 members, with each
15 Councilmember and the Mayor having one
16 appointment, and the Mayor having three
17 additional appointments from
18 under-represented communities to ensure
19 diversity.

20 The initial appointment would
21 be made by the new council and mayor
22 after the first Monday in January, 2008,
23 and no later than February 1, 2008.

24 The first term would run from
25 February 1, 2008, to August 31, 2009.

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 Future terms would be for one year,
3 beginning on September 1st of each year.

4 The commission would have the
5 authority to write its own bylaws and
6 would be required to conduct regular
7 meetings at least one a month. It would
8 be required to keep minutes of these
9 meetings and also would be required to
10 prepare an annual report. Bylaws,
11 minutes and the annual report would be
12 filed with the Chief Clerk of City
13 Council.

14 And in closing, I might add
15 that Philadelphia would not be a first.
16 Like the Children's Fund, San Francisco
17 did it first several years ago, and so I
18 ask for favorable consideration of this
19 bill, Mr. Chairman.

20 Thank you.

21 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
22 you, Councilwoman.

23 Any questions or comments on
24 the -- the Chair recognizes Councilman
25 Kenney.

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581

2 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you.

3 Councilwoman, I think it's a
4 tremendous idea, and I really think it's
5 something that should be
6 institutionalized permanently as a part
7 of the city political and policy
8 landscape.

9 The one question I have is, it
10 says on the resolution that the powers
11 and duties of the commission, one of
12 them would be -- shall advise and
13 comment to Council, the Mayor, agencies
14 and departments of the city on proposed
15 ordinances and other legislative matters
16 and policies concerning the children and
17 youth of the city.

18 Would this be -- would they
19 have the ability to comment on
20 everything, or just ordinances and
21 resolutions and policies that affected
22 children?

23 'Cause I'm not clear on it. It
24 says other "legislative matters," but I
25 want to make sure that it's everything

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 that comes before us and not just issues
3 related to either education or
4 recreation or -- is it everything?

5 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:
6 It's intended for young people to
7 comment only on proposed ordinances and
8 legislative matters that directly impact
9 children, so it would not be the huge
10 world that we know it to be as members
11 of Council.

12 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I mean,
13 certainly this is, you know, your idea
14 ask you're shepherding it through.

15 But one of the things I would
16 just suggest is that perhaps we should
17 widen the scope of their ability to
18 comment. I mean, there are issues
19 relative to the Police Department that
20 may affect them, or just generally
21 government in general, which I think
22 part of what the effort here is to get
23 young people to start thinking about
24 their city and the laws that affect
25 their city and policies that --

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581

2 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

3 That govern them.

4 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: And while
5 probably their focus -- it's important
6 to deal with issues that affect them
7 directly, but in the end, I guess
8 everything that happens in the city
9 affects them directly and long-term.

10 So I have no suggested
11 language.

12 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

13 Yes.

14 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: But if
15 there's something you could maybe craft
16 before we get this out of committee that
17 would kind of broaden their scope and
18 give them the latitude to comment on
19 anything.

20 I mean, I think that one of the
21 things we're probably lacking is young
22 people's engagement because they think
23 that we don't listen, and I think having
24 their ability to comment on whether or
25 not we build stadiums, whether or not,

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 you know, what the Police Department
3 looks like, what the -- how the Streets
4 Department does their stuff.

5 It may be interesting and
6 insightful for all of us, so it's just
7 --

8 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: I
9 thank you for the feedback.

10 And one impetus for the
11 legislation is because there are a
12 number of what one might call "splinter
13 youth groups" in the city that have a
14 voice and are making a difference, but
15 it doesn't resonate to our level.

16 So we will craft language
17 quickly so that we can --

18 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: If you
19 agree with my assertion --

20 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:
21 Absolutely I do. Absolutely.

22 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: And I think
23 it would be interesting on any
24 particular issue that we're dealing with
25 to have representatives from that

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 commission sitting at that table,
3 telling us what they think about all of
4 the things we're doing -- campaign-
5 finance reform, contract-compliance
6 reform.

7 I mean all of that stuff, I
8 think. It's their city; at some point,
9 we're going to have to move forward and
10 --

11 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:
12 And pass the baton. That's exactly
13 right.

14 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: So that's
15 just my suggestion.

16 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:
17 Thank you very much.

18 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you.

19 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
20 you.

21 Are there any other questions
22 or comments from members of the
23 committee?

24 (No further questions.)

25 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Seeing

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 none, on my list here I have as Panel
3 No. 1 Loree Jones and Denise Ray.

4 (Witness comes forward.)

5 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Good
6 morning, Miss Jones. Identify yourself
7 for the record, please.

8 MS. JONES: Good morning,
9 Councilman. Good morning, Chairman
10 Greenlee. Loree Jones, Secretary of
11 Internal Affairs for Mayor John Street.

12 Good morning, Chairman
13 Greenlee, members of the Law and
14 Government Committee of City Council.
15 Good morning, Councilwoman Blondell
16 Reynolds-Brown.

17 I'm here on behalf of Mayor
18 Street to testify about Bill No. 060581,
19 which would place a Charter-change
20 question on the May 2007 ballot
21 regarding the creation of a Youth
22 Commission; and Resolution No. 080596,
23 which contains the substance of the
24 proposed changes to the city's Home Rule
25 Charter.

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581

2 Thank you for providing me with
3 the opportunity to testify for the
4 Administration on this important
5 initiative.

6 This administration, like the
7 bill and resolution author, Councilwoman
8 Blondell Reynolds-Brown and her
9 colleagues, has demonstrated a strong
10 commitment to the welfare and success of
11 the city's children and young adults,
12 supports the concept involving young
13 adults in the process of government, and
14 believes in assisting youth in making
15 their voices heard on issues of
16 importance to them in this city.

17 Mayor Street has made every
18 year of his administration "The Year of
19 the Child" and has signaled his deep
20 commitment to children through
21 initiatives such as the Children's
22 Report Card, curfew centers, and most
23 recently, an aggressive truancy program.

24 Certainly youth commissions in
25 other parts of the country have provided

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 a unique way for young people to become
3 engaged in the political process and to
4 gain practical firsthand knowledge about
5 how government works.

6 The Administration supports
7 initiatives such as this that are
8 designed to enhance the education and
9 civic engagement of our city's youth.

10 The one challenge with the
11 creation of the commission as proposed
12 is the Charter-change proposal. The
13 Youth Commission proposed in this
14 legislation would be an advisory body.
15 Other advisory bodies have been
16 established in the city to seek advice
17 and input of particular communities on
18 issues of importance to those
19 communities.

20 This Youth Commission,
21 similarly, could be created simply
22 through the adoption of a Mayor's
23 Executive Order. Creation of the
24 commission by Executive Order allows for
25 flexibility in making changes for the

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 proposal if, over time, it appears
3 improvements need to be made.

4 Unless there's a specific
5 reason to treat this proposed advisory
6 body differently from the others, then
7 there seems to be no compelling need to
8 create it through a Charter change.

9 While the Administration does
10 not support the Charter change proposed,
11 the Administration would certainly be
12 willing to consider adoption of a Youth
13 Commission by another more flexible
14 mechanism.

15 Thank you for allowing the
16 Administration to appear before you this
17 morning. We look forward to working
18 with you collaboratively on this matter.

19 This concludes my testimony. I
20 would be pleased to answer any
21 questions.

22 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
23 you, Miss Jones.

24 I know Councilman Kenney has a
25 couple questions, but there's just one

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 question I had.

3 Obviously, by Executive Order,
4 that order only lasts as long as that
5 particular executive is in office.
6 Obviously, this is hopefully a very
7 far-reaching proposal.

8 Does that concern you that we
9 could go through all of this and then
10 the next Mayor could decide, well, you
11 know, I don't think this is a good idea?

12 I think that's -- I don't want
13 to speak for Councilwoman
14 Reynolds-Brown, but I think that's part
15 of the thinking involved here.

16 I don't know if you have a
17 comment on that.

18 MS. JONES: It's something that
19 we did consider and had discussions
20 about.

21 We certainly -- the
22 Administration has some concerns about
23 the number of Charter-change proposals
24 that have come out in the last couple
25 years and are proposed in the next

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 couple of weeks. And so generally, this
3 fits into that concern.

4 It's our belief that this City
5 Council and whoever is elected mayor
6 would share Councilwoman's -- the
7 current mayor's concern and interest in
8 children and would be interested in
9 continuing this commission.

10 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
11 you.

12 The Chair recognizes Councilman
13 Goode.

14 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you,
15 Mr. Chairman.

16 Miss Jones, is it a general
17 concern that Council not seek to change
18 the Charter too often, or is there
19 something specifically within this
20 Charter amendment which you view to be
21 not flexible enough?

22 I don't see anything within
23 this particular Charter amendment that's
24 not flexible enough or that couldn't be
25 written into stone, so to speak.

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2 MS. JONES: I'm sorry. Can you
3 repeat the question?

4 COUNCILMAN GOODE: I mean, what
5 about this Charter amendment shouldn't
6 be permanent? Is it something
7 specifically within this Charter
8 amendment that you feel needs to be
9 flexible and that would be changed over
10 time?

11 MS. JONES: Our concern is
12 really a general one about the amount of
13 changes that are being made to the
14 Charter, and we'll be expressing that
15 not just here but in other upcoming
16 hearings.

17 COUNCILMAN GOODE: So then it's
18 not a specific concern about how this
19 particular Charter amendment is crafted?

20 MS. JONES: No. I mean, our
21 sense is that this could be created by
22 another mechanism, perhaps as an
23 Executive Order, but we do have on
24 overall concern about the amount of
25 changes that are proposed to the

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 Charter.

3 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Well, in my
4 own viewpoint, there are issues in terms
5 of discrimination and empowerment that
6 relate to race, gender, and age that,
7 unfortunately, we would hope to be
8 resolved within generations and over the
9 course of time, but they may be built-in
10 issues in terms of society.

11 So I'll ask the question sort
12 of sarcastically. What happens if the
13 next mayor hates children?

14 (Laughter.)

15 MS. JONES: That sounds like a
16 rhetorical question if I have ever heard
17 one.

18 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Well, what
19 happens? I mean, would children and
20 young people then become not empowered
21 within that administration?

22 MS. JONES: That's a fair
23 concern and one for this body to make a
24 decision about.

25 Our sense is that this is such

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 an important issue and an important
3 initiative that's been proven in other
4 parts of the country and that it's
5 something that a future mayor and a
6 future council would be supportive of
7 going forward.

8 So I don't see that as a main
9 concern. I don't see that as -- it's
10 not our anticipation that a future mayor
11 would not be supportive of children and
12 the creation of Youth Commission in this
13 way.

14 But certainly through a Charter
15 change, you would have the opportunity
16 as Council to address that.

17 COUNCILMAN GOODE: But
18 clearly -- well, let's not say that the
19 Mayor hates children or dislikes
20 children; let's say the Mayor just
21 doesn't prioritize that as a policy
22 concern and that this Council and those
23 people who support this and the voters
24 who support it simply think that this is
25 a way of empowering young people, as a

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 way of dealing with issues of youth
3 empowerment long-term, and that it
4 should not be up to any given
5 administration whether that should be a
6 policy priority or not.

7 MS. JONES: That is something
8 that, again, this body of City Council
9 can decide to do.

10 It's not our anticipation that
11 that would be the case in that
12 hypothetical situation. A way of
13 getting around that would be to do a
14 Charter change, but our sense is that
15 you could do this without enacting a
16 Charter change, and that it would
17 continue in future administrations.

18 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Let me ask
19 one more rhetorical question then.

20 Do you think that every
21 administration has cared about children
22 in the same way?

23 MS. JONES: No.

24 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Okay. Thank
25 you.

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581

2 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
3 you.

4 The Chair recognizes Councilman
5 Kenney.

6 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you,
7 Mr. Chairman.

8 I tend to agree with the
9 comments made by Councilmember Goode,
10 and the reason that I do is not to doubt
11 the commitment of this administration to
12 its children, but in some ways, if you
13 really want to be taken seriously and we
14 want to show that we're really serious
15 about having young input into our
16 government, I think you almost have to
17 institutionalize it in a permanent
18 fashion.

19 I don't think that any of the
20 people that are talking about running
21 for mayor, if successful, would hate
22 children or would do anything to regress
23 this, but I do think that there's a
24 value to the voters actually empowering
25 this group of young people and for the

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 young people who serve on the commission
3 to actually think and know that what
4 they're doing has been recognized by
5 their fellow citizens and authorized by
6 the government.

7 And I do agree with you that
8 concerns over frequent changes to the
9 Charter is something we've wrestled with
10 since I've been here, going on 16 years
11 now, but I do believe that certain
12 issues rise to the level of needing to
13 be institutionalized so that there's no
14 doubt of the Council's, of the
15 Administration's and, more importantly,
16 of the citizens' commitment to making
17 this a body that's viable and
18 contributory --

19 (Applause.)

20 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Any other
21 questions or comment from members of the
22 committee?

23 (No further questions.)

24 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
25 you, Miss Jones.

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581

2 Miss Ray, do you have any
3 testimony?

4 MS. RAY: Yes, I do. Good
5 morning.

6 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Good
7 morning.

8 MS. RAY: My name is Denise
9 Ray, and I am employed by the First
10 Judicial District of Pennsylvania,
11 Philadelphia Family Court.

12 I'd like to add that my
13 testimony, however, is my personal
14 opinion and in no way reflects the
15 opinion of the First Judicial District
16 Philadelphia Family Court.

17 I am honored and privileged to
18 offer testimony in support of this
19 legislation that goes beyond meetings
20 and committees.

21 Imagine an approach to building
22 sound mind and competencies of youth
23 that go beyond the classroom. The Youth
24 Commission is an outgrowth of the kind
25 of imagination needed to continue to

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 foster a heightened awareness of the
3 value of Philadelphia's children.

4 Inherent in the proposed Youth
5 Commission is a two-pronged process, as
6 I see it, a two-pronged advantage:

7 One, the facilitation of a
8 governmental/formal leadership ability
9 among the young; and, two, the provision
10 of important voices to assist in
11 understanding and meeting the needs of
12 the youth culture.

13 The utilization of the city's
14 young people to assist in improving
15 civic engagement and, thus, improving
16 its communities is an awesome process.

17 Youth is that period wedged
18 behind childhood and adulthood. It
19 comes with a propensity to change the
20 world. The manner in which a family,
21 community, city, country, or culture
22 manages its youth will affect the whole
23 of each of those entities.

24 Youth must be prepared to
25 assume greater and more meaningful

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 responsibility for their lives, their
3 future, and the community in which they
4 thrive.

5 They can only navigate this
6 effectively if we, the adults around
7 them, act as models, teach them, and
8 expose them accordingly. The Youth
9 Commission could mark the beginning of
10 the whole of city government's
11 investment in its youth.

12 A word about youth. For many
13 social and psychological reasons, the
14 plight of too many young people in our
15 city has taken a difficult turn. Their
16 futures have become less certain and
17 steps toward adulthood have become
18 risky.

19 All youth should be able to
20 face the prospect of growing older and
21 assuming their place in society, but
22 first, we must consider the whole issue
23 of the developmental process. It does
24 not end with adolescence.

25 Supporting young people

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 requires a focus on evidence-based
3 developmental assets, and these assets
4 are powerful tools that help shape the
5 lives of young people from all
6 socioeconomic, racial and ethnic and
7 family backgrounds. They also impact
8 youth from all kinds of communities.

9 Yet the average youth,
10 according to (indiscernible) Institute
11 only experiences 19 of 40 prescribed
12 developmental assets. They are the key
13 to fostering productive people. And if
14 a child's life is seriously devoid of
15 such assets, it is less likely that he
16 or she will adjust in normative ways.

17 Asset-building is an ongoing
18 process that needs to be continued
19 beyond high school and needs to involve
20 a village of concerned adults who can
21 support consistent, repetitive, positive
22 messages to young people.

23 While the role of City Council
24 is not in rearing children, everyone
25 needs to be committed to ensuring our

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 youth know what's expected of them and
3 know that they can achieve. The need to
4 hear such messages from home, at
5 schools, and their communities is
6 important, and they also need to hear it
7 from city government.

8 Some of this asset-building can
9 be a byproduct of a youth involvement in
10 the Youth Commission. While serving
11 City Council members and the Mayor and
12 representing the youth of this city, the
13 experience of a Youth Commission for
14 young people affords city government
15 officials the opportunity to offer the
16 developmental assets of support,
17 empowerment, and constructive use of
18 their time.

19 Youth need enriching
20 opportunities to reach their full
21 potential. Young people have their
22 pulse on the community in which they
23 live. They know things you wouldn't
24 believe; it is the nature of peer
25 culture.

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581

2 They have the ability to
3 support Councilmembers on a number of
4 important community issues from their
5 perspective. By virtue of their age and
6 involvement in their community, they can
7 reach out to youth who may be needy,
8 youth who may be bullied, and represent
9 the voices of other youth in expressing
10 what their educational and personal
11 needs may be and introduce issues to
12 Council.

13 In addition to the role laid
14 out in the ordinance proposal, there are
15 potential collateral advantages of a
16 Youth Commission. These commission
17 members would become the newest and
18 youngest pillars of our community.

19 Getting out the vote of newly
20 turned 18-year-olds might be an idea.
21 Hosting community service fairs and
22 perhaps facilitating other youth-
23 leadership initiatives for young people
24 across the city to help change the
25 violent culture.

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2 A Youth Commission is a
3 promising endeavor for the City of
4 Philadelphia. It takes our express
5 concern for young people to a higher
6 level and uses the natural abilities of
7 young people to support city
8 government's policy-making process and
9 our communities in new and exciting
10 ways.

11 Thank you.

12 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
13 you, Miss Ray.

14 Are there any questions or
15 comments from members of the committee?

16 (No questions.)

17 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Could I
18 please note for the record the presence
19 of Councilman Kelly on the committee.

20 Councilwoman Reynolds-Brown?

21 I'm sorry.

22 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:
23 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

24 I want to seize the moment
25 right now to publicly thank all of those

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 who are providing testimony today both
3 for or against this proposal.

4 I just need you to know that we
5 appreciate it, and I'm delighted to be
6 mentioned in the same sentence with
7 Philadelphia Citizens for -- PCCY,
8 Philadelphia Citizens for Children and
9 Youth for their help with us down this
10 road.

11 Thank you very much,
12 Mr. Chairman.

13 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
14 you, Councilwoman.

15 Any other questions or
16 comments?

17 Councilman Goode.

18 COUNCILMAN GOODE: A couple
19 questions for Miss Jones.

20 Miss Jones, while the
21 Administration does not necessarily
22 support what could be piecemeal
23 amendments to the Home Rule Charter,
24 does the Administration support a
25 comprehensive overhaul to the Charter in

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 view of the fact that it's over 50 years
3 old?

4 MS. JONES: The Administration
5 does support a comprehensive review of
6 the Charter, and I understand that the
7 Committee of Seventy is in the process
8 of doing a review, and we're
9 collaborating with them on that, and we
10 definitely would welcome that process.

11 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Well, not
12 just a review per se policy-wise, but an
13 actual overhaul; I mean, taking action
14 towards overhauling the City Charter.

15 MS. JONES: I think that that
16 would follow from a review.

17 COUNCILMAN GOODE: And you do
18 you believe that you should play a role
19 in that?

20 MS. JONES: I'm sorry?

21 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Do you
22 believe that you should play a role in
23 that?

24 MS. JONES: I think it
25 definitely would be valuable to have the

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 input of youth and all stakeholders of
3 the City in an appropriate way.

4 COUNCILMAN GOODE: And so if
5 we're going to overhaul the Charter
6 anyway and you're going to be involved
7 in overhauling the Charter, then why
8 wouldn't you wish to move forward on a
9 Youth Commission to begin to empower
10 youth and bring them into the process
11 right now?

12 MS. JONES: We definitely agree
13 with empowering youth and having them as
14 a part of the process.

15 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you.

16 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
17 you, Councilman.

18 Councilman Kenney.

19 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Yes. I
20 just have one other comment that
21 occurred to me while Ms. Ray was giving
22 her testimony.

23 One of the benefits of having a
24 formal commission approved by the voters
25 is that not that necessarily the next

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 mayor or the next matter after that
3 will, as Councilman Goode sarcastically
4 said, hate children, but what if we come
5 into a situation where the
6 administration is in conflict with the
7 members of the Commission on an issue
8 that is important to the members of the
9 Commission that we need to hear about
10 that may enlighten us, and a mayor
11 because of the purse-string power, may
12 be able to shut down that discussion.

13 I think sometimes we need to
14 take the chance of putting our foot out
15 there, even if it's not pleasant so
16 that -- and I hate to give an example
17 'cause it's hard to do it, where we're
18 dealing with this issue of gun violence
19 now and youth violence and killings.
20 The Commission may have a totally
21 different perspective on what an
22 administration may have.

23 I think it's important that the
24 independence be maintained so that even
25 if we don't follow what they're

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 suggesting, that they have the freedom
3 out from underneath an Executive Order
4 to express that opinion and know that
5 they're still going to exist in the
6 future.

7 And a lot of times, especially
8 with young people, you don't really
9 understand them and you don't know where
10 they're coming from, but you don't want
11 to shut 'em up either, and they have
12 something to say.

13 And you may not take it all,
14 you may not accept it all; you may just
15 listen to what they have to say and
16 figure it out your own way.

17 But if there's some ability to
18 shut them down or to shut them up or to
19 turn them off, I think that would
20 probably not be in our best interest.
21 Even though it's an Charter change, the
22 fact that they'll be independent and
23 unable to be shut down, even if they're
24 telling us stuff that we don't want to
25 hear or we don't agree with, I think

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 it's an important element of their
3 effectiveness.

4 So...

5 (Applause.)

6 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
7 you, Councilman.

8 Any other questions or
9 comments?

10 (No further questions or
11 comments.)

12 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
13 you, Councilman Kenney.

14 I also should note for the
15 record -- it's probably an appropriate
16 time -- that I received a letter from
17 the Committee of Seventy, and
18 Mr. Stalberg, the President and CEO,
19 cannot be here but wanted this in the
20 record.

21 And if I could paraphrase, he
22 takes the same position that the
23 Administration does in support of the
24 commission but not of a Charter change.

25 Thank you.

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2 The next panel I was given is
3 quite a long one. I'll say the names,
4 but before I do, could I just
5 respectfully ask that anybody that is
6 here to testify -- we have a number of
7 committees that are going to be meeting
8 after us -- if they could be brief, if
9 they have written testimony, maybe they
10 could just submit that or paraphrase it
11 and/or if they're saying the same thing
12 as someone else, you know, if there
13 could be a spokesperson for that
14 position.

15 And Panel No. 2 that I have
16 here is listed as: Ben Waxman, Jamira
17 Burley, Matthew Zaccagni, Kimber
18 Christian, Jamar Tillery, Sarah Sims,
19 Shawn Dorman, Malik Neal, and last, but
20 not least, Miss Philadelphia 2006, Mary
21 Kaye Jacono. I probably fouled that one
22 in particular up.

23 I don't know where you will
24 all sit, but do your best.

25 (Witnesses come forward.)

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2 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Identify
3 yourself for the record and proceed,
4 please.

5 MR. ZACCAGNI: My name is
6 Matthew Zaccagni.

7 First I'd like to say good
8 morning to the committee members and
9 Councilwoman Reynolds-Brown. My name is
10 Matthew Zaccagni, and I'm a member of
11 the School District of Philadelphia
12 Citywide Student Government. I'm
13 currently the chair for their
14 communications committee.

15 I believe the creation of a
16 Youth Commission is crucial to the
17 process of this city because it gives
18 the youth, the young citizens of
19 Philadelphia, a much needed voice in
20 local government.

21 So often, students don't
22 realize the power they possess or the
23 ability they have to make a positive
24 change in their environment. This
25 commission will give the students the

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 ability to make that positive change.
3 In a forum of our peers, we can discuss
4 ideas and have an efficient body that
5 will be able to effect that change.

6 But most importantly, I believe
7 that the creation of a Youth Commission
8 can play a crucial role in reducing the
9 amount of violence and homicides in the
10 City of Philadelphia.

11 When you bring people together
12 of different races, ages, and walks of
13 life, this convergence of energy can
14 only lead to positive results. By
15 creating a permanent Youth Commission,
16 you will be directly responsible for
17 helping bring a positive change to this
18 city.

19 I would just also like to note
20 from hearing the testimony from the
21 woman from the Mayor's Office, it is a
22 good idea and the correct way to go
23 about it is making it permanent and not
24 something that could potentially be
25 revoked in the future.

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2 Thank you.

3 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
4 you.

5 Any questions or comments?

6 (No questions or comments.)

7 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Please
8 proceed.

9 MS. BURLEY: Hello. My name is
10 Jamira Burley, and I'm currently the
11 President of Citywide Student
12 Government.

13 The purpose of the Youth
14 Commission is to give the students and
15 the youth not only a voice in the
16 community but the opportunities to make
17 change in an environment that affects
18 them the most.

19 Day after day, year after year,
20 decisions and so-called solutions are
21 made about the youth but the youth is
22 not represented at the table of
23 discussion. It's almost as if it's
24 expectations without representation.
25 Everyone expects so much from the youth

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 but the youth is never represented when
3 decisions are being made.

4 I guarantee that the homicide
5 rate and the drop-out rate would
6 decrease if there was opportunity for
7 the youth to be heard.

8 If you was to ask those
9 students in detention centers and ask
10 the ones dropping out of high schools
11 and ask the ones getting pregnant why
12 they do the things that they do, they
13 will tell you it's because no one ever
14 took the time to listen, no one ever
15 took the time to ask them why, and no
16 one ever took the time to let them be
17 heard.

18 So the first step in the right
19 direction would be for the formation and
20 creation of the Youth Commission of
21 Philadelphia.

22 Thank you.

23 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
24 you.

25 Please proceed.

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2 MS. CHRISTIAN: Hi. My name is
3 Kimber Christian and I'm here
4 representing -- (inaudible).

5 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Speak
6 right into the microphone.

7 MS. CHRISTIAN: My name is
8 Kimber Christian, and I'm here
9 representing Youth Action.

10 "You can't lead the people if
11 you don't love the people. You can't
12 save the people if you don't serve the
13 people," Dr. Cornell West.

14 Good morning, everyone. Once
15 again, my name is Kimber Christian and
16 I'm here representing Youth Action.

17 Many of you sitting before me
18 might say, Well, what is Youth Action?
19 Well, I'm here to answer that question.

20 Youth Action is a nonprofit
21 organization based in Philadelphia
22 founded by Young Alumni of the Tavis
23 Smiley Foundation. Youth Action's main
24 focus is to establish an effective
25 youth-based program that strives to

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 solve major issues that plague the youth
3 through our various communities in the
4 Philadelphia area.

5 Someone may ask the question of
6 why Youth Action may be so different
7 from any other nonprofit organization?
8 Well, aside from many other
9 organizations, Youth Action is solely run
10 by high school and college students, and
11 we are committed to bringing awareness
12 to community issues, so committed that
13 we put together events that will draw
14 the attention of the youth.

15 Yes, we do have fun, but at the
16 end of the day, our guests leave our
17 informative events with knowledge of
18 things that we are faced with, things
19 that are we are so immune to that we pay
20 no attention such as teen pregnancy,
21 domestic violence, and homelessness in
22 Philadelphia. These are the top things
23 that affect the youth community today.

24 I believe the Youth Commission
25 can benefit the youth by using

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 strategies that will lure youth in and
3 educate them on how to face and defeat
4 the hardships that come our way.

5 To do this, we have to follow
6 Dr. Cornell West, who says, in his
7 words: "You have to love the people to
8 lead the people and you have to serve
9 the people to save the people."

10 And I believe he says this
11 because if you have not lived among us
12 and you haven't lived in the communities
13 that, you know, are plagued with these
14 hardships, you don't know how to face
15 it. So I think the Youth Commission
16 will benefit the youth by doing just
17 that.

18 Thank you.

19 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
20 you. Very well said.

21 Thank you very much.

22 Does anyone else wish to
23 testify?

24 Ma'am? Come on up.

25 (Witnesses come forward.)

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581

2 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Good
3 morning. Please identify yourself for
4 the record and proceed.

5 MS. JACONO: Good morning. My
6 name is Mary Kaye Jacono, and I'm
7 Miss Philadelphia 2006-2007. Thank you
8 so much for having me here this morning,
9 and a special thank you to Councilwoman
10 Reynolds-Brown for inviting me to speak
11 this morning.

12 I know you have many people
13 that would like to speak, so I promise
14 I'll keep this brief.

15 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
16 you.

17 MS. JACONO: Just to give you a
18 little bit of background, I am 24 years
19 old and I'm a third-year law student at
20 Villanova.

21 And although I am
22 Miss Philadelphia, I know that I am only
23 one of potentially thousands of young
24 men and women in this city looking for a
25 way to share their voice and make a

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581

2 difference in their community.

3 My platform as Miss

4 Philadelphia is child advocacy, and so a

5 lot of what I've been doing this year is

6 spending time with children in schools,

7 day cares, camps; wherever there are

8 children, I try to be there.

9 And what I've noticed most

10 about the children in the city is that

11 they're extremely passionate, extremely

12 determined. A lot of them are trying

13 very hard to rise above difficult

14 circumstances.

15 And more than anything, what I

16 have seen with so many of the children

17 in the city is that what they need more

18 than anything is somebody to take a

19 chance on them, somebody to believe in

20 them, somebody to make them feel like

21 they are worthwhile.

22 And not just for a day, not

23 just for a week, not just for a year,

24 but permanently. Because so many of

25 these children have people coming in and

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 out of their lives on a regular basis,
3 they don't have permanent fixtures.

4 And the amendment to the
5 Charter for a Philadelphia Youth
6 Commission would provide an opportunity
7 for these children to feel like they're
8 worthwhile in this city and like the
9 city cares about them.

10 So I promised I would be brief,
11 so thank you so much for having me. I
12 really appreciate it.

13 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
14 you. Thank you very much.

15 MR. WAXMAN: My name is Ben
16 Waxman, and I have written testimony,
17 but I won't read it; I'll just try to be
18 as brief as possible.

19 I think that one of the key
20 constituencies I think that will be
21 really positively impacted by this
22 legislation is college students, which,
23 actually, when we talk about youth
24 issues in the city, college students are
25 often overlooked. And justifiably so,

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 because there are a lot of critical
3 issues facing young people in
4 Philadelphia.

5 But there's over 200,000
6 students at almost 81 colleges and
7 universities in the Philadelphia area.
8 There's millions of dollars pumped into
9 the region's economy by college
10 students, and we need to make sure that
11 college students want to stay in
12 Philadelphia once they graduate.

13 So I definitely think that
14 that's an important constituency that
15 will be served by the creation of the
16 Youth Commission, and I just wanted to
17 kind of offer that kind of support.

18 If you have any questions, I'll
19 be happy to answer them.

20 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
21 you.

22 Sir, go ahead.

23 MR. DORMAN: Good morning. My
24 name is Shawn Dorman. I also have a
25 statement of testimony, but I'm going to

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581

2 try to stay off of that.

3 Basically, I want to say that
4 in Philadelphia, we have a lot of
5 encouraging ideas towards us that are
6 coming our way, but then we don't see
7 action in what you say. We don't see
8 dollars going in behind what the
9 committee says.

10 So I feel that our youth having
11 the Youth Commission, it would encourage
12 and help develop better plans and
13 strategies on funding for our youth and
14 in our schools. And it will better
15 strategize our community, our youth
16 community, to better fund them and have
17 us closer together and stuff.

18 That's all I wanted to say.

19 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank you
20 very much.

21 And if you have written
22 testimony that you want to submit, it
23 will become a part of the record.

24 Thank you very much.

25 Is there anybody else to

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581

2 testify with this group?

3 (Witness comes forward.)

4 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Please
5 identify yourself for the record. and
6 proceed, please.

7 MR. TILLERY: Hi. My name is
8 Jamar Tillery. I'm here representing
9 PCCY.

10 And, basically, the Youth
11 Commission was introduced to me when I
12 was in -- well, basically, like two
13 months ago, when I started my internship
14 at PCCY. I'm a senior at Masterman
15 Charter High School.

16 And when they first told me
17 about it, I was all for it and
18 everything, 'cause I think that the
19 youth should have a say-so of what goes
20 on in the government because there are
21 some smart people.

22 And, like, people always look
23 down on us. Like, Oh, they're just
24 young. They do this, they do that.
25 Like what can they know. There's always

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 that one adult that's always, like, Oh,
3 yeah, mm, they just kids.

4 So like, for example, if a kid
5 was to get beat up, shot, or killed in
6 the school, the first thing people
7 always think is that, oh, what the
8 parents think, but it's not necessarily
9 what the parents think because, of
10 course, they'll be angry.

11 But it's what the students
12 think -- oh, how did they let a gun into
13 the school? How can we stop
14 (indiscernible) the guns? How could one
15 of our students get beat up or killed
16 like that?

17 So, like, the first thing
18 people always go for is the adult
19 opinions, and some adults have like
20 negative responses. Like, for instance,
21 adults would be like, oh, for instance,
22 an adult would usually say, like, oh, he
23 got beat up or killed. What are they
24 going to give the guy, the death penalty
25 or life in jail?

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2 But another kid can say like --
3 a kid like a friend or something could
4 use the example as, oh, that was my
5 friend. Can I say something? Can I
6 speak on it?

7 That's about it. I'm nervous.

8 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: If I
9 could just interrupt and note for the
10 record the presence of Councilwoman
11 Campbell. Thank you.

12 Please proceed.

13 MR. NEAL: Good morning. My
14 name's Malik Neal, and I'm a high school
15 student at City Center Academy, and I
16 reside in Councilwoman Anna Verna's
17 district.

18 I believe as Americans,
19 democracy is the best form of government
20 we know, but it can only work if
21 individual citizens take responsibility
22 for their actions and for their
23 communities.

24 I think throughout history, we
25 saw youth get involved in their

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 political system during the civil rights
3 movement and Vietnam. We saw students
4 protest and march and fight for what
5 they believed in, and I think today, we
6 also stand here to say what we believe
7 in, which is the Philadelphia Youth
8 Commission.

9 And I think we all agree that a
10 Philadelphia Youth Commission is what
11 this city needs with all the problems
12 the city faces. I'm sure that solutions
13 to these problems is not easy, but I'm
14 sure that with the help of the City
15 Council and Philadelphia Youth
16 Commission, we can achieve 'em.

17 And I think with the petitions
18 we got signed, the people of
19 Philadelphia are sending us a signal
20 that they want the Philadelphia Youth
21 Commission established.

22 And I think, just as in the
23 1960s, where youth were saying their
24 mottos and slogans, I think today what
25 we say is: No decision about us without

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581

2 us.

3 Thank you.

4 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank

5 you.

6 MS. SIMS: My name is Sarah
7 Sims. I'm a senior at Archbishop Bishop
8 (indiscernible) High School. I'm
9 representing Youthadelphia, which I'm
10 one of the co-chairs of PCCY and the
11 United Way.

12 I speak on behalf of all the
13 youth that have been told that they
14 weren't going to be anything and the
15 youth that lack the necessity to become
16 better adults and better people.

17 You look at me and say, Well,
18 I'm just another average youth, but I
19 feel as though I'm not. I feel as
20 though I've been given the seeds by
21 different people that have believed in
22 me, like people that would be like the
23 Youth Commission, they have given me the
24 seeds to grow into a tree and can
25 support other youth and help other

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 youth.

3 I believe the Youth Commission
4 is a step one to get the youth voices
5 heard. I think it's very important that
6 youth voices and opinions should be
7 heard. No decision should be made
8 without us.

9 Thank you.

10 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank you
11 very much. Thank you all for your
12 testimony.

13 Any questions or comments from
14 the committee?

15 (No questions.)

16 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
17 you. Thank you very much for coming.

18 (Applause.)

19 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: The next
20 panel I have listed is Rasheeda West,
21 Marlene Olshan, and Damon Roberts.

22 (Witnesses come forward.)

23 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Good
24 morning. Whoever would like to go
25 first, please identify yourself for the

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 record and proceed.

3 MS. OLSHAN: Good morning.

4 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Good
5 morning.

6 MS. OLSHAN: My name is Marlene
7 Olshan, and I'm the Chief Executive
8 Officer of Big Brothers Big Sisters
9 Southeastern Pennsylvania.

10 I've been asked to share my
11 testimony with you today and would like
12 to thank Councilwoman Blondell
13 Reynolds-Brown for affording me the
14 opportunity, and most importantly, for
15 bringing the challenges facing the youth
16 in our city today.

17 I represent an agency on behalf
18 of thousands of children and volunteers
19 and families, and in our programs, we
20 know firsthand the importance of
21 engagement and mentoring.

22 More to the point, we know that
23 the way to build a strong, healthy
24 future for our children is by engaging
25 everyone in the community, and our

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2 city's youth need to be a part of this
3 engagement.

4 The Youth Commission would give
5 our city's youth a chance to voice the
6 issues they are facing. It would give
7 them an opportunity to become engaged in
8 identifying and finding solutions. Most
9 of all, by encouraging them to take a
10 leadership role in our city, it will
11 provide other youth with role models
12 that they can aspire to. We know about
13 the power that role models and
14 leadership have in young people's lives.

15 At Big Brothers Big Sisters
16 Southeastern, PA, we're the largest
17 affiliate in Pennsylvania and we've
18 served children in Philadelphia for over
19 90 years. In 2006, we will serve 2900
20 children.

21 But right now, we have 13
22 children on the waiting list, the
23 majority of them boys, living here in
24 the. In a city where 180,000 children
25 ages 14 and older had eight or more

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 absences last year, where half of the
3 9th-graders don't graduate on time, and
4 where the murder rate continues to
5 skyrocket, hitting 375 dead as of this
6 weekend, it is clear that we need to do
7 more to support the youth in our
8 community.

9 And through the Youth
10 Commission and other programs, we need
11 to engage youth in helping to address
12 these challenges.

13 I can speak firsthand about how
14 older youth can really step up when they
15 are asked to be leaders and role models.
16 In several schools throughout
17 Philadelphia and the other counties we
18 serve, we have high school programs
19 where high school students are mentors
20 to elementary and middle school
21 students.

22 We see the power of these
23 relationships. The younger students
24 really love to look up to their high
25 school students, and these high school

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 students, in turn, demonstrate
3 leadership and responsibility.

4 A number of them have commented
5 on how proud they felt when they
6 realized that their little brothers and
7 little sisters did respect them and
8 listened to them and their advice.

9 Similarly, the simple act of
10 spending time with a child, whether it's
11 an adult or a young adult, improves
12 school performance, results in better
13 grades, and improves kids' self-
14 confidence.

15 Today, as the City Council
16 convenes this hearing on the Youth
17 Commission, the positive impact of
18 mentoring is more critical now than
19 ever. We know mentoring works.

20 Big Brothers Big Sisters is
21 classified as a blueprint program. We
22 know that our high school
23 (indiscernible) program works. We have
24 175 high school students right here in
25 Philadelphia who are providing

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 mentorship and leadership to younger
3 students and who are providing them a
4 way for them to be positively and
5 constructively engaged in our community.

6 It will take a communitywide
7 effort to address the complexities and
8 challenges facing our city. It is clear
9 that there is increased youth violence
10 and that leadership is needed to reduce
11 this violence and the steady drumbeat of
12 truancy and dropout rates.

13 We believe that by engaging
14 youth in all ways, including through the
15 Youth Commission, that we can become a
16 part of this multi-pronged solution. We
17 encourage our city's youth as well as
18 our adults to stand up and provide
19 leadership that everyone needs.

20 On behalf of Big Brothers Big
21 Sisters Southeastern Pennsylvania, thank
22 you for this opportunity to present
23 testimony.

24 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
25 you.

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2 Please proceed.

3 MS. WEST: Good morning. My
4 name is Rasheeda West, and I'm a staff
5 attorney at the Support Center for Child
6 Advocates.

7 The Support Center for Child
8 Advocates is Philadelphia's pro bono
9 lawyer program for abused and neglected
10 children. We offer the skills and
11 dedication of lawyer-social worker
12 teams. In nearly 30 years, we have
13 served as a resource to the community
14 and to this Council, and I thank you for
15 the invitation to serve in this in this
16 role again.

17 As a staff attorney for the
18 Support Center for Child Advocates, I
19 work almost exclusively on issues
20 dealing with older youth and have done
21 so over the past five years.

22 Over the course of my tenure at
23 Child Advocates, it has become clear
24 that the pressing issues concerning
25 older youth are numerous, the three most

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 constant issues being the need for
3 foster homes, not congregate care for
4 older youth; the need for youths to be
5 in school, the right school, and finish
6 school; and the need for adequate and
7 affordable housing for those youths
8 exiting the system. Youths need
9 permanent homes, good schools, and not
10 to end up homeless.

11 For those of you on the
12 committee who are the parents of
13 teenagers, you know that most young
14 people are not ready to be sent out on
15 their own at the age of 18, yet we
16 expect children leaving the child
17 welfare system to do just that. We
18 would expect our own children to go to
19 school, yet we allow our children
20 (indiscernible) to age out without a
21 high school diploma.

22 Across the nation, court-
23 involved children are second-class
24 citizens. Children in both child
25 protection and delinquency proceedings

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 fail in devastating numbers to develop,
3 learn and succeed (inaudible) their
4 potential brilliance, their evident
5 strength and capacity.

6 In Philadelphia, 6,728 children
7 are in dependency placements, and 1,797
8 are in delinquency placements. It is
9 well-documented that court-involved
10 children are disproportionately
11 African-American and Latinos.

12 What child clients are offered
13 by public systems is largely fragmented
14 and often inadequate for youths' complex
15 needs. All youth need to have a voice,
16 but particularly the ones involved in
17 the child welfare system.

18 Child Advocates feels that the
19 formation of a Youth Commission is the
20 right step to address the needs of these
21 young people. We recommend that the
22 Youth Commission include members who are
23 intimately aware of the many issues
24 facing youths within the child welfare
25 system and members who have themselves

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 been in care.

3 And, again, I just want to
4 thank the committee for their interest
5 in youth, and I have copies of my
6 testimony for the record.

7 (A copy of Ms. West's testimony
8 was not provided to the stenographer for
9 attachment hereto.)

10 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
11 you. It will be included.

12 Please proceed.

13 MS. MCGINLEY: I'm Sharon
14 McGinley, and I created a youth advisory
15 group for the Support Center of the
16 Child Advocates, and we've been doing
17 this for the last three years.

18 Our agency has benefitted from
19 having this group be a part of it. Our
20 social worker who works with me was
21 amazed at how much she's learned from
22 the group. Having worked with young
23 people for decades, she's learned a
24 great deal from their wisdom and
25 insight.

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2 How often have you heard the
3 phrase "I don't know" when you've asked
4 a child, "Why did you do that?" or "Why
5 didn't you tell me you were in trouble?"
6 Our young people have been able to
7 explain to us some of the most baffling
8 behavior.

9 The youth I work with have been
10 mature, thoughtful, and extremely
11 insightful. Many issues dealing with
12 young people we complicate and get
13 wrong. I hope you will be able to have
14 the good fortune to work with the youth
15 as I have.

16 And Nellie Caisson is one of
17 our Youth Advisory Board members, and
18 she wanted to testify about her
19 experience.

20 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Please.

21 (Witness comes forward.)

22 MS. CAISSON: Hi.

23 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Please
24 identify yourself for the record and
25 proceed with your testimony.

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2 MS. CAISSON: My name is Nellie
3 Caisson, and I'm with the Youth Advisory
4 Board of the Support Center for Child
5 Advocates.

6 And I just want to let you all
7 know that I think that being a part of
8 the Youth Advisory Board is good for
9 youth voices to be heard. It's
10 something that would help us to get our
11 words out. Like don't overlook us
12 because lots of times we're overlooked
13 and our voices aren't being heard.

14 So, therefore, that's why a lot
15 of homicides are happening with the
16 youth, you know, it's mostly killing
17 teens that are killing teens or
18 whatever.

19 So I think that it is a good
20 idea for a Youth Commission to be
21 starting.

22 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank you
23 very much.

24 Mr. Roberts?

25 MR. ROBERTS: Good morning. My

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 name is Damon Roberts. Among other
3 things, I'm Community Outreach Director
4 for the Philadelphia Young Democrats.
5 I'd like to thank Councilwoman Blondell
6 Reynolds-Brown for inviting me to
7 testify today.

8 I definitely support amending
9 the Home Rule Charter to create the
10 Philadelphia Youth Commission because I
11 think that it sends a dual message to
12 youth in this city: First of all, that
13 they are valued by governmental
14 leadership; and secondly, that they can
15 make a contribution to our municipality.

16 Many of the things that I
17 planned to say have already been said
18 before, and I definitely am in support
19 of it.

20 One thing that I will add, and
21 there are only two suggestions that I
22 would ask you to consider.

23 First of all, don't only
24 include in this the so-called best and
25 the brightest, those with A averages and

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 those who are regularly involved in
3 student government. Also involve those
4 who are at the fringes of school and at
5 the fringes of civil society.

6 And then the second thing is
7 that I think that the kids who are
8 involved should be paid. In Section
9 3806(d) of the proposal, it says that
10 members of the Commission shall not be
11 compensated. I think that giving them
12 some compensation could further
13 engagement.

14 Yet despite those minor
15 disagreements, I stand in full support
16 of the notion of creating a Philadelphia
17 Youth Commission, and I trust that City
18 Council with resoundingly support this
19 and give us a chance to vote on it in
20 May.

21 Thank you very much.

22 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
23 you, Mr. Roberts.

24 Are there any questions or
25 comments?

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2 (No questions or comments.)

3 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Seeing
4 none. Thank you all very much for your
5 testimony.

6 The next panel that I have
7 listed is Shelly Yanoff, Lindsay Berger,
8 and Tom McKenna.

9 (Witnesses come forward.)

10 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: And while
11 they are coming up, please, I'd like to
12 note to the folks in the audience who I
13 think are here for the next set of bills
14 for the Finance Committee. The Finance
15 Committee will start as soon as we have
16 completed our hearings.

17 And I again emphasize to you
18 the need to be as brief as possible.
19 That wasn't directed just to you.

20 MS. YANOFF: Okay, sure.

21 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Oh,
22 absolutely. Please proceed.

23 MS. YANOFF: Thank you. Thank
24 you so much for holding this hearing.
25 And thank you Councilwoman Blondell

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 Reynolds-Brown.

3 I won't read my testimony
4 except for a part or two.

5 Right now, you are struggling
6 in this city with issues of violence, of
7 dropouts, of how to get college
8 graduates to stay here, of how to
9 strengthen our economy, about what to do
10 with schools.

11 Our young people have a lot to
12 say, but there's no official way to make
13 them heard to, help them be heard, and
14 to support them.

15 The implementation of this
16 Charter amendment would allow the
17 Commission and young people to help
18 figure out strategies and advise you
19 officially of that.

20 We're glad that the Mayor
21 supports the idea of a commission
22 created by Executive Order, but we urge
23 that this Youth Commission have the
24 authority and the legitimacy to
25 officially advise and be appointed by

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 both Council and the executive branch
3 and that it survive any individual
4 administration and that it exist as a
5 right and not as a favor.

6 When this nation was founded,
7 only white land-owning men of a certain
8 religion were able to speak their truth
9 to power, to vote, to have a voice, to
10 be officially heard or concerned about
11 policy.

12 Gradually, barriers were broken
13 down, and we as a society reaped the
14 benefit of the enriched deliberation
15 about important matters that, in fact,
16 impacted on people who were allowed to
17 talk and who were encouraged to talk and
18 were officially listened to.

19 The reverse is also true when
20 groups feel they have no authority, no
21 voice, and so their attention, their
22 alienation, their disinterest grows. We
23 risk a great deal in not taking
24 advantage of them.

25 So we respectfully ask that you

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 give the youth of the city and us a
3 chance to build a better community, to
4 increase civic and electoral
5 participation, to make Philadelphia the
6 city that problem-solves and builds a
7 future with its youth.

8 Thank you.

9 MS. BERGER: Good morning,
10 Councilmembers and Mr. Chairman.

11 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Good
12 morning.

13 MS. BERGER: My name is Lindsay
14 Berger, and I'm currently a senior at
15 the University of Pennsylvania.

16 Before college, I lived in San
17 Francisco actually and was a member of
18 the San Francisco Youth Commission, so I
19 wanted to give you today an example of
20 how great the model worked over there.

21 The Youth Commission being
22 proposed today is modeled off of the one
23 I was a part of over there.

24 It's a great model to look at
25 because, among other things, it's an

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 entity of the city of San Francisco.
3 This has been a defining factor of the
4 commission over there because it gives
5 the body credibility and stability. It
6 also allows young people to express
7 their opinions openly and freely.

8 Since its inception in 1995,
9 the commission has empowered young
10 people to speak up for their rights in
11 City Hall. These last 11 or so years,
12 young people have roamed the halls,
13 looking for opportunities to speak to
14 Councilmen, write their own resolutions,
15 and get stuff done.

16 The body has held hearings on
17 police in schools, youth homelessness,
18 skateboarding, and the state of San
19 Francisco public schools, and they have
20 taken every issue a couple steps
21 further.

22 Youth Commissioners were so
23 dissatisfied by the education they
24 received and so disheartened by what
25 other students expressed at their

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 hearing that they contacted news media
3 and took some of the most popular news
4 stations in San Francisco on a tour of a
5 typical high school. Images of soiled
6 bathrooms, decrepit facilities, and
7 rundown textbooks were all over
8 television. As you can imagine, this
9 spurred action.

10 This might make you nervous,
11 but it makes me proud.

12 However, this might not have
13 happened had the Commission not been in
14 the Charter.

15 It has also formed numerous
16 task forces including the Transitional
17 Youth Task Force and the Lesbian, Gay,
18 Bisexual, Transgendered, Questioning and
19 Queer Youth Task Force.

20 It has also saved various
21 programs from being cut in the budget.
22 Each year, youth drug facilities,
23 after-school programs, and/or youth
24 extracurricular facilities are spared
25 from the chopping block. After all,

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 youth are the best judges of which youth
3 programs should and should not be saved.

4 My experience with Youth
5 Commission was invaluable. As a young
6 person, I learned to be confident in my
7 ability to express my thoughts and my
8 discontent. I was constantly going to
9 meetings, giving testimony at hearings,
10 and serving as a youth contingent of
11 many advisory committees.

12 It also gave me the opportunity
13 to meet other young people with whom I
14 might not have worked. Of the seventeen
15 youth I served with, three of them had
16 been homeless at one point, one of whom
17 credits the Youth Commission with giving
18 her the little stability and security
19 she had while she was living on the
20 street.

21 The majority of young people
22 involved attend public schools and
23 represents a broad range of diversities,
24 from age to sexual orientation. All of
25 the commissioners I keep in touch with

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 say the commission has given them a
3 passion for activism and a commitment to
4 civic engagement.

5 I think it will come as no
6 surprise to you that it has imbued me
7 with the same sense of activism and
8 passion.

9 The commission gave me the
10 opportunity to be good at something
11 outside of school. For many young
12 people, this is really important, but
13 for many commissioners I worked with,
14 their success on the commission was what
15 allowed them to do so well in school.

16 Since I'm a political science
17 major and I'm trying to make my teachers
18 proud, I think it's important to touch
19 on the issue of youth development. Tom
20 will speak to that in a little bit,
21 briefly as well.

22 But one important study I
23 looked at, which was produced by the
24 Edna McConnell Clark Foundation says,
25 "When participating in structured youth

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 activities, adolescents experience a
3 combination of intrinsic motivation and
4 concentration that appears to be unique
5 in their lives."

6 It continues to say, "Such
7 activities also appear to be associated
8 with positive changes and grade point
9 average, self-concept, and educational
10 and occupational aspirations."

11 In addition, "Constantly
12 participating in extracurricular
13 activities throughout high school
14 creates greater civic involvement -- for
15 example, voting and volunteering -- two
16 years after high school."

17 These are amazing findings, and
18 we really need to take them to heart and
19 take advantage of them.

20 The Youth Commission was able
21 to work in San Francisco because San
22 Francisco is the hub of youth activism.
23 When I got to Philadelphia, I heard the
24 same catchphrase, but we are missing one
25 thing, and this is the Youth Commission.

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2 We need to bridge the gap
3 between youth and politics and advocate
4 for better youth policies, programs, and
5 budget priorities in Philadelphia. We
6 need a body of young people to look out
7 for youth across the city and fight for
8 our rights. We can only achieve this if
9 youth get a place in your City Hall.

10 Thank you for your time and I
11 will answer any questions.

12 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
13 you.

14 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: What was
15 your last sentence? Youth get a place
16 where?

17 MS. BERGER: In your City Hall.

18 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: No, it's
19 your City Hall. It's our City Hall.

20 MS. BERGER: Thank you.

21 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: By the way,
22 the big important question: Are you
23 going to stay here after graduation?

24 MS. BERGER: We'll see.

25 (Laughter.)

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2 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: That's a
3 very good answer.

4 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Sounds
5 like a politician in the making.

6 Sir, please proceed.

7 MR. McKENNA: You have my
8 written testimony.

9 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Just
10 identify yourself for the record,
11 please.

12 MR. McKENNA: Yeah, I will in a
13 second. I just want to say that I will
14 focus on those points that have not been
15 emphasized.

16 My name is Tom McKenna. In the
17 past seven years, I've been at the
18 University of Pennsylvania where I teach
19 courses in nonprofit leadership and
20 administration through the Adult
21 Institute School of Public Policy at
22 Wharton.

23 Prior to coming to Penn in
24 1999, I was a nonprofit executive for 37
25 years, 23 in New York City heading a

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 neighborhood-based group, citywide and
3 federation and statewide organizations,
4 and the final 14 years here in
5 Philadelphia as National CEO of Big
6 Brothers Big Sisters of America, the
7 only major national human service
8 organization headquartered here in
9 Philly.

10 And I'm proud to say that
11 Lindsay is one of my students, and you
12 can see from her passion what she can
13 bring out and how important this
14 commission can be.

15 Most of my career has been
16 focused in the field of youth services.
17 My perspective on this work has been
18 heavily influenced by theories of
19 positive youth development, which were
20 spoken to eloquently earlier in terms of
21 referencing search institute, and youth
22 development is essentially a focus that
23 really, really puts the emphasis on the
24 potential of youth growing into caring
25 and productive adults, and really puts

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 an emphasis on building assets, and it
3 sees youth as resources rather than
4 problems to society.

5 And I can think of no better
6 example of youth development than the
7 opportunities which would be afforded
8 youth through the establishment of a
9 Philadelphia Youth Commission.

10 Such a Youth Commission can
11 serve many purposes; again, many have
12 been spoken to.

13 One that hasn't been mentioned
14 as much is from a youth leadership
15 standpoint. Think about how valuable it
16 would to the civic life of Philadelphia
17 to have a cadre of youth who are
18 knowledgable about the institutions and
19 decisions that are affecting their lives
20 and putting this knowledge to use
21 through the Youth Commission.

22 This leadership group will, in
23 turn, involve youth of all geographic
24 areas of Philadelphia in their
25 deliberations as they discuss and make

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 recommendations to you as members of the
3 City Council.

4 By supporting the creation of
5 the Philadelphia Youth Commission, you
6 will be putting in place the process
7 that will significantly involve youth
8 for generations to come. What a
9 positive cumulative impact this can have
10 on developing youth leaders in our city
11 now and in the future.

12 Think, also, another point of
13 the opportunities such a commission can
14 have for you as Councilmen and
15 Councilwomen to be exposed to the
16 special insights of youth who you will
17 appoint to the commission. They will be
18 like advisors and staff people to you.

19 Shouldn't this lead, in turn,
20 to better informed youth policy, which
21 will, in the long, run benefit the
22 entire City of Philadelphia.

23 So briefly, in conclusion, the
24 creation of the Philadelphia Youth
25 Commission is a win/win situation for

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 all the key stakeholders in the
3 democratic process of government at the
4 local level.

5 Elected public officials will
6 have a new resource to draw upon. Young
7 people themselves, instead of feeling
8 alienated from the political process,
9 will now have a sense of empowerment.
10 And the citizens of Philadelphia will
11 benefit from improved governmental
12 decisions affecting youth.

13 And I just want to make a
14 comment about the question of whether
15 this should really go into the Charter
16 or just be, in essence, an advisory
17 group appointed by the Mayor.

18 I think that Councilman Kenney
19 and Councilman Goode made good, strong
20 points about this, and I want to
21 particularly emphasize Councilman
22 Kenney's point about creating an
23 independent body, because that's a big
24 difference. I mean, a group that's
25 appointed, in essence, is not really an

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 independent body, and I think this
3 really is important.

4 The final point is that what an
5 opportunity we'll be missing to not have
6 this on ballot. Think of the work that
7 PCCY and the youth you heard today will
8 be putting in over the next few months
9 to make sure that the whole city is
10 aware of this.

11 Think of the empowerment that
12 they're going to get out of outreach
13 that is being planned to really see that
14 everyone understands and ultimately
15 supports this Charter revision. I think
16 it would be just a shame to cut that
17 short.

18 So I really strongly support
19 this effort, and I think it's great to
20 see the young people here today that are
21 speaking so eloquently, more so than
22 myself.

23 Thank you.

24 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
25 you.

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2 Councilman Rizzo.

3 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Professor?

4 MR. MCKENNA: Yes?

5 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Convince her
6 to stay.

7 MS. BERGER: Maybe you guys can
8 convince me to stay.

9 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Like I
10 said, a politician in the making.

11 Miss Shamberger, do you want to
12 speak too?

13 (Witness comes forward.)

14 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: I've
15 known you for 30 years, but please
16 identify yourself for the record.

17 MS. SHAMBERGER: It's a
18 pleasure to be here. I'm Ann
19 Shamberger, a neighbor of
20 Mr. Greenlee's, and I'm the President
21 and CEO of Philadelphia Safe and Sound.

22 So much of what I would have
23 said has already been said today. I
24 just want to echo our support for this
25 bill and to thank again Councilwoman

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 Blondell Reynolds-Brown for her
3 leadership in introducing it and Shelly
4 Yanoff from PCCY for their leadership in
5 working toward its passage.

6 Just in terms of Safe and
7 Sound, most of you know that we produce
8 the Annual Report Card on children's
9 well-being in the city. We also deliver
10 a number of services that are aimed at
11 youth development.

12 And I just wanted to make sure
13 that you're aware that in our Beacon
14 programs, of which there are 30
15 citywide, we do require that each
16 program have a youth council, and they
17 have been invaluable in shaping those
18 programs in ways that are responsive to
19 the youth who are attending them.

20 And also to say that positive
21 youth development does have a positive
22 impact on crime and violence in the
23 city. If you look at the youth arrest
24 for crimes in the after-school hours
25 between 3:00 and 6:00, since 2000, there

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 has been a 19 percent decrease in those
3 arrested in the after-school hours and
4 during the same time when the City was
5 investing in positive youth development
6 opportunities.

7 So I think that it is both the
8 right thing to do and an excellent
9 investment Of City dollars that will
10 result in reducing crime in the city

11 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank you
12 very much.

13 Are there any questions or
14 comments?

15 Councilman Kenney?

16 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you.

17 It's not often that we consider
18 legislation that has absolutely no
19 downside in Council. Despite the
20 argument --

21 (Applause.)

22 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Despite the
23 argument between the Charter or
24 Executive Order, which is a minor issue.
25 I think we've weighed in on that, that

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 it should be a Charter change. But
3 there's nothing negative that can come
4 from this; it's only positive.

5 So thanks for all your input.

6 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
7 you.

8 I have two more people listed
9 that which to testify. Mary Ann Smith
10 Amanda Park; are either one here?

11 (Witness comes forward.)

12 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Good
13 morning, identify yourself for the
14 record.

15 MS. PARK: Good morning. My
16 name is Amanda Park, and I will speak
17 briefly 'cause as a former teacher, I
18 can see the eyes going.

19 My name is Amanda Park, and I
20 am the director for the after-school
21 program at the First United Methodist
22 Church in Germantown. Thank you for
23 allowing me to give testimony in favor
24 of forming the Youth Commission.

25 A brief history. In 1998,

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 church members worked for the
3 administration and staff at Germantown
4 High School to confront the overwhelming
5 fact that 50 percent of students were
6 dropping out of 9th grade. A safe and
7 nurturing school environment was reduced
8 to risk the students dropping out. In
9 its ninth year, this non-sectarian
10 program has operated with a single
11 focus: Academic success.

12 A couple of statistics. No
13 student has dropped out of school while
14 attending the program, and all students
15 who remain active in the after-school
16 program graduate.

17 Also, because it was geared
18 toward 9th-graders, our 9th-graders are
19 two-and-half times more likely to pass
20 to the 10th grade on the first try.

21 I could go on and on about the
22 success of the after-school program, but
23 I believe that there's a more pressing
24 need that exists.

25 In the eight years since the

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 after-school program started, nothing
3 has changed in the School District of
4 Philadelphia but the players. As
5 pointed out by the Philadelphia Inquirer
6 on October 26th, there still is a
7 dropout crisis.

8 I too am one of the players who
9 has changed. In 1998, I was a teacher
10 at Germantown High School. I wrestled
11 each day with the successes and failures
12 of my students.

13 In 2001, talent development
14 from Johns Hopkins was introduced to the
15 administration and staff at Germantown
16 High School. I participated in the
17 exploratory committee and recommended
18 that talent development be implemented
19 at Germantown.

20 From an optimistic teacher's
21 point of view, it didn't work for many
22 students; it was too little too late.

23 I left the School District of
24 Philadelphia in 2004 to pursue
25 out-of-school programing and have spent

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 the last year-and-a-half participating
3 in workshops, advisory boards, and
4 meetings that prove that there are a lot
5 of after-school programs that are
6 effective, and Ms. Shamberger certainly
7 could speak to that.

8 Unfortunately, system-wide, the
9 students are being left behind for
10 improved test scores and virtually
11 becoming second-class citizens. The
12 parents are overwhelmed, and in many
13 ways, their needs too are being ignored.

14 Many of these students are lost
15 in a system that is broke, patched with
16 Band-aids that have lost their adhesion.

17 The First United Methodist
18 Church of Germantown's after-school
19 program is attempting to be proactive by
20 providing more direct services to those
21 students who are behind in credits or
22 over age but we are only one program
23 working with one school.

24 This is the time when strong
25 advocacy is needed for the students in

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 Philadelphia, and sometimes the
3 strongest advocates are the students
4 themselves.

5 I hope that by forming a Youth
6 Commission, the students will not only
7 be heard but listened to.

8 I thank you for your time.

9 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
10 you, Miss Park.

11 Is there anybody else that
12 wishes to testify on this bill and
13 resolution?

14 Sir, please.

15 (Witness comes forward.)

16 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Identify
17 yourself for the record.

18 FATHER RHODES: Good morning.
19 And thank you for the opportunity.

20 I have just one brief comment.
21 My name is Father Ron Rhodes. I am a
22 ordained Catholic priest of the
23 independent Catholic Church but my
24 comment is as a citizen.

25 I live in West Philadelphia in

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 what people call a "hot zone," and I
3 appreciate very much, Councilwoman
4 Reynolds-Brown, your legislation for one
5 reason:

6 The children, youth, and young
7 adult are already powerful. They're
8 shaping the way we live in my
9 neighborhood and in my community. Any
10 effort that puts before them positive
11 ways of being powerful is extremely
12 important.

13 I strongly urge you to pass
14 this legislation. As a citizen, I need
15 it at 50th and Chestnut Street so that I
16 can say to them that there are
17 alternatives.

18 Thank you very much.

19 (Applause.)

20 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
21 you, Father.

22 Anyone else to testify?

23 (No response.)

24 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Seeing
25 none.

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581

2 Councilwoman Reynolds-Brown, I
3 know there are some amendments that we
4 should go into. Could you just briefly
5 explain them?

6 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

7 The amendments go directly to
8 the important question raised early in
9 the testimony -- earlier in the hearing
10 from Councilman Jim Kenney with regards
11 to broadening the scope of the work of
12 the Youth Commission to not only be
13 limited to issues impacting children and
14 youth and those departments that provide
15 services to the children and youth but
16 to be taken across the entire scope of
17 government, whereby any issues from any
18 department in our government will be
19 will have an opportunity, if you will,
20 for young people to respond, reply,
21 advocate, or oppose.

22 So the language has been
23 distributed and... I'll just it read
24 for the record:

25 The Youth Commission is hereby

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581
2 established to advise the Council and
3 the Mayor on issues which are of concern
4 deleting the word, deleting the word
5 "relating to," but on issues which are
6 of concern to children and youth.

7 And under "Powers and Duties,"
8 the same: Deleting the word
9 "concerning" and inserting "which are of
10 concern." So that's "any and all issues
11 which are of concern to children and
12 young people."

13 Additionally, Chapter 8,
14 independent boards and commissions
15 language which further cleans up, if you
16 will, the time lines associated with
17 this legislation.

18 So I move for the adoption.

19 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay. I
20 guess we'll do that actually in the
21 meeting.

22 Okay. Thank you. Thank you,
23 Councilwoman.

24 Any questions for the
25 Councilwoman on the amendments?

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't - Bill 060581

2 (No response.)

3 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Seeing

4 none -- hold on.

5 Okay. Seeing no one else that

6 wishes to testify, this concludes the

7 public hearing of the Law and Government

8 Committee.

9 And we will now go into the

10 public meeting.

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1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't Public Meeting

2 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: The Chair
3 recognizes Councilman Goode for a motion
4 on Bill No. 060854.

5 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you,
6 Mr. Chairman.

7 I move that Bill No. 060854 be
8 reported out of committee with a
9 favorable recommendation and that the
10 rules of Council be suspended so as to
11 permit first reading at our next Council
12 session.

13 (Motion seconded.)

14 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: It's been
15 moved and properly seconded that Bill
16 No. 060854 be approved by this committee
17 and that the rules of Council be
18 suspended.

19 All in favor, please say aye.

20 Opposed?

21 The motion passes.

22 The Chair recognizes Councilman
23 Kenney regarding Ordinance No. 060851.

24 I'm sorry. The Chair
25 recognizes Councilman Goode.

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't Public Meeting

2 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you,
3 Mr. Chairman.

4 There are two sets of
5 amendments to the bill. After reviewing
6 the Law Department amendment, some of
7 the numbers were changed, so I move that
8 we approve the amendments proposed by
9 the Law Department, but on Page 3 of the
10 Law Department amendments --

11 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay. I
12 believe that is, Councilman, on the
13 resolution that we're actually amending,
14 correct?

15 COUNCILMAN GOODE: That's
16 correct.

17 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay. So
18 first, again, I recognize Councilman
19 Kenney on Bill No. 060581.

20 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you,
21 Mr. Chairman.

22 I move that Bill No. 060581 be
23 reported out of this committee favorably
24 and a request be made for a rules
25 suspension to allow for first reading at

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't Public Meeting
2 our next Council session.

3 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Is there
4 a second?

5 (Motion seconded.)

6 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: It's been
7 moved and properly seconded that the
8 Bill No. 060581 be reported out of this
9 committee with a favorable
10 recommendation and that the rules of
11 Council be suspended.

12 All in favor will please say
13 aye.

14 Opposed?

15 There are none opposed. The
16 motion passes.

17 (Applause.)

18 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Hold on
19 one second before you finish your
20 applause.

21 The Chair recognizes Councilman
22 Goode regarding Resolution No. 060596.

23 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you,
24 Mr. Chairman. I jumped ahead of myself
25 earlier.

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't Public Meeting

2 On Resolution No. 060596, there
3 are two sets of amendments, one by the
4 Law Department, and the other amendment
5 we'd like to add. I suggest that we
6 work with the Law Department amendment.

7 On Page 3 of that amendment,
8 Section 4-1200, under "Powers and Duties
9 of the Youth Commission," I suggest that
10 we cross out the word "concerning,"
11 strike it out and change that to "which
12 are of concern to." So cross out
13 "concerning."

14 We're not going to do the first
15 one because it was a different Law
16 Department change.

17 For the second one on the
18 second sheet, we can find it on Page 3,
19 the Law Department amendments to the
20 resolution, 4-1200, we'll change that
21 word "concerning" to read "which are of
22 concern to" on the Law Department
23 amendments.

24 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Is there
25 a second?

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't Public Meeting

2 (Motion seconded.)

3 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Any

4 questions about the amendment?

5 (No response.)

6 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Seeing

7 none --

8 COUNCILMAN GOODE: I move for

9 the adoption of the amendments as

10 circulated and as just changed and read

11 into the record.

12 (Motion seconded.)

13 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Opposed?

14 The amendment is adopted.

15 The Chair against recognizes

16 Councilman Goode.

17 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you,

18 Mr. Chairman.

19 I move that the resolution, as

20 amended, be reported out of committee

21 with a favorable recommendation.

22 (Motion seconded.)

23 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: It's been

24 moved and properly seconded -- I'm

25 sorry, is there a question?

1 12/5/06 Law and Gov't Public Meeting

2 Councilwoman Reynolds-Brown?

3 On the resolution, you don't have to.

4 That goes automatically on the calendar.

5 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

6 Fine. Thank you.

7 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay.

8 All in favor of the resolution, please

9 say aye.

10 Opposed?

11 The resolution passes and will

12 be on the calendar for the next Council

13 meeting.

14 There being no other business

15 before this committee, thank you very

16 much.

17 (Applause.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the
proceedings of the City of Philadelphia
Council Committee on Law and Government are
contained fully and accurately in the
stenographic notes taken by me on Tuesday,
December 5, 2006, and that this is a true and
correct statement of same.

JOSEPHINE CARDILLO
Registered Professional Reporter

(The foregoing certification
of this transcript does not apply to any
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