

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Via Microsoft Teams
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Wednesday, March 3, 2021
2:07 p.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILWOMAN HELEN GYM, CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN KENDRA BROOKS
COUNCILWOMAN JAMIE GAUTHIER
COUNCILMAN KENYATTA JOHNSON
COUNCILMAN ISAIAH THOMAS

RESOLUTION 210034 - Resolution authorizing the Committee on Children and Youth to conduct hearings examining the relationship between the property tax exemption for wealthy nonprofits on the School District's budget and the resulting environmental hazards in School District facilities...

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2 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
3 very much.

4 Good afternoon, everybody. I
5 am City Councilmember Helen Gym, Chair of
6 the Children and Youth Committee.

7 I understand that state law
8 currently requires that the following
9 announcement be made at the beginning of
10 every remote public hearing as follows:

11 Due to the current public
12 health emergency, City Council committees
13 are currently meeting remotely. We are
14 using Microsoft Teams to make these
15 remote hearings possible. Instructions
16 for how the public may view and offer
17 public testimony at public hearings of
18 Council committees are included in the
19 public hearing notices that are published
20 in the Daily News, the Philadelphia
21 Inquirer, and Legal Intelligencer prior
22 to the hearings, and can also be found on
23 PHLCouncil.com.

24 I now note that the hour has
25 come. Mr. Spiva, will you please call

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2 the roll to take attendance.

3 Members that are in attendance
4 will please indicate that you are present
5 when your name is called, and also if you
6 could say a few brief words when
7 responding so that your image will be
8 displayed on screen when you speak.

9 THE CLERK: Councilmember
10 Brooks.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Good
12 afternoon, Madam Chair. Good afternoon,
13 colleagues and guests. I'm present.

14 THE CLERK: Thank you.

15 Councilmember Gauthier.

16 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Good
17 afternoon, Madam Chair. Good afternoon,
18 colleagues and to the panelists and the
19 public. Present.

20 THE CLERK: Councilmember
21 Johnson.

22 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Good
23 morning, everyone. Good morning,
24 colleagues. Good morning, members of the
25 public.

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2 THE CLERK: Vice Chair Thomas.

3 (No response.)

4 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: All right.

5 Thank you.

6 A quorum of the Committee is
7 present, and this hearing is now called
8 to order. This is a public hearing of
9 the Committee on Children and Youth
10 regarding Resolution No. 210034.

11 Mr. Spiva, will you please read
12 the title of the resolution.

13 THE CLERK: 210034, a
14 resolution authorizing the Committee on
15 Children and Youth to conduct hearings
16 examining the relationship between the
17 property tax exemption for wealthy
18 nonprofits on the School District's
19 budget and the resulting environmental
20 hazards in School District facilities on
21 the health and safety of Philadelphia's
22 most vulnerable children.

23 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Wonderful.

24 Before we begin to hear
25 testimony from the witnesses, will the

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2 Clerk please explain some of the rules
3 around the hearing.

4 THE CLERK: Yes. Everyone who
5 has been invited to the meeting today to
6 testify should be aware that this public
7 hearing is being recorded. Because the
8 hearing is public, participants and
9 viewers have no reasonable expectation of
10 privacy. By continuing to be in the
11 meeting, you are consenting to being
12 recorded.

13 Additionally, prior to
14 recognizing members for the questions or
15 comments they have for witnesses, we will
16 note for the record at this time that we
17 will use the Chat feature available in
18 Microsoft Teams to allow members to
19 signify that they wish to be recognized.
20 In order to comply with the Sunshine Act,
21 the Chat feature must only be used for
22 this purpose.

23 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Wonderful.
24 Thank you very much.

25 Well, first of all, I want to

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2 welcome everyone to this important
3 hearing and thank the bill sponsor for
4 moving this resolution forward. I know
5 many people have been waiting for a long
6 time for this hearing. We have a robust
7 witness list as well. So I'm looking
8 forward to getting started and would like
9 to invite an opening set of remarks from
10 the bill sponsor, Councilmember Kendra
11 Brooks.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Thank you
13 so much, Madam Chair.

14 I want to thank the panelists
15 here today, the concerned members of the
16 public who signed up to testify today,
17 and the co-sponsors of this hearing
18 resolution, including every member of the
19 Committee, Councilmembers Gauthier, Gym,
20 Johnson, and Thomas, and in addition to
21 Councilmembers Squilla, Green, and Bass.

22 I also want to thank the many
23 community and student groups, especially
24 Philly Jobs with Justice, for their
25 advocacy for fair funding for our public

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2 schools and for their support in bringing
3 this hearing together today.

4 My hope is that this hearing is
5 the beginning of a larger conversation on
6 how to equitably fund education in Philly
7 so that every student in the City has a
8 safe, healthy, and supportive environment
9 to learn in.

10 The School District is
11 currently facing \$5 billion in need of
12 capital repairs, and the economic impact
13 of the pandemic has further threatened
14 the funding for our public schools. It
15 is clear that conversations around who in
16 the City is paying their fair share for
17 public education are needed now even
18 more.

19 As schools look forward to
20 reopening, we need not only to think
21 about safe, healthy learning
22 environments, but how we are going to
23 support our students through the learning
24 losses they have experienced as a result
25 of this traumatic, difficult year. It is

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2 far past the time that we prioritize our
3 school communities and invest in our
4 young people.

5 The testimonies that you will
6 hear today will examine the impact that
7 Philadelphia's non-profit tax exemptions
8 have had on our children's learning
9 environments, and what we know is that
10 Philadelphia's public schools have been
11 plagued by inadequate funding for
12 decades. And it's no coincidence that
13 the vast majority of the students who
14 attend public schools in Philadelphia are
15 low-income children of color and majority
16 are black students.

17 Children of color, especially
18 black children, are disproportionately
19 impacted by the health conditions
20 associated with environmental hazards,
21 such as chronic asthma. And this is not
22 just about investing in education. It's
23 about investing in the lives, black
24 lives, and black futures.

25 And we need to come together to

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2 redefine what the future of educating our
3 children looks like, and we need to get
4 to a place where Philadelphia's children
5 are not only supported by their local
6 wealthy non-profits, but they also have
7 the educational preparation and pathways
8 to find opportunities and further their
9 careers at these same institutions.

10 As a longtime education
11 activist, turned City Councilmember, a
12 mother of Philadelphia public school
13 children, and a Philadelphia public
14 school alumna, this issue is close to my
15 heart. And I want to thank everyone
16 again for being here today, and I look
17 forward to hearing your testimonies.

18 Thank you so much, Madam Chair.

19 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
20 very much, Councilmember Brooks.

21 I would like to acknowledge the
22 presence of our Vice Chair, Councilmember
23 Thomas. Welcome.

24 And would any other Committee
25 members like to make any opening remarks

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2 before we begin?

3 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Good
4 afternoon, everybody. Good afternoon,
5 Madam Chair. I just want to say I'm
6 present, and I want to thank the sponsor
7 of this bill for introducing the
8 resolution so we can have this important
9 conversation today.

10 Thank you, Madam Chair.

11 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
12 very much, Vice Chair Thomas. We
13 appreciate your presence here.

14 I want to thank the bill
15 sponsor as well, and just have a few
16 brief additional remarks.

17 The history of PILOTs has been
18 one that has previously existed within
19 the City of Philadelphia. The
20 conversation today that we look forward
21 to is one that's going to be driven by
22 communities, by our parents, by
23 educators, by students themselves who are
24 in our public school systems that have
25 long been underfunded, and this is an

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2 important conversation because as we talk
3 about school reopenings and as we talk
4 about economic recovery, it is critically
5 important that schools and the health and
6 well-being of children in the physical
7 space of their schools as well as the
8 emotional climate space and community
9 space that's created by schools is
10 considered a top priority. This is
11 something that goes far beyond the
12 schoolhouse doors.

13 In the 1990s, the last time
14 that we had a significant PILOT program
15 in the City of Philadelphia, the City's
16 largest institutions came together when
17 Philadelphia faced bankruptcy, when it
18 was looking at a falling status within a
19 corporate marketplace, and made a
20 commitment to the City that it would
21 stand up and embrace the City and send as
22 much of an external message to the
23 broader world that Philadelphia was on
24 the rise.

25 Now again in 2021, two decades

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2 later, we believe that that same message
3 must be sent. We believe that that same
4 message must be sent loud and clear by
5 some of our city's biggest actors that
6 Philadelphia's recovery relies on the
7 health and well-being of its children, of
8 its school system, and that those things
9 are core to our future.

10 The message today is clear. As
11 long as our children struggle to learn in
12 schools, with poor or no ventilation at
13 all, exposed asbestos, lead paint, and
14 chronic mold outbreaks, our largest
15 non-profits have a critical role to play
16 in altering our city's future by
17 investing explicitly in school funding
18 justice.

19 When we invest in modernizing
20 our school systems, we make an investment
21 in the public health and in our city's
22 future. We need a unified and powerful
23 message from our largest civic leaders
24 that the inequitable funding of
25 Philadelphia's schools must end.

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2 Restoring PILOTs can send a
3 message loud and clear not only to City
4 Hall but especially to Harrisburg and to
5 Washington, DC that we must build the
6 schools that our children both need and
7 deserve.

8 With that, we will begin this
9 hearing, and will the Clerk please call
10 the first panel to testify this afternoon
11 on Resolution 210034.

12 THE CLERK: Thank you. For the
13 first panel, we have Representative Rick
14 Krajewski, Adam Langley, and Brittany
15 Alston.

16 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Good
17 afternoon, everybody. If you are
18 connected and ready to proceed,
19 Representative Krajewski, welcome to
20 Council, and if you could please state
21 your name for the record and you may
22 proceed with your testimony.

23 REPRESENTATIVE KRAJEWSKI: Good
24 afternoon. Thank you, Chairperson Gym
25 and other members of the Committee on

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2 Children and Youth. My name is Rick
3 Krajewski. I am the State Representative
4 for Pennsylvania's 188th District.

5 I want to thank Councilmember
6 Brooks for introducing this important
7 resolution, and appreciate everyone on
8 this Committee for giving me the
9 opportunity to represent my constituents
10 in this discussion of toxic schools and
11 non-profit property tax exemptions.

12 I'm here today to testify for
13 many reasons, but I'll start with one
14 alarming fact: In my district in West
15 and Southwest Philadelphia, an estimated
16 one in four children have asthma. Along
17 with the lead and asbestos contamination
18 that is endemic to the public school
19 buildings in West and Southwest Philly,
20 the uncontrolled growth of mold has had
21 an undeniable impact on the children who
22 attend these schools. At one school in
23 my district, Lea Elementary, a historic
24 public school that generations of
25 Philadelphians have attended, parents and

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2 students decry classroom conditions that
3 are blatantly unhealthy. And saddest of
4 all, our youth are becoming desensitized.
5 These classroom environments have become
6 their normal.

7 Chronic asthma can be
8 debilitating and even fatal, and it's
9 shameful that our children are facing
10 lifelong health conditions because of a
11 lack of funding for our school buildings,
12 while universities that are located mere
13 blocks away continue to construct
14 state-of-the-art, tax-exempt buildings on
15 campus.

16 Capital projects on university
17 campuses have clearly not been hampered
18 by the pandemic. Jefferson is gearing up
19 to spend over a half a billion dollars on
20 an outpatient building. Penn is in the
21 midst of building a 26 million "guest
22 house" next to the existing University
23 President's house. The Drexel Academic
24 Tower is underway at the former site of
25 University High School. All this being

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2 things that are happening in my district
3 just blocks away from these schools.

4 And while I'm extremely
5 grateful for the world-class education
6 that I received at the University of
7 Pennsylvania, as a working-class black
8 undergraduate, it was immediately obvious
9 to me how many resources were being
10 centralized within our institution while
11 the greater communities of West and
12 Southwest Philadelphia suffered from
13 divestment in university-sponsored
14 gentrification.

15 Children of CEOs, princes, and
16 other elites walked campus grounds while
17 just outside of our bubble was, and still
18 is, one of the most economically divided
19 zip codes in our city, 19143. In the
20 same geographic area, we have residents
21 living in deep poverty mere blocks from
22 half-million-dollar houses. A 20-minute
23 walk from Penn Alexander School, a highly
24 desired public school financially
25 supported by Penn, leads you to Avery D.

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2 Harrington School, a West Philadelphia
3 public school struggling with a lack of
4 resources and overcapacity class sizes.

5 Drexel University, another
6 hugely wealthy non-profit with property
7 in my district, has a lot in common with
8 Penn. What is now known as University
9 City, where both of these institutions
10 have adjacent campuses, was at one point
11 a thriving, tight-knit black community
12 known as the Black Bottom. In the 1950s,
13 Penn and Drexel established the West
14 Philadelphia Corporation with the goal of
15 clearing a path for massive expansion.
16 Through a combination of property
17 acquisition and eminent domain, the West
18 Philadelphia Corporation displaced
19 thousands of black community members. By
20 the 1970s, this neighborhood was all but
21 eliminated.

22 Another consequence of this
23 land grab was the diversion of billions
24 of dollars of property out of the tax
25 base, and our public schools, which are

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2 funded largely by property taxes at the
3 municipal level, bear the brunt of that
4 loss.

5 Drexel, just like Penn, is also
6 a real estate giant. The University has
7 a non-profit real estate subsidiary
8 called Academic Properties, Incorporated
9 that, quote/unquote, "owns, manages,
10 leases or operates a portfolio of over
11 one million square feet of both
12 commercial and residential holdings."

13 While Drexel's legacy of displacement and
14 disinvestment cannot be erased, it can
15 build a foundation for a different path
16 by reversing the extraction of wealth
17 from the historically black community it
18 resides in.

19 So Penn's ten-year commitment
20 to contributing to the remediation of
21 lead and asbestos in our schools is
22 certainly needed, but the chronic
23 underfunding of the Philadelphia public
24 schools also cannot be resolved with
25 charity.

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2 It is time for Penn to step
3 down from its ivory tower and have a real
4 mutual partnership with all of West and
5 Southwest Philadelphia. This can mean
6 community benefit agreements where our
7 community members are given real agency
8 and input and adopting reinvestment
9 policies, like payment in lieu of taxes,
10 to put money back into the public
11 resources that the University benefits
12 from.

13 Our public schools are
14 struggling with systemic underfunding
15 compounded by further cuts during COVID.
16 West and Southwest Philadelphia, along
17 with every other district in
18 Philadelphia, needs a shift towards an
19 investment in the health and safety of
20 the black and brown children who will
21 soon be returning to toxic school
22 buildings. This means that the
23 enormously wealthy institution in West
24 Philadelphia and beyond must contribute a
25 full 40 percent of their foregone

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2 property taxes as an ongoing source of
3 revenue dedicated to safe and healthy
4 public schools.

5 With that, that's the end of my
6 testimony. I want to thank you again for
7 giving me the opportunity to speak on
8 this important issue.

9 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you so
10 much, Representative Krajewski.

11 Will the next testifier, if you
12 could just please state your name for the
13 record and proceed with your testimony.

14 MR. LANGLEY: So I believe I'm
15 the next speaker, Adam Langley. Good
16 afternoon. So, first of all, I'd like to
17 thank the Committee for the invitation to
18 address you today. I'm really happy to
19 be here to speak about non-profit
20 payments in lieu of taxes.

21 As I said, my name is Adam
22 Langley and I'm Associate Director for
23 U.S. and Canadian Programs at the Lincoln
24 Institute of Land Policy. We're a think
25 tank and private operating foundation

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2 based in Cambridge, Massachusetts. And I
3 note our location at the start because we
4 really are located in the center of PILOT
5 activity in the United States, and we see
6 firsthand how PILOTs can be a significant
7 revenue source for cities with a large
8 non-profit presence, such as
9 Philadelphia.

10 So I'm coming to you today from
11 Cambridge, a city of around 100,000
12 people, receives over \$7 million per year
13 in PILOTs. It's primarily from MIT and
14 Harvard. Those two universities have 40-
15 and 50-year agreements with the city. In
16 the nearby in Boston, the city received
17 \$34 million in PILOTs in FY20 from nearly
18 50 non-profits.

19 So, again, there really is
20 significant revenue potential from
21 PILOTs. And this is something that I've
22 been researching for over a decade now,
23 and probably the most important thing
24 that I've learned is that collaboration
25 is better than conflict when it comes to

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2 PILOTs, that governments are more likely
3 to have success obtaining PILOTs when
4 they work collaboratively with the
5 non-profits to try to reach mutually
6 beneficial agreements that are really a
7 win-win.

8 So with that in mind, today I
9 want to focus on six recommendations for
10 how local governments can take a
11 collaborative approach when it comes to
12 PILOTs.

13 The first thing to keep in mind
14 is that respectful dialogue with
15 non-profits is really the critical first
16 step in starting discussion about PILOTs,
17 and to do that, local governments need to
18 explain the need for a PILOT, demonstrate
19 that they're a trustworthy partner who
20 will use the funds efficiently,
21 acknowledge non-profits' contributions to
22 their community, and listen to the
23 non-profits' concerns.

24 Local officials can make the
25 case that PILOTs are actually in the

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2 non-profit's own self-interest or at
3 least part of being a member of the
4 community. After all, non-profits can't
5 thrive in a bubble. If they're in a city
6 with high crime, decaying infrastructure,
7 those sorts of things are going to affect
8 the non-profit as well. So a PILOT that
9 makes it easier for a city to provide
10 quality public services at reasonable tax
11 rates can actually benefit the non-profit
12 itself.

13 A second recommendation that
14 we've observed is that at times it can be
15 useful to avoid the term "PILOT" all
16 together, because there are some
17 non-profits very concerned that making
18 payments in lieu of taxes can create the
19 impression that they should be paying
20 taxes and they worry how it might
21 undercut their tax-exempt status down the
22 road.

23 And, of course, non-profits
24 aren't only concerned about the property
25 tax exemption. Universities, for

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2 example, often get greater benefit from
3 the exemption of investment income from
4 federal income taxes.

5 So with these concerns in mind,
6 there's non-profits that may be willing
7 to make what are essentially PILOTs but
8 go by other names. So in some cities
9 these are called volunteered
10 contributions, service fees, et cetera.
11 It's just a name change that the
12 non-profits believe does not pose the
13 same risk to their exempt status.

14 A third recommendation is that
15 local governments need to justify why
16 they're seeking a certain dollar amount
17 for a PILOT rather than just kind of
18 pulling a number out of thin air, and the
19 first thing to do is to estimate the cost
20 of providing services to a non-profit, so
21 things like police and fire protection,
22 street maintenance, snow removal, et
23 cetera.

24 So, for example, in Boston they
25 found that year after year, those sorts

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2 of services generally accounted for about
3 a quarter of the city's budget, and they
4 argued that non-profits should be asked
5 to make PILOTs equal to 25 percent of
6 what they would owe of their taxable
7 institutions.

8 Now, of course, if you want a
9 non-profit to pay 25 percent of what they
10 would pay if taxable, 40 percent, then
11 you would need some basis to calculate
12 how much they would owe if they were
13 taxable. And arguably the best approach
14 is to base each non-profit's requested
15 PILOT on the assessed value of their
16 taxes and properties. The challenge
17 there is that existing assessments are
18 often inaccurate for non-profit
19 properties, but it is possible to get
20 reasonably accurate valuations.

21 So, for example, in Boston,
22 they do have pretty solid estimates of
23 non-profits' property values, and to get
24 those estimates, they rely upon a state
25 law that allows them to request detailed

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2 facility information from non-profits,
3 and they can then feed that data into
4 their mass appraisal system. Otherwise,
5 you could base the PILOT on the amount of
6 square footage for non-profits, the land
7 area or their non-profit revenues, which
8 is data that can be easily obtained from
9 a Form 990.

10 A fourth recommendation is to
11 consider earmarking profits for certain
12 non-profit priorities instead of having
13 the money go into the General Fund, which
14 can be viewed as a sort of black box.

15 Worcester, Massachusetts
16 provides an interesting case study on
17 this issue. People have been trying to
18 get the city's universities and hospitals
19 to make PILOTs going back to the 1980s,
20 but those efforts had consistently been
21 unsuccessful for decades. But then at a
22 meeting in 2007, a city councilor
23 suggested earmarking PILOT revenues for
24 certain non-profit priorities, and the
25 discussion on PILOTs was instantly

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2 changed, and soon the city was able to
3 negotiate long-lasting PILOT agreements
4 with three universities, including
5 Worcester Polytechnic University and
6 Clark University. Those two institutions
7 are contributing over \$15 million over
8 25 years. And in terms of earmarking,
9 the universities agree to provide funds
10 for the city's public library, to help
11 pay for major improvements to the public
12 parks adjacent to their campuses.

13 Now, from a city's perspective,
14 money is fungible, can reallocate funds,
15 but by earmarking PILOTs, those
16 agreements may be viewed very differently
17 by the universities. So now university
18 presidents that negotiate a PILOT, they
19 can go to their board of directors, they
20 can go to their donors and say the
21 university is furthering education and
22 learning in Worcester. Those are
23 certainly objectives consistent with
24 their mission as an educational
25 institution, and they can also make the

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2 case that improving the parts adjacent to
3 their campuses can help attract students
4 and professors to their campuses.

5 A fifth recommendation is to
6 seek long-term PILOT agreements in the
7 range of 5 to 30 years. A long-term
8 agreement means there's the predictable
9 revenue stream for government and a known
10 budget item for non-profits. And equally
11 important, it avoids renegotiating PILOTs
12 every few years. These can be quite
13 time-consuming for government, for
14 non-profits, and these negotiations can
15 become contentious, so it's good to kind
16 of reach an agreement, and then both
17 sides stick to it for the long term.

18 Typically these agreements
19 specify a base year payment and then use
20 an annual inflator, like 2 or 3 percent,
21 so that the PILOT keeps up with
22 inflation.

23 And then my final
24 recommendation is to reduce cash PILOTs
25 for non-profits that agree to provide new

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2 services for local residents, and this
3 approach is a compromise between the
4 preferences of non-profits, which
5 typically have a strong preference for
6 providing services, and local
7 governments, which typically prefer cash
8 to fund their highest priorities.

9 So one key question is which
10 services should count for offsets. First
11 I'd say the services should benefit local
12 residents. So scholarships set aside for
13 city students would count, but financial
14 aid for students outside the city would
15 not. You might want to focus on new
16 services that are kind of above and
17 beyond the organization's main business
18 model. You don't really want to be just
19 giving non-profits credit for things that
20 they're already doing.

21 So, for example, pretty much
22 every hospital has considerable
23 unreimbursed medical care. You might not
24 want to reduce the cash PILOT just
25 because a hospital has unreimbursed care,

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2 but if a hospital sets up a new free
3 wellness program for city residents,
4 things like smoking cessation, weight
5 loss or a program to fight opioid
6 addiction, those sorts of services could
7 count because they're really not a part
8 of the hospital's core business model.

9 Now, to take this approach,
10 city officials and non-profit leaders
11 need to identify which services are most
12 valuable for local residents and that
13 each non-profit is in the best position
14 to provide. And it's important that the
15 local government is clear and consistent
16 about their priorities rather than
17 regularly requesting a new type of
18 program or service.

19 So to wrap up, as I said at the
20 beginning, PILOTs can provide a valuable
21 revenue source for cities with a large
22 non-profit presence, but the most
23 important thing to remember is that
24 collaboration is better than conflict
25 when it comes to PILOTs. And there are

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2 several things you need to do to take
3 this collaborative approach. First,
4 remember PILOTs are voluntary, so it's
5 critical to start with respectful
6 dialogue with non-profits to make the
7 case for a contribution.

8 Second, you might want to avoid
9 the term "PILOT" all together and call
10 them voluntary contributions or service
11 fees instead.

12 Third, you need to justify why
13 you're seeking a certain dollar figure.
14 That means estimate the cost to provide
15 services to non-profits and use some sort
16 of basis, like a non-profit's assessed
17 values or their square footage, to
18 calculate a fair number for a PILOT.

19 Fourth, consider earmarking
20 PILOTs for non-profit priorities rather
21 than having the money go into the General
22 Fund.

23 Fifth, pursue long-term
24 agreements in the range of 5 to 30 years.

25 And, finally, reduce cash

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2 PILOTs for non-profits that agree to
3 provide new services for local residents.

4 And adopting these
5 collaborative strategies have led to
6 break-throughs in PILOT negotiations and
7 significant annual contributions in
8 cities like Boston and Worcester and many
9 other places.

10 So, again, thank you for the
11 invitation to speak today. I appreciate
12 your attention, and I'd be happy to take
13 any questions either now or at the end of
14 the panel.

15 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
16 very much, Mr. Langley.

17 We have one more testifier to
18 this panel, Brittany Alston, and then
19 afterwards we will begin with questions
20 from the Committee.

21 Ms. Alston, if you could just
22 state your name for the record and you
23 may begin with your testimony.

24 MS. ALSTON: Great. Brittany
25 Alston for the record. Good afternoon,

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2 Chairperson Gym and other members of the
3 Committee on Children and Youth. Thank
4 you so much for the opportunity to
5 testify today. My name is Brittany
6 Alston. I'm the Deputy Research Director
7 for the Action Center on Race and the
8 Economy, or ACRE. Some of my research
9 focuses on the impact that foregone tax
10 revenue in the form of economic
11 development subsidies has on workers and
12 communities, specifically communities of
13 color. So I'm here today to comment on
14 why private universities and mega
15 non-profits need to pay their fair share
16 into our city through PILOTs, or payment
17 in lieu of taxes.

18 In this testimony I'd like to
19 highlight three key points. One, that
20 private universities are well-driven
21 institutions, not public services. Two,
22 that mega non-profits highlight the stark
23 economic divide that exists in the City.
24 And, three, that PILOTs are a vehicle to
25 bring in progressive revenue to the City.

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2 So to my first point, private
3 universities are well-driven
4 institutions, not public services. In
5 Fiscal Year 2020, the top ten private
6 universities in the country had
7 endowments that equal nearly 200 billion
8 collectively. UPenn is actually in that
9 top ten, and they increased their
10 endowment by over 200 million in that
11 same year, for a total endowment of
12 nearly 15 billion.

13 These universities rely on
14 highly financialized instruments and
15 extractive economies to generate their
16 investment income and grow their
17 endowments. The harms caused to poor
18 black and brown workers and communities
19 through private equity vehicles are well
20 documented, and the harms of propping up
21 extractive economies like the fossil fuel
22 industry are also well documented. So
23 through these investment vehicles,
24 private universities become a larger
25 piece -- or a piece of a larger puzzle

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2 that rely on wealth extraction and
3 financialization to thrive.

4 While the University receives
5 approximately 35 million annually in
6 direct subsidy from the Commonwealth, it
7 is unclear how these universities provide
8 direct and long-lasting benefits to the
9 community it's situated in and also
10 surrounded by. Instead, the University
11 has fueled gentrification in West Philly,
12 and the now University City district has
13 lost -- (connection issues) -- have
14 called.

15 While reparations do require
16 very specific steps in commitment, I do
17 think that PILOTs are a step in repairing
18 the economic and spatial harm that has
19 been caused to these communities.

20 So my second point, mega
21 non-profits highlight the stark economic
22 divide that exists in the City, and I
23 think the Representative talked about
24 this also. But I'd like to be very clear
25 in saying healthcare services and

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2 educational programs should never be
3 viewed as charity, but as a basic right
4 that we all need to be invested in so
5 that we can be the fullest and healthiest
6 versions of ourselves. That investment,
7 it should be reparative, intentional, and
8 robust.

9 The charitable programs that
10 were created by non-profits like Penn or
11 Drexel and Jefferson, they just don't
12 meet the needs of the community, but
13 their fair share contributions can
14 provide the City with increased funding
15 to address the overwhelming needs of
16 students and families.

17 The pandemic has had a huge
18 impact on working-class and poor folks in
19 previously unimaginable ways, but mega
20 non-profits have continued to expand
21 their wealth, their power, and their
22 footprint into the communities around
23 their universities. As families face the
24 threat of losing their homes, they see
25 brand new dorms coming up. They see, you

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2 know, increased police violence and also
3 increased police presence in the
4 communities surrounding these
5 universities that often patrol the
6 neighborhoods.

7 As Philadelphians continue to
8 lose their jobs in record numbers,
9 university administration compensation
10 packages have remained untouched and in
11 some cases have actually increased.

12 As we know, the impact of this
13 pandemic has been extremely uneven, and
14 black and brown workers and communities
15 have seen higher rates of unemployment
16 and underemployment as a result. The
17 communities in which these institutions
18 are located deserve so much more than
19 PILOTs, in my opinion, but PILOTs are
20 very much a necessary first step in the
21 right direction.

22 The last thing I'll say is that
23 PILOTs are a vehicle to bring progressive
24 revenue into the City. So as the budget
25 season rolls around, the community, along

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2 with you all, are exploring ways to close
3 deep budget holes that have been
4 exacerbated by the economic impact of
5 this pandemic. We know that the
6 Coronavirus did not create the need to
7 strengthen our public goods and services,
8 but it really dramatically increased the
9 demand for these services and revealed
10 how business as usual is just not good
11 enough. This pandemic should be a
12 wake-up call for us to reimagine who pays
13 and why, because our communities cannot
14 withstand another year, as our Mayor put
15 it, of painful cuts.

16 PILOTS are an opportunity to
17 bring in additional progressive revenue
18 that can help shift how we balance our
19 city budget.

20 I hope that we can work closely
21 to reimagine a city where wealthy
22 institutions pay their fair share so that
23 we are not balancing our budget on the
24 backs of black and brown children, they
25 can be fully supported through our School

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2 District and take part in learning
3 experiences that really allow them to
4 thrive.

5 I'm so excited to continue
6 listening to the community voices that
7 strengthen the case for PILOTS --

8 COUNCIL SUPPORT: Excuse me one
9 second. Madam Chair, we have to pause
10 the hearing for one second. There's a
11 technical issue with Channel 64. I
12 apologize.

13 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Okay.

14 COUNCIL SUPPORT: Give us a
15 moment, please.

16 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Sure.

17 We apologize, Ms. Alston.

18 MS. ALSTON: That's okay. I
19 was saying thank you.

20 (Brief pause.)

21 COUNCIL SUPPORT:
22 Councilmembers, we're live again.

23 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
24 very much.

25 We wanted to make sure that

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2 everyone had a chance to hear Ms.

3 Alston's full testimony.

4 Ms. Alston, we apologize for
5 the interruption, and please continue.

6 MS. ALSTON: No worries. I was
7 just saying that I'm excited to continue
8 listening to the community voices and
9 experience that strengthen the case for
10 PILOTS in the City. I think it's a
11 strong conversation for us to be having,
12 and I welcome any questions from you all
13 as the Committee.

14 Thank you.

15 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: I want to
16 thank the first panel. We appreciate
17 your testimony very much.

18 Does anyone from the Committee
19 have questions? And I'd like to -- happy
20 to start with Councilmember Brooks.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Thank you
22 so much, Madam Chair.

23 I have questions for each
24 member of the panel, but I'm going to
25 start off with Mr. Langley.

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2 Based on your research, have
3 you seen examples where large non-profits
4 gain better relationships with
5 surrounding communities by voluntarily
6 making these payments?

7 MR. LANGLEY: Yeah. I would
8 think absolutely that making a voluntary
9 contribution to the community is viewed
10 positively by members of the community.
11 And so, yeah, I think absolutely, yes.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: And I
13 know this was covered in your policy
14 brief, but for the record, how many
15 municipalities currently have PILOTS?

16 MR. LANGLEY: So the most
17 recent data we have, we found 218 local
18 governments with PILOT agreements around
19 the country.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Thank you
21 for that.

22 And I noted that you stressed
23 the importance of collaboration with
24 non-profits in establishing PILOTS.
25 Philadelphia has a long history of

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2 respectful dialogue with non-profits, and
3 we've seen economic inequality has still
4 been exacerbated. Do you have
5 recommendations for how cities can
6 demonstrate our needs and continue to
7 engage in respectful dialogue while also
8 requesting increased investments from
9 non-profits?

10 MR. LANGLEY: Right. Well, I
11 mean, I think that a lot of the comments
12 that you made in the opening remarks and
13 some of the speakers made specifically
14 about Philadelphia illustrates the need,
15 whether that be the need to invest in a
16 safer environment in the schools. So, I
17 mean, it's basically I think just showing
18 the gap between the level of public
19 resources needed to provide decent public
20 services and the level of revenues that
21 the City can realistically obtain from
22 other avenues.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Thank you
24 so much, Mr. Langley, for your time.

25 My next line of questioning is

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2 for Rep Krajewski, if he's still online.

3 REPRESENTATIVE KRAJEWSKI: Yes.
4 I'm here.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: All
6 right. So we know that a non-profit's
7 tax exemption is determined on the state
8 level, which is why we here in
9 Philadelphia -- so why we here in Philly
10 are unable to pass legislation on this
11 issue. Do you think there are
12 state-level implications for the issue of
13 non-profit tax exemptions, and have you
14 had a chance to look at that?

15 REPRESENTATIVE KRAJEWSKI:
16 Yeah, absolutely. So there's definitely
17 implications on the state level, because
18 I think with many issues that we deal
19 with in Philadelphia, whether it's
20 non-profits and PILOTs, whether it's
21 school funding, whether it's progressive
22 taxation, the truth is that there are
23 other jurisdictions that are dealing with
24 this same issue, right? I mean,
25 Philadelphia is not the only city where

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2 non-profits are increasingly acting as a
3 business instead of an entity that's
4 accountable to its community.

5 So in regards to doing what we
6 can to change it legislatively on the
7 state level, I think one of the big
8 things that we need to do is figure out
9 how can we unite with other counties that
10 are dealing with this situation of having
11 large non-profits that are extending
12 their reach beyond whatever their core
13 sector is and are now operating like
14 corporations essentially, right?

15 So I think Allegheny County is
16 a perfect example of other parts of the
17 state where you have large institutions
18 that basically have a huge footprint in a
19 small area and thinking about, well, what
20 would it actually mean for our
21 communities if we were to redefine what
22 this relationship would look like. And
23 hopefully if you're doing that, we can
24 obviously win here in Philadelphia, but
25 we can also start to bridge that

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2 urban-suburban-rural divide that I think
3 is often stymying us on issues when it
4 comes on the state level where we're
5 showing like actually this isn't just a
6 Philadelphia issue, it's not even just
7 for me like a West Philadelphia issue,
8 right? This is a bigger issue that
9 affects all of us.

10 So my hope is the role that we
11 can play in the legislature is to build
12 enough support across the Commonwealth
13 that we can actually get a legislative
14 fix, while on the local level we're
15 pushing for things like quick ending the
16 exemption or trying to get more payments
17 to these areas.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Thank you
19 so much, Rep Krajewski.

20 And my final line of question
21 is for Ms. Alston. Can you speak a bit
22 about how the City's current tax
23 structure could be described as extracted
24 and how PILOTs might help us reshape
25 that?

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2 MS. ALSTON: Yeah. So, I mean,
3 we know that there's a really rigid and I
4 would say oppressive and colonialist
5 regulation that binds how we can raise
6 revenue on the state level through the
7 Uniformity Clause, but I think that
8 PILOTs actually provide us with an
9 opportunity to raise this revenue without
10 falling into a conversation about the
11 Uniformity Clause, because overall we
12 know that the City is heavily reliant on
13 flat taxes, which we can consider to be
14 regressive taxes. And regressive
15 taxation just means that those who have
16 less pay more proportional to the amount
17 that they make or earn. And this
18 conversation around PILOTs creates a real
19 shift that I think is important, a shift
20 toward progressive revenue or revenue
21 that rests on this belief that those who
22 have more pay more or pay their fair
23 share.

24 So when we decide against
25 progressive revenue, we're really leaving

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2 money on the table for the City through
3 sort of foregone revenue, and this money
4 otherwise could be used to fund our
5 public services. Specifically in this
6 case we're talking about funding our
7 School District.

8 So I think this really provides
9 an opportunity to start thinking about
10 how we tax generally. And this is not a
11 tax, right? It is a voluntary
12 contribution, but it still rests on this
13 idea of who pays more and why, and I
14 think it's pushing us toward a
15 conversation on progressive revenue and
16 the need to have that in our city.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Thank you
18 so much, Ms. Alston.

19 Madam Chair, that concludes my
20 line of questioning for this panel.

21 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
22 very much, Councilmember.

23 The Chair recognizes
24 Councilmember Gauthier.

25 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank

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2 you, Madam Chair. And I also wanted to
3 say thank you to Councilmember Brooks for
4 sponsoring this -- for this resolution
5 and having this important conversation.

6 I wanted to thank all of the
7 panelists for your powerful testimony. I
8 also wanted to say hey to Rep Krajewski,
9 my partner in so much of the work in West
10 and Southwest Philly.

11 My question is for Adam. Thank
12 you so much for your informative
13 testimony that allowed us to learn a
14 little bit about how this works in other
15 places. I also appreciated your emphasis
16 on having a reasoned discussion with the
17 large non-profits that we would need to
18 really collaborate with to get this
19 going, and I hope that that's a
20 possibility and that we can move forward
21 in that way.

22 I absolutely think we should be
23 moving towards PILOTs and SILOTs, where
24 appropriate, for smaller institutions.

25 I am the Council representative

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2 for West and Southwest Philadelphia,
3 right? And so we have most of the City's
4 meds and eds within our boundaries, and
5 like Representative Krajewski described,
6 we've not only -- I mean, so that
7 provides a lot of -- that means we have a
8 lot of resources and assets within our
9 boundaries, but it also means that we in
10 particular see some of the harmful
11 effects to gentrification and
12 displacement. And, of course, our
13 district has had the painful history of
14 having many of the institutions literally
15 built on top of black neighborhoods and
16 extracting black wealth, right? And so
17 for that reason, I think that the
18 neighborhoods of West and Southwest
19 Philadelphia deserve particular attention
20 in whatever PILOTs or SILOTs situation we
21 would be able to put together, and I
22 wanted to know if in your research you
23 have come across any places where
24 particular neighborhoods have been
25 earmarked in a certain way for a

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2 particular level of support.

3 MR. LANGLEY: Okay. That's a
4 good question. So, first of all, I would
5 say you mentioned SILOTs. And so
6 services in lieu of taxes I think
7 naturally would be kind of the easiest
8 for a non-profit to provide in its own
9 backyard. So that to me is -- that would
10 be one approach.

11 And then I mentioned the
12 earmarking that there was in Worcester in
13 terms of improving parks in their
14 neighborhood. So that's one example.
15 Otherwise, I'm not -- nothing is coming
16 to mind, but that doesn't mean that there
17 aren't examples of that. And certainly
18 if you're trying to kind of align the
19 costs and benefits of hosting non-profits
20 having more of the revenue dedicated to
21 the neighborhood, there's definitely a
22 strong argument for that approach.

23 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Yeah.
24 Particularly as it relates to the
25 non-profits that are in our backyard,

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2 right? And in a way, that captures both
3 the history of what happened here and in
4 a way, that captures what's currently
5 going on in terms of neighborhood change
6 and gentrification. So I'd be interested
7 to have that conversation with the
8 institutions and with anybody else who is
9 working on this moving forward.

10 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
11 very much, Councilmember Gauthier.

12 Mr. Langley, could you speak a
13 little bit among the large cities in the
14 U.S., the ones that tend to have -- this
15 conversation is actually focused in on
16 schools, and in particular I think you
17 heard from opening remarks by
18 Councilmember Brooks and myself, we've
19 emphasized what has long been recognized
20 as a severe school underfunding across
21 the State of Pennsylvania, but also a
22 growing recognition from civic actors
23 across the board. Actually, the
24 University of Pennsylvania did announce
25 \$100 million over ten years to be

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2 dedicated towards lead and asbestos
3 removal, for example. And I do think one
4 of the things that Councilmember Brooks
5 has been very clear about and what I
6 think many of the speaking public has
7 been very clear about is that the mission
8 here is around addressing specifics
9 around school underfunding.

10 So I'm interested in whether
11 you have any analysis of the larger
12 city -- among the larger cities what kind
13 of participation level there is around
14 PILOTs/SILOTs around the country.

15 MR. LANGLEY: Okay. Yeah.
16 That's a good question. That's a hard
17 question. So, first of all, in terms of
18 PILOTs dedicated towards school
19 districts, our research shows that it's
20 pretty uncommon, but there are precedents
21 for that approach. I look back at our
22 survey that we did almost ten years ago
23 now, in 2012, which is still the most
24 extensive data on PILOTs, and I would say
25 there were four noteworthy examples of

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2 PILOTs going to school districts. And so
3 those are two Ivy League institutions and
4 two Pennsylvania jurisdictions. So there
5 is in Dartmouth, New Hampshire, the
6 university gave \$1.9 million to its
7 school district, and then in Ithaca, New
8 York, Ithaca College makes a contribution
9 that goes specifically to the school
10 district. And then we found data of
11 non-profits that make contributions to
12 school districts in Erie and Harrisburg.

13 So there are places that do
14 that. I don't find it a lot. In part,
15 it can be difficult to get good data on
16 PILOTs. They're not really collected in
17 any central location.

18 In my presentation, I talked
19 about how it's -- often part of the
20 argument for asking a non-profit to
21 contribute is that they should pay for
22 the cost of services that they benefit
23 from. And so those tend to be the sorts
24 of municipal services that I mentioned,
25 police and fire, street maintenance and

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2 so on. And so I guess the case for
3 public education is just made less
4 frequently, but at the same time, I also
5 mentioned the importance of earmarking,
6 and I think specifically for
7 universities, there's very strong
8 argument for earmarking the money for
9 education since that is consistent with
10 their mission.

11 And let me think. In terms of
12 participation rates is the other question
13 that you asked about. That's also hard
14 to answer. I mean, I definitely know the
15 most about Boston, which probably has --
16 not probably. Undoubtedly has kind of
17 the model approach to PILOTs around the
18 country, and their participation rates
19 off the top of my head would be something
20 like 90 percent for their hospitals,
21 70 percent for their universities, and
22 50 percent for their cultural
23 institutions. Those are very ballpark,
24 but that data is available. The city
25 makes the data available every single

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2 year to kind of just shine a light on who
3 is contributing as much as they have been
4 asked to contribute under the city's
5 program and who is not.

6 And otherwise PILOT
7 participation varies widely. One of the
8 weaknesses is that it is kind of a more
9 ad hoc approach, but with state laws the
10 way they are, that's the approach that's
11 available.

12 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: I'm sure
13 that's why you've been invited on this
14 panel in part, because there isn't a
15 central gathering point. So it's really
16 helpful to have someone like yourself
17 take the time to share that.

18 I think there are unique
19 situations around Philadelphia. We are,
20 for example, the only Commonwealth in
21 the -- we're the only school district in
22 the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania that
23 does not have an elected school board and
24 thus cannot raise its own revenues. So a
25 lot of times it's possible for a school

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2 system to raise revenues and to plot out
3 kind of its own determinative future
4 about what its expenses are.
5 Philadelphia, despite being a school
6 system that is the largest in the State
7 of Pennsylvania, serves the largest
8 percentage of black, brown, and immigrant
9 youth in the State of Pennsylvania, is
10 unable to raise its own money and thus is
11 wholly dependent upon city and state and
12 federal resources to do it external to
13 what its own needs may be. So we're in a
14 unique situation on that front.

15 But I really appreciate it, and
16 I just want to especially thank
17 Representative Krajewski and Ms. Alston
18 for your powerful testimony as well and
19 really appreciate your time here today.
20 Thank you.

21 Are there any other questions
22 for this panel from other members of the
23 Committee?

24 (No response.)

25 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Seeing none,

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2 we will move to the second panel.

3 Will the Clerk please call the
4 next panel to testify on this bill.

5 THE CLERK: Yes. We have
6 Christina Ly and Akira Drake Rodriguez.

7 MS. LY: Good afternoon,
8 everyone.

9 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Good
10 afternoon. If you could please state
11 your name for the record, and you can go
12 in the order in which your name is
13 called, and we just really appreciate
14 your voices in this hearing. Thank you.

15 MS. LY: Okay. My name is
16 Christina Ly. I go by she, her or hers.
17 I'm a youth organizer at VietLead, a
18 senior at the Academy at Palumbo High
19 School, and a prospective student at the
20 University of Pennsylvania.

21 I've decided to give my
22 testimony today because I truly have deep
23 compassion for the well-being of humans,
24 and I believe that the prioritization of
25 wealth and profits over people is

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2 absolutely disgusting and dehumanizing.

3 In regards to the lack of
4 enforcement of payment in lieu of taxes,
5 PILOTs, to multi-billion-dollar
6 institutions such as Penn, Drexel,
7 Jefferson, and many more for decades,
8 this has avalanched to a breaking point,
9 a catastrophe that overtook the ceilings
10 of my school in September of 2018.

11 Although renovators were sent to repair
12 the damage, our roof still continued to
13 leak. Water would leak into buckets and
14 hallways as they would be shuffled
15 between a Times Square of students
16 navigating to their next classes. Our
17 transition to our next class in our
18 narrow hallways and our only one
19 available stairwell had merely made
20 matters into misery.

21 When it came lunchtime, we
22 would go to our new lunchroom, also
23 called the auditorium, where the walls
24 had been contaminated with lead and
25 asbestos, where our laps turned into

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2 tables for unfresh packaged foods.

3 Because there could have been
4 an abundance of revenue collected and
5 distributed to schools through PILOTs,
6 the collapse and its aftermath wouldn't
7 have happened, but in reality, it did.
8 It did to the staff at my school. It did
9 to my peers. And it did to me.

10 So what if we were in the
11 building during the collapse? These
12 collected budgets from PILOTs would have
13 allowed us to renovate our run-down
14 building and would have ensured secure
15 conditions in the first place, but it was
16 too late, because my school ceiling was
17 left unprotected.

18 The reality, my reality, is
19 that our schools are plummeting deeper
20 into a funding crisis. Not only are we
21 missing an essential system for enforcing
22 PILOTs, but also our city has decided to
23 postpone the phased-down tax abatement.
24 So now what? What are the decisions that
25 the City Council Committee of Children

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2 and, most importantly, these
3 PILOTs-refusing-non-profit institutions
4 will make? There is only one right, one
5 humane, life-changing decision.
6 Remember, children are the leaders of the
7 future, and you must think about how an
8 effective solution can shape a quality
9 education experience for children to
10 learn and flourish. This is not a
11 luxurious ask. Simply this is based on
12 urgency and necessity.

13 Thank you.

14 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you.

15 Akira?

16 PROFESSOR RODRIGUEZ: Hi.

17 Thank you, Councilmember Brooks,
18 Gauthier, Gym, Johnson, Bass, Squilla,
19 Green, and Thomas for introducing and
20 sponsoring this resolution and holding a
21 hearing regarding the relationship
22 between property tax-exempt status of
23 large non-profit institutions, the state
24 of Philadelphia's school facilities, and
25 the growing urgency to address the

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2 connections between health outcomes and
3 the built environment. My name is Akira
4 Drake Rodriguez and I am here as an
5 Assistant Professor of City and Regional
6 Planning at the University of
7 Pennsylvania, as a researcher who studies
8 the distribution of public goods and
9 services in high-need areas, and as a
10 member of the Penn for PILOTs working
11 group.

12 In this testimony, I would like
13 to briefly outline the goals of Penn for
14 PILOTs based on extensive research by
15 faculty, staff, and students; review some
16 of the critical needs for PILOTs and
17 other school revenue streams based on my
18 own research with residents and educators
19 around district policies; and, finally,
20 tie these issues to the broader needs
21 around School District facilities,
22 reopenings, and public health.

23 Penn for PILOTs began out of a
24 student movement that built on a decade
25 of student, community, and staff

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2 organizing. More than a thousand faculty
3 and staff have signed our petition for
4 the University of Pennsylvania to commit
5 to making payments in lieu of taxes to
6 help ensure adequate funding for the
7 Philadelphia public schools.

8 Penn is the largest property
9 owner in the City of Philadelphia, but as
10 a non-profit institution, it pays no
11 property taxes on its non-commercial
12 properties. In other words, it
13 contributes nothing to the tax base that
14 funds Philadelphia's public school
15 system, this in a city whose schools are
16 underfunded and facing deep budget cuts,
17 as articulated by the other testifiers,
18 amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

19 Penn did pay PILOTs in the mid
20 1990s when then Mayor Ed Rendell issued
21 an executive order that suggested the
22 City review the non-profit tax-exempt
23 status of its largest institutions. To
24 assist the City in its near bankruptcy
25 budget crisis, Penn and other large

1 3/3/21 - CHILDREN AND YOUTH - RES. 210034
2 tax-exempt institutions began paying
3 PILOTs through the end of the decade.

4 Today, with Penn having become
5 the seventh richest university in the
6 country, the conditions in public schools
7 in Philadelphia, the largest poorest city
8 in the country, require that we make that
9 commitment again.

10 Together with Jobs for Justice
11 and other community groups, Penn for
12 PILOTs is asking that Penn and other
13 similar large non-profit institutions pay
14 40 percent of what its property taxes
15 would be if it were not a tax-exempt
16 institution to support the City's
17 schools.

18 Based on Penn's 2016-2017
19 annual budget, we estimate that Penn's
20 PILOT payment today would be roughly
21 \$40 million. To put that figure in
22 perspective, 40 million is just over
23 one-third of one percent, 0.35 percent,
24 of Penn's unrestricted annual revenues
25 for Fiscal Year 2020. It is just over a

1 3/3/21 - CHILDREN AND YOUTH - RES. 210034
2 quarter of one percent, 0.26 percent, of
3 the value of Penn's endowment. Penn and
4 the City's other wealthy non-profits can
5 definitely afford to meet the basic
6 responsibility met by all of the City's
7 homeowners and businesses of contributing
8 to our children's education.

9 Based on my own research, I
10 also want to stress, however, that while
11 the City's wealthy non-profits paying
12 PILOTs would be an important step towards
13 addressing the inequalities that plague
14 the School District and the broader City
15 of Philadelphia and its surrounding
16 region, it would only be one step towards
17 addressing the needs of the School
18 District. Many of us are now focusing on
19 the conditions of the School District's
20 facilities, but we also need to pay close
21 attention to staffing, supplies, and
22 overall operations.

23 Philadelphia's schools have
24 suffered from a disinvestment in school
25 counselors, nurses, paraprofessionals,

1 3/3/21 - CHILDREN AND YOUTH - RES. 210034
2 educators, therapists, librarians, art,
3 and recreation teachers for decades.
4 There are issues around governance,
5 procurement, and safety that will make it
6 difficult to reopen schools safely even
7 if the School District could immediately
8 replace every HVAC system, water fountain
9 and sink faucet, and remediate all the
10 asbestos.

11 Strikingly, the greatest issue
12 I find in my research is that the trust
13 that is needed to cooperatively make
14 decisions that address the multiple needs
15 and interests of children, caregivers,
16 and school staff has been severely eroded
17 in the last decade. Although the School
18 District's governing body, the Board, has
19 reverted to local control in the last
20 five years, public comments have
21 increasingly raised issues around
22 transparency and accountability in
23 recent. The August 2020 Inspector
24 General report on the remediation of the
25 Benjamin Franklin/SLA asbestos project

1 3/3/21 - CHILDREN AND YOUTH - RES. 210034
2 was a damning account of the multiple
3 failures of the School District to
4 address the safety of the building
5 occupants, including workers, students,
6 and caregivers, the communications skills
7 of a public entity, and the
8 accountability of public servants.

9 In this year of COVID-19 and
10 increasing attention to issues of racial
11 and economic injustice throughout our
12 city, it is clear that all of our major
13 public and private institutions have been
14 failing the children of Philadelphia.

15 At this time of reckoning, I
16 would, therefore, like to end on a note
17 of linking health, building conditions,
18 and public trust and accountability. I
19 want to urge City Council to work with
20 the Mayor, the School District, and the
21 City's caregivers, educators, staff, and
22 students not only to press for a
23 critically needed source of funding from
24 the City's major tax-exempt institutions,
25 but also to address the decades of

1 3/3/21 - CHILDREN AND YOUTH - RES. 210034
2 mistrust, inequity, and under-performance
3 in our public schools.

4 We need a democratically
5 elected board to allocate and spend new
6 sources of revenue on school facilities
7 and resources. We need greater citizen
8 and community engagement to determine how
9 the school budgets are spent in the
10 District. A plan to engage all of the
11 City's major non-profits in paying PILOTs
12 as well as Penn's major current gift in
13 the School District provides an
14 opportunity to do so.

15 Thank you.

16 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
17 very much, Professor Rodriguez, and thank
18 you very much to Christina for your and
19 VietLead's powerful work on supporting
20 safe and healthy school facilities. We
21 know what a difficult time it was for
22 you, especially for Christina for your
23 school, and how painful it was to have
24 gone through what you did, and we know
25 that there are school communities all

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2 across the City of Philadelphia, many of
3 them black, brown, and immigrant, who
4 have also seen their school year
5 curtailed, shortened, upended by
6 traumatic building conditions. So we
7 appreciate your taking the time for this.

8 I had a quick question for
9 Professor Rodriguez. You heard a little
10 bit from Mr. Langley about large
11 non-profits needing to have a
12 collaborative conversation, recognizing
13 that we're in a different space than we
14 were 20 years ago when there was a
15 loophole -- not a loophole, but there was
16 an opening within the state law that
17 could have proceeded around this. So I
18 know you've been working more directly
19 with your university, and being
20 respectful of your ability to have
21 confidential conversations, but what,
22 from your experience, have been sort of
23 the balking points as to why a university
24 that is deeply invested in neighborhoods
25 that has put efforts towards education

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2 might be resistant around the idea of --
3 I know there can be semantics around
4 PILOTs, whatever it is, but I think
5 that -- I've never felt that your
6 organization or anything has been less
7 than clear that whatever we want to call
8 it exactly, the investment is what you're
9 interested in.

10 Do you have -- I mean, do you
11 feel comfortable sharing a little bit
12 about how you would say some of the areas
13 where we need to really kind of focus on
14 in terms of what's been resistant for
15 your university or in other conversations
16 that you've had with some of the larger
17 non-profits?

18 PROFESSOR RODRIGUEZ: Sure. I
19 can't say that I've had any conversations
20 with any of these people, so I will just
21 say that I've not been -- the gift that
22 was allocated from Penn to the City with
23 regards to the School District, Penn for
24 PILOTs is not involved in those
25 negotiations. I can say that. And when

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2 our attempts to meet with the Board and
3 with leadership, I will say that we did
4 not get response, and response to the
5 media in general was that Penn provides
6 this economic impact, right? They
7 provide through other forms and other
8 services and other goods to this issue of
9 public schools. And I think that surely
10 that is a good response, but like you
11 said, things have changed. Not only has
12 the City's needs changed and the School
13 District's needs changed, but Penn's
14 position has also changed within the
15 region, within the City, and even within
16 kind of universities.

17 Penn is expanding in multiple
18 ways and in that expansion is taking on
19 many more services, and I do think that
20 this also opens up a conversation around
21 privatization of those services. And,
22 yes, the City provides a lot of services
23 to the University, but it also provides
24 services and the transparency around
25 those services.

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2 And so when thinking about
3 PILOTs and thinking about how we frame
4 these conversations, we want to also
5 think about what the universities'
6 responses could be or what the sort of
7 large institutions' responses could be,
8 which is an increasing privatization,
9 which could also be more damaging.

10 And so just being aware of
11 those sort of trade-offs and dynamics I
12 think is really important. But I can say
13 for Penn for PILOTs, we've not been in
14 conversation with the administrators to
15 sort of talk about that, their own
16 perspectives.

17 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
18 very much, and thank you very much for
19 your work, Professor Rodriguez.

20 PROFESSOR RODRIGUEZ: Thank
21 you.

22 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Are there
23 any members of the Committee who would
24 like to ask this panel any questions?

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Yes,

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2 Madam Chair. I have questions for both
3 panelists.

4 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Great. The
5 Chair recognizes Councilmember Brooks.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Thank you
7 so much.

8 My first question is for Ms.
9 Ly. I want to thank you for your strong
10 background in organizing to change your
11 school and our city. We really
12 appreciate that. But I want you to tell
13 me based on your own experience what
14 would you like to see leaders do to make
15 sure more peers that you had in high
16 school are equipped with the tools and
17 skills to join you next year at the
18 university level?

19 MS. LY: I believe that
20 definitely a lot of base building and a
21 lot of bringing awareness to this issue,
22 because it definitely has impacted my
23 peers, but I feel like a lot of them
24 don't really recognize what's going on in
25 the City. So definitely bringing

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2 awareness, bringing more education to my
3 peers so that hopefully they can join in
4 to this very important issue of
5 definitely making changes in our City of
6 enforcing PILOTs, right, and also
7 encouraging the abolishment of the tax
8 abatement, the phased-down one even, yes.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Thank you
10 so much for that, and I really do
11 appreciate the work that you do and your
12 organization.

13 MS. LY: Thank you.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: My next
15 question is for Dr. Drake Rodriguez. You
16 have done a great deal of research to
17 understand the needs of public school
18 parents and their children. Do you think
19 that the current targeted intervention
20 from non-profits, such as tutoring
21 programs, meet those needs?

22 PROFESSOR RODRIGUEZ: Yes and
23 no. The needs are so expansive in that
24 they are not just needs of students but
25 needs of households and communities, and

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2 the scale at which we attempt to address
3 these problems I think are well situated
4 coming from schools but require a lot
5 more resources than school districts are
6 able to provide and even non-profits.

7 This is definitely a time for
8 the City and the state as well as the
9 federal government to get more heavily
10 involved in using schools as the
11 community infrastructure that they can
12 be. And so certainly I think schools are
13 an ideal place to distribute services, an
14 ideal place to make connections, an ideal
15 place to mobilize, but only when they're
16 fully funded and equitably resourced.

17 And so we can't just have certain
18 community schools who do a wonderful,
19 wonderful service to our communities in
20 five or six areas in the City. We need
21 them to be part of the school model as we
22 go forward.

23 And so I definitely appreciate
24 everything that non-profits do inside and
25 outside of school facilities, but we

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2 definitely need more resources going into
3 these places, because this is where most
4 of our communities are, and if we invest
5 in these schools as public goods the way
6 that they should be, they will become
7 public goods that people want to save and
8 preserve and invest in.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Thank
10 you. You answered my follow-up question
11 as well.

12 PROFESSOR RODRIGUEZ: Yes.
13 Thank you.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Thank you
15 for your time and your research and for
16 you to continue to stay vigilant on
17 pushing this conversation, because I
18 agree that the investments that we put in
19 our young people today will affect the
20 tomorrow that we will have to live in as
21 seniors, which is a scary word to say,
22 but...

23 PROFESSOR RODRIGUEZ: I agree,
24 and I think it's parents too. It's not
25 just young people when we invest in

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2 schools. We're investing in staff and
3 educators and parents and communities.
4 And so if we really think about it in
5 that way, I hope that people want to
6 invest in themselves.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Thank you
8 so much for your time.

9 Madam Chair, that concludes my
10 questioning for this panel.

11 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
12 very much, Councilmember Brooks.

13 Are there any other questions
14 for this panel from other members of the
15 Committee?

16 (No response.)

17 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Wonderful.
18 Thank you very much to this panel for
19 your time and your expertise today. We
20 really appreciate it. Thank you.

21 So this concludes the panel
22 testimony for this resolution and we will
23 now begin hearing from individuals who
24 have registered to provide public
25 comment. We have about three dozen

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2 members of the public who have signed up
3 to speak on this issue. We ask that you
4 keep your testimony to three minutes, and
5 we look forward to making sure that we
6 hear from everybody.

7 So will the Clerk please read
8 the name of the first person registered
9 for public comment.

10 THE CLERK: Yes, Chair. First
11 we have Andi Johnson, who I believe needs
12 to be connected in by phone.

13 MS. JOHNSON: Hello.

14 THE CLERK: Ms. Johnson, please
15 state your name and proceed with your
16 testimony.

17 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Good
18 afternoon.

19 MS. JOHNSON: Good afternoon.
20 Thank you, Councilmember Brooks and Gym,
21 Thomas, Gauthier, the Committee on
22 Children and Youth, and the rest of City
23 Council. My name is Andi Johnson and my
24 testimony consists of reading a letter
25 signed by parents and caregivers,

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2 affiliate Philadelphia students from
3 across the City. I believe you also have
4 a copy of the letter.

5 Dear City Council Committee on
6 Children and Youth and other
7 Councilmembers, we are grateful to have
8 this opportunity to submit this written
9 testimony to you in relationship to your
10 March 3rd, 2021 hearing examining what
11 happens to our public schools when
12 wealthy non-profits refuse to pay their
13 fair share to our city and our education
14 system.

15 As parents and caregivers of
16 students in the Philadelphia school
17 system, we've seen what starving our
18 schools of resources has done to hundreds
19 of thousands of students, their
20 educators, and their families.

21 Buildings facing poor
22 circulation in classrooms in the face of
23 COVID-era reopenings were crumbling for
24 decades, riddled with mold, asbestos, and
25 lead. Educators attempting to serve

1 3/3/21 - CHILDREN AND YOUTH - RES. 210034
2 children with hugely disparate needs,
3 passions, and strengths have overcrowded
4 classrooms and months lost to
5 standardized testing.

6 The Philadelphia City budget is
7 anticipated to have at least \$450 million
8 in deficits for 2022 and a looming budget
9 deficit in coming years as well.

10 At a time when we face funding
11 deadlock in our state capitol and no
12 promise of more federal stimulus after
13 this year, we come together to demand
14 that the mega non-profits of
15 Philadelphia, including all major health
16 systems and universities, contribute
17 payments in lieu of taxes, or PILOTs, to
18 our School District, on top of any other
19 contributions they make to Philadelphia's
20 school and city programs, this year and
21 every year until we have well-funded
22 public education for every family that
23 wants it in the City of Philadelphia.

24 We support the push that any
25 PILOTs that our major health systems and

1 3/3/21 - CHILDREN AND YOUTH - RES. 210034
2 universities provide be held in an
3 educational equity fund made available
4 for public school needs.

5 We look forward to the
6 leadership of City Council in helping to
7 hold the non-profit health systems and
8 universities in Philadelphia,
9 institutions that benefit from public
10 infrastructure funded by taxpayers,
11 accountable to the education and thriving
12 of the next generation of Philadelphians.

13 Sincerely, and again this
14 letter is signed in just the past five
15 days by 324 parents and caregivers of
16 students who attend over 60 different
17 elementary, middle, and high schools in
18 Philly.

19 Thank you.

20 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you so
21 much. And all of the members of the
22 Committee do have your letter, and we
23 appreciate your testimony. Thank you.

24 THE CLERK: Next we have
25 Jessica Way. Please state your name and

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2 proceed with your testimony.

3 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Good
4 afternoon.

5 MS. WAY: Hello. My name is
6 Jessica Way. I'm a teacher at the
7 Franklin Learning Center and a Penn
8 alumnus, and this will be my twelfth year
9 teaching in the School District of
10 Philadelphia. I'm a registered nurse,
11 but I teach students in one of only three
12 medical assisting programs in the State
13 of Pennsylvania.

14 When I first started at my
15 school in 2007, we had one principal, two
16 assistant principals, three deans, four
17 counselors, four secretaries, a full-time
18 nurse, a librarian, and a lab assistant
19 who assisted with setting up and breaking
20 down lab experiments. We underwent
21 facilities improvements and I was able to
22 sit down with architects and completely
23 rehabilitate my classroom space because
24 we were able to convert three classrooms
25 into one large classroom clinical lab

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2 area that is really gorgeous.

3 Within just four years, though,
4 I watched as the education cuts to Philly
5 public schools stripped and stripped and
6 stripped desperately needed resources
7 from the building. We lost a second AP,
8 two of our three deans. We lost three
9 counselors. We lost three secretaries.
10 We lost the librarian. We lost a
11 full-time nurse. We lost the lab
12 assistant. The classroom sizes started
13 to balloon. Teachers started wandering
14 the halls with carts because we didn't
15 have enough classroom space for every
16 teacher. See, student numbers are
17 everything in an environment of scarcity,
18 and if you're not packed to the gills
19 with kids, you lose the most precious
20 resource that we have for our students,
21 our staff.

22 The ceilings and walls started
23 to flake paint all over the floor due to
24 water damage. I have stood in classrooms
25 where old light bulbs have gone up in

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2 flames in the middle of class.

3 The money that was taken from
4 us never really came back. Even when the
5 stock market was bumping, even when
6 Philly was touting a great financial
7 comeback, the District was always, always
8 operating at a deficit. We recouped one
9 full-time nurse and one counselor and
10 that's it. In eight years we haven't
11 even halved our losses. We were
12 stretched thin with too few people doing
13 too many jobs before COVID-19, before a
14 year of social isolation and epic levels
15 of gun violence. In just the past four
16 months, I have had multiple seniors in my
17 class held up at gunpoint.

18 My students are working more
19 hours than ever, as they have become
20 responsible for paying a larger share of
21 their family's household bills. They are
22 under an incredible amount of stress, and
23 even if conditions improve post-pandemic,
24 we will be returning to school in the
25 fall to students who have experienced the

1 3/3/21 - CHILDREN AND YOUTH - RES. 210034
2 most epic levels of trauma. We will need
3 way more precious staff members, not
4 less. We will need trained and licensed
5 professionals to help our students.
6 \$40 million from UPenn is enough to put
7 two more counselors, a librarian, and a
8 school psychologist in every school in
9 the District.

10 Speaking as a teacher in the
11 School District, I want to be clear. Our
12 relationship with academic institutions
13 in Philadelphia is a two-way street. I
14 have personally mentored multiple Penn
15 students from the nursing school in my
16 classroom, and I have watched my
17 co-workers mentor dozens of Penn students
18 in our classrooms, who require our school
19 to meet their graduation requirements.
20 We have hosted dozens of Drexel medical
21 students and CCP nursing students in our
22 classrooms, and this required our
23 uncompensated time in order to meet their
24 graduation requirements. As a Penn
25 nursing student, I completed all of my

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2 community health clinical time with the
3 school nurse from the former Pepper
4 Middle School.

5 It's not so simple to portray
6 our schools as charity cases, requiring
7 attention from wealthy benefactors.

8 We're giving to them as well, and they
9 have a stake in us staying open and
10 thriving, and that is why they need to
11 pay PILOTS.

12 Thank you.

13 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
14 very much.

15 THE CLERK: Thank you.

16 Next we have Anea Moore.
17 Please state your name and proceed with
18 your testimony.

19 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Good
20 afternoon, Anea.

21 MS. MOORE: Hi. Good
22 afternoon, Committee on Children and
23 Youth. My name is Anea Moore. I'm a
24 proud Southwest Philadelphian and Philly
25 public school alum. I'm also an alum of

1 3/3/21 - CHILDREN AND YOUTH - RES. 210034
2 the University of Pennsylvania.

3 I'm here today to talk about
4 Penn's relationship with Philly public
5 schools in particular and to stress the
6 importance of conducting a full
7 investigation on Penn and other wealthy
8 non-profits' impact on public schools in
9 the City.

10 During my time at Penn, I spent
11 two years as the Chair of the Student
12 Advisory Board of the Netter Center,
13 Penn's hub of university-school
14 partnerships. The Netter Center runs
15 over 40 programs for thousands of
16 students in many Philadelphia public
17 schools. Typically when questioned why
18 the University does not pay PILOTs, Penn
19 will cite these programs as an excuse for
20 why they do not.

21 I worked at the Lea School
22 through Penn for four years and during my
23 time there conducted and authored two
24 studies on Penn's impact on the school
25 through these partnership programs. Do

1 3/3/21 - CHILDREN AND YOUTH - RES. 210034
2 the partnership programs have some
3 benefit? Yes, of course, but my research
4 also found that the programs were
5 paternalistic, often unorganized, and
6 disruptive to the school's ecosystem.
7 There was certainly not enough to excuse
8 permanent direct payments to the
9 District.

10 During my first year working at
11 Lea, I met a student by the name of
12 Muhammad, who had learned how to play the
13 cello from the music program that I
14 helped to lead. I didn't know him well,
15 but I have a fond memory of sitting with
16 Muhammad and my mentor eating burritos in
17 the Qdoba on 40th and Locust.

18 During his life, Muhammad
19 encountered hundreds of Penn students,
20 including myself and his late mentor
21 Alex, and went through many of the
22 University's partnership programs. But
23 that was still not enough to elongate his
24 life. Last May I received a phone call
25 early in the morning and it was my mentor

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2 crying, telling me that Muhammad had been
3 shot and killed earlier that week in West
4 Philly. Over tears, we thought about the
5 last few months of Muhammad's life, how
6 he had become disengaged in school and
7 started skipping, how he had grown
8 distant. We wondered if we had done
9 enough, what could we have done better.

10 Me coming here before you today
11 is doing that better for him. Perhaps
12 Muhammad would be here if the school
13 building was a proper learning
14 environment. Perhaps he would be here
15 today if he had access to schools and to
16 counselors and social workers in his
17 school. Perhaps he would be here today
18 if everyone across the City, including
19 the mega wealthy non-profits, did their
20 part in ensuring a better life for him.

21 The Council must authorize an
22 investigation on Penn's and other mega
23 wealthy non-profits' impact on
24 Philadelphia public schools. The
25 children we have already lost and the

1 3/3/21 - CHILDREN AND YOUTH - RES. 210034
2 children who are still here with us,
3 still living and breathing right before
4 our very eyes, deserve that at the very
5 least.

6 Thank you.

7 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you so
8 much for your powerful testimony, Anea.
9 It's wonderful to see you. Thank you.

10 MS. MOORE: Good to see you
11 too. Thank you so much.

12 THE CLERK: Next we have Jamie
13 Song. Please state your name and proceed
14 with your testimony.

15 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Good
16 afternoon.

17 MR. SONG: Good afternoon.
18 Thank you for granting this time to talk
19 about one of the most concerning and
20 urgent issues facing our city's youth and
21 the people who nurture them. I'm honored
22 to be speaking in solidarity with
23 directly impacted community members,
24 including the amazing educators who will
25 be speaking right after me.

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2 My name is Jamie Song and I am
3 a Master of Public Health student at
4 Penn. I grew up in the neighborhood of
5 Penn Wynne, right across the City line
6 from Overbrook, and I was lucky enough to
7 attend Lower Merion's public schools.
8 Although my family didn't have much in my
9 childhood, my parents at least had faith
10 that I would have a reasonably safe and
11 physically healthy environment in which
12 to grow and learn.

13 In contrast, less than a mile
14 away, students and staff had to suffer
15 under toxic environmental conditions on a
16 daily basis in their schools.

17 At Penn, I sat in some of the
18 most beautiful, spacious, and
19 well-maintained classrooms in the City.
20 Meanwhile, public school students and
21 teachers have had no choice but to drink
22 toxic water contaminated by lead and
23 breathe air contaminated with asbestos
24 and mold and watch as the resources
25 dedicated to their schools dwindle and

1 3/3/21 - CHILDREN AND YOUTH - RES. 210034
2 disappear.

3 While my classmates and
4 professors never have to worry about
5 whether their educational settings are
6 safe, students and staff in Philly public
7 schools face significantly heightened
8 risks of cognitive impairment,
9 developmental problems, lung disease, and
10 deadly cancer.

11 Penn is investing millions of
12 dollars into shiny new dorms for
13 underclassmen and an ultra-modern guest
14 house for the President. Yet, Philly
15 public schools continue to deteriorate
16 and fall apart from insufficient
17 infrastructure funding. We can't deny
18 that these disparities enact a form of
19 violence and even dehumanization on
20 Philly's public school students and
21 staff. It speaks volumes, telling them
22 that they don't even deserve basic human
23 rights.

24 When a school building cannot
25 provide the conditions for human rights,

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2 including clean air and water, we are
3 called to action as a city and community
4 to remedy that basic need. To that end,
5 I join the students and staff to ask the
6 City to demand payments in lieu of taxes
7 from wealthy non-profits like Penn,
8 Drexel, and Jefferson to finance the
9 basic needs of our public schools. These
10 payments in lieu of taxes, or PILOTs,
11 would cover the foregone income they
12 would have paid to the City if their
13 massive and profitable private land
14 ownership were properly taxed in ways
15 that services in lieu of taxes could
16 never accomplish. The contribution of
17 PILOTs to our public schools would help
18 remediate the extremely hazardous
19 conditions that our children and school
20 workers must face.

21 It's been evident for years
22 that environmental remediation is
23 urgently needed, and it will only become
24 more urgent as the City loses money to
25 COVID-19 and maintenance falls even

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2 further behind. PILOTs would also
3 strengthen the relationship between our
4 city and our non-profit institutions and
5 make that relationship more sustainable
6 and equitable. I would love to see that
7 come to fruition, particularly a
8 commitment by these wealthy non-profits
9 to contribute 40 percent of the foregone
10 property taxes, but this can't happen
11 without buy-in from both City Council and
12 the Mayor's Office and direct demands to
13 those wealthy non-profits to transition
14 from superficial charity to genuine
15 solidarity.

16 I hope you will seriously
17 consider my proposal to move forward and
18 give our public school students and staff
19 a real chance to succeed.

20 Thank you for your time and
21 attention.

22 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you so
23 much, Mr. Song, and we appreciate your
24 testimony. One of the things that we
25 were glad to be able to do, though, was

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2 to bring a clean water campaign to every
3 Philadelphia public school. So
4 addressing that issue of water and
5 drinking water safety was really critical
6 for us.

7 And so we have more work to do,
8 but we're glad that every public school
9 does have filtered water stations that
10 remove those dangerous -- and we mandate
11 lead testing. So we will continue to be
12 vigilant. Thank you very much.

13 THE CLERK: Next we have Angela
14 Chan.

15 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Good
16 afternoon.

17 MS. CHAN: Good afternoon, City
18 Councilmembers. Thank you so much for
19 the opportunity to speak today. My name
20 is Angela Chan. I teach grade three at
21 Jackson Elementary School and have been
22 with the School District for 18 years. I
23 am here to ask our city to call on
24 wealthy non-profits such as Penn, Drexel,
25 and Jefferson to begin to make PILOTs in

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2 the amount of 40 percent of what they
3 would owe in annual property taxes in
4 order to help fund our public schools.

5 In underfunded schools, we ask
6 our students to put up with conditions
7 that threaten their health and safety.
8 In my own classroom, plaster falls from
9 the ceiling every couple of months when
10 it rains hard. My students joke that
11 it's raining white powder. But why do we
12 allow our kids to get used to these
13 conditions?

14 There is flaking paint in the
15 school building even after our lead
16 stabilization project. Our awesome
17 custodial and maintenance staff do their
18 very best, but they are short-staffed,
19 and work orders put in for upkeeping
20 don't get fulfilled in a timely manner.
21 I will never know if my own asthma
22 diagnosis at the midpoint of my teaching
23 career was due to building conditions,
24 but during this past year of remote
25 learning, my asthma has not been

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2 triggered at all.

3 We sacrifice our personal
4 health to come to work every day, and we
5 worry that the medical consequences will
6 manifest in students later on in their
7 lives.

8 My colleagues and I are
9 straining to make up for the inequities
10 in the system. Teachers spend hundreds
11 of our personal dollars and fundraise
12 thousands more to provide our students
13 with a rich and well-rounded education.

14 There are not enough counselors
15 and social workers, and teachers wear a
16 million hats not only to support our
17 students academically but also
18 emotionally and nutritionally. Every day
19 we are stretched so thin. Meanwhile,
20 School District officials are struggling
21 to reopen schools safely. And, by the
22 way, the broken relationship of trust
23 between the District and the community is
24 also a casualty of chronic underfunding,
25 and this distrust leads to a

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2 demoralization on all fronts that
3 trickles down to the work we do in the
4 classroom.

5 Funding our schools to help us
6 build back trust is so critical.

7 Penn has already generously
8 committed to a donation of \$100 million
9 over ten years to the District, and we
10 are grateful. However, this isn't the
11 same as confronting, let alone
12 dismantling, the systemic inequities that
13 they helped to perpetuate.

14 A system that exempts wealthy
15 non-profits from paying property taxes
16 exacerbates the starving of our public
17 schools by withholding money that should
18 be going to fund our students' education.
19 Making a long-term commitment in the form
20 of PILOTs will signify their genuine
21 solidarity with communities, leaving the
22 essence of their contribution from
23 charity towards justice.

24 The rewards and joys of
25 teaching are abundant beyond description

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2 because of the children we serve. Our
3 students are brilliant, talented,
4 creative, and compassionate, and we need
5 to create the conditions that will allow
6 them to thrive in all the ways that they
7 are meant to do. The City must demand
8 that wealthy non-profits pay their fair
9 share of contributing PILOTs to fund safe
10 and healthy schools.

11 Thank you so much for your time
12 today.

13 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you so
14 much, Angela.

15 THE CLERK: Next we have Rachel
16 Levin joining us by phone.

17 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Good
18 afternoon.

19 (No response.)

20 THE CLERK: It's a little
21 difficult to hear you, Ms. Levin. Can
22 you try speaking up.

23 (No response.)

24 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: While we're
25 waiting for Ms. Levin to connect, why

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2 don't we go to the next testifier and
3 work to connect Ms. Levin.

4 MS. LEVIN: Hello. I'm sorry.
5 I muted myself.

6 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: That's okay.
7 Good afternoon.

8 MS. LEVIN: Good afternoon.
9 Rachel Levin for the record. I'm
10 speaking at this hearing today as a
11 former teacher in the School District.

12 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Ms. Levin,
13 it's helpful if you turn off whatever you
14 may be listening to on the TV because --

15 MS. LEVIN: I don't have
16 anything on. Can you hear me now?

17 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Yes, we can
18 hear you.

19 MS. LEVIN: I think I just put
20 my speaker phone on.

21 (Pause.)

22 THE CLERK: I think we've lost
23 Ms. Levin. So in the meantime, let's
24 move forward to the next testifier until
25 we can get her reconnected.

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2 James Lindberg, please state
3 your name and proceed with your
4 testimony.

5 MR. LINDBERG: Hello. Hi. My
6 name is James.

7 THE CLERK: Hi, James. We can
8 hear you. Please go ahead.

9 MR. LINDBERG: Great. Hi. My
10 name is James or my students call me
11 Mr. L. This is my fifth year working
12 within the schools in Philadelphia as
13 both a student teacher and full-time
14 classroom teacher.

15 I grew up in a suburb of
16 Philadelphia and New Jersey, attended a
17 private high school in that area, and
18 then attended the University of
19 Pennsylvania. The severity of
20 differences between the buildings and
21 resources is wrong.

22 Students at my school here in
23 Philadelphia have had to switch to
24 learning in the hallways because lead
25 paint needed to be covered during the

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2 school year. They have had to deal with
3 the stairwell and art rooms being closed
4 for almost a month during the school year
5 because there was exposed asbestos, which
6 we were then told was fixed and then
7 later found out it was not, so it had to
8 be closed off again.

9 We've had to cancel an
10 after-school event with parents and
11 guardians due to flooding in the combined
12 basement gym/auditorium/cafeteria. My
13 students and I have had to watch
14 kindergarten students sit on the floor of
15 the hallway to learn because their
16 classroom floor had to be ripped up and
17 replaced due to mold, and then having it
18 done again because it was not corrected
19 the first time.

20 We have had to tell students to
21 not go into certain areas of the
22 classroom because there was often
23 unidentifiable materials falling from the
24 ceilings or avoiding the constant leaking
25 of liquids. At times we've had to close

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2 down school and learning because it's too
3 hot and students are dripping sweat.

4 I watched my eighth grade
5 English language learning students have
6 to try and test out of the program by
7 taking access testing in closets and
8 watched the library be shared by three
9 classes at once, where special education
10 students are supposed to have a chance to
11 work on their skills and focus, and so
12 many other building issues that's just
13 the norm and they forget about and make
14 excuses for it, like our hard-working
15 cleaning staff not being given enough
16 trash bags so that they have to reuse
17 ones that are covered in food and milk
18 products.

19 For me, a smaller but important
20 detail is the faded, blotched windows
21 that you cannot see out of. I was
22 working at a school that had to replace a
23 window, and the new window was clear. I
24 thought that maybe they were blurry on
25 purpose. Almost every single window at

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2 my school is so opaque that the beautiful
3 Philadelphia skylines in South Philly is
4 invisible, and it can be such a positive,
5 helpful teaching tool, while students and
6 my own mental health suffer from the lack
7 of light that can make it through those
8 windows.

9 The public K-8 school in the
10 suburbs I attended do not have these
11 issues. There were two gymnasiums and a
12 separate cafeteria. There was all one
13 floor, so a student who may need a
14 wheelchair could actually attend the
15 school.

16 The University of Pennsylvania
17 continues to add newer or fancier
18 buildings by the day. I don't even
19 recognize parts of the campus where I was
20 a student less than six years ago.

21 City Council needs to urge mega
22 non-profits to pay PILOTs so that our
23 city's schools can have the capital and
24 building repairs that they desperately
25 need. This is a great opportunity for

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2 mega non-profits to strengthen their
3 connection and relationships with the
4 community and city.

5 I will not continue to work in
6 Philadelphia public schools because I do
7 not want to get sick or die from cancer.
8 I know too many longtime teachers,
9 educators, and custodial staff members
10 that have spent years in School District
11 buildings and who now have chronic
12 illnesses or cancer.

13 I love teaching and I love the
14 City of Philadelphia, but no one should
15 have to choose between their own safety
16 and working in School District buildings.

17 Thank you.

18 THE CLERK: Thank you.

19 We have Rachel Levin back on
20 the line. Please state your name and
21 proceed with your testimony.

22 MS. LEVIN: Hi. Thank you.

23 Can you hear me now?

24 THE CLERK: Yes.

25 MS. LEVIN: Okay. Thank you.

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2 Rachel Levin. I'm speaking today and
3 appearing as a former teacher in
4 Philadelphia schools, a University of
5 Pennsylvania GSE alum, and as a concerned
6 community member that continues to serve
7 Philadelphia schools as a literacy coach.

8 I'm here to call on wealthy
9 non-profits such as Penn, Drexel, and
10 Jefferson to begin to make PILOTs in the
11 amount of 40 percent of what they would
12 owe in annual property taxes in order to
13 help fund our public schools.

14 In my eight years working in
15 School District buildings, I have seen
16 and experienced unhealthy and unsafe
17 learning conditions that are a direct
18 impact of chronic school underfunding.
19 As I began to reflect, I actually had
20 trouble recalling them all at first,
21 because there were so many instances and
22 so many stories I've experienced myself
23 or heard from trusted colleagues that
24 they've become normalized.

25 The idea that because we work

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2 or learn in buildings run by the School
3 District means that we have to accept
4 these conditions for ourselves, our
5 students, and our community is not only
6 sad but also offensive and demoralizing,
7 especially when there's a source of
8 funding available that is not being
9 utilized.

10 I worked in two different
11 buildings that did not have air
12 conditioning in every classroom. I saw
13 kindergartners pass out, asthma
14 flare-ups, and energy drained due to the
15 unbearable heat.

16 Along with inconsistent
17 building temperatures, students and
18 teachers also have to deal with cases of
19 asbestos and mold that are discovered
20 throughout the year, which not only
21 exposes them to possible harmful lifelong
22 health consequences but also disrupts
23 their learning as they are forced to move
24 their classrooms and their learning to
25 multi-purpose rooms at a moment's notice.

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2 Windows that don't open, metal
3 bars over windows, and doors that don't
4 lock properly or even get stuck shut with
5 students inside are just everyday facts
6 of life for the members of our school
7 communities. Through all of these
8 conditions, teachers and students persist
9 in making the experience as positive and
10 productive as possible.

11 Everyone on the ground, from
12 principals to teachers, building
13 engineers and families, does everything
14 within their sphere of influence to
15 mitigate these conditions and provide
16 children with safe learning conditions.
17 However, it's not enough. It wasn't
18 enough before the pandemic, and now we
19 are all feeling the effects of this
20 chronic underfunding even more as we
21 struggle preparing buildings for safe
22 reopening amidst a long history of
23 distrust and a lack of accountability.

24 I've come here today to say
25 that teachers and students should not be

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2 subjected to these conditions, especially
3 when we have institutions that pride
4 themselves on their partnerships and
5 commitment to the City and to the
6 education of all our children.

7 We urge you to play a part in
8 getting non-profits to begin paying
9 40 percent of foregone property taxes in
10 PILOTs to the School District so all of
11 our students can go to school in safe and
12 healthy conditions.

13 Thank you for your time today.

14 THE CLERK: Thank you.

15 Next we have Isabel Yannatos.
16 Please state your name and proceed with
17 your testimony.

18 MS. YANNATOS: Hi. My name is
19 Isabel Yannatos. I am currently a
20 graduate student at the University of
21 Pennsylvania.

22 The University of Pennsylvania
23 is a non-profit in name only. In
24 reality, Penn acts like a power-hungry,
25 profit-driven corporation. President

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2 Gutmann and the Board of Trustees care
3 more about their exorbitant salaries, the
4 amount of donations they can accrue, and
5 the number of expensive new buildings on
6 campus than they care about serving the
7 Philadelphia community.

8 Most of Penn's resources,
9 including its property and its endowment,
10 do not benefit the wider community but
11 only serve those directly affiliated with
12 Penn. People without a Penn ID are not
13 able to access most of the buildings on
14 campus, and Penn Police regularly remove
15 people who they think don't belong on
16 campus.

17 Penn expands its area of
18 control by buying and constructing new
19 buildings and by having police patrol the
20 neighborhood. As we saw this past May,
21 Penn Police have no problem going into
22 West Philadelphia with military gear to
23 stop people from rightfully protesting.

24 Penn also hoards money. Penn's
25 endowment is nearly \$15 billion, with a

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2 B. The Board of Directors chooses to
3 spend only 5 percent of that, while the
4 endowment grows at a higher rate. In
5 other words, the University spends less
6 than it makes and takes a profit.

7 As a graduate student at Penn,
8 I can use Penn's properties and get paid
9 a stipend, while Philadelphia public
10 school teachers and students face
11 decrepit buildings and unsafe conditions.
12 It does not make sense that Penn is
13 allowed to profit from these resources
14 without paying taxes into the
15 Philadelphia school system. This needs
16 to change. Penn needs to be held
17 accountable and make amends for its
18 hoarding of wealth. These amends must be
19 in the form of PILOTs.

20 UPenn's recent donation to the
21 School District does not nearly go far
22 enough. First, this donation was framed
23 as an act of charity that removed all
24 agency from the people of Philadelphia.
25 Residents should get to decide how the

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2 City's money is spent.

3 Second, Penn needs to commit to
4 a better relationship to the Philadelphia
5 community in perpetuity, not just for the
6 next ten years.

7 Third, Penn's commitment needs
8 to be proportional to its resources, not
9 a fixed amount. That's why we are asking
10 for 40 percent of foregone property
11 taxes. That is less than one percent of
12 the endowment, and it is more than the
13 \$10 million per year that Penn is giving
14 now.

15 Paying PILOTS is only a first
16 step in repairing the damage that the
17 University of Pennsylvania has done to
18 Philadelphia residents, but it is a
19 crucial step. As a member of the Penn
20 community, I demand better from my
21 university, and I refuse to be complicit
22 in Penn's extraction of wealth and
23 hoarding of resources.

24 Thank you for the opportunity
25 to speak today.

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2 THE CLERK: Thank you.

3 Next we have Dr. Ann

4 Farnsworth-Alvear. Please state your
5 name and proceed with your testimony.

6 DR. FARNSWORTH-ALVEAR: Hello.

7 My name is Ann Farnsworth-Alvear. Are
8 you able to hear me?

9 THE CLERK: Yes.

10 MS. FARNSWORTH-ALVEAR: Thank
11 you for the opportunity to comment on
12 this resolution. I am employed by the
13 University of Pennsylvania. I strongly
14 support PILOTs. For me, the reason is
15 simple. Philadelphia schools depend on
16 property taxes. If rich institutions
17 that own property in the City do not
18 shoulder their fair share, then other
19 property owners, many of whom are poor,
20 are subsidizing those institutions'
21 non-payment.

22 Without PILOTs, the City
23 schools cannot make up the difference and
24 cannot educate young people in
25 Philadelphia effectively.

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2 When UPenn and other
3 non-profits begin paying PILOTs, they
4 will begin to be part of building a
5 stronger city and a stronger democracy.
6 That work of rebuilding is important now.
7 PILOTs cannot be postponed any longer.
8 Children in Philadelphia need all who own
9 expensive property to pay into school
10 budgets. Individuals and for-profit
11 corporations should, of course, also
12 continue to pay property taxes. I know I
13 pay mine.

14 The need is great, however.
15 That is why big non-profits also need to
16 step up. For me, this is not an
17 abstraction. My three children have
18 attended multiple public schools in
19 Philadelphia. I value the wonderful work
20 done by their teachers. That needs to be
21 said. But I am angry that over years, my
22 children went without the music and arts
23 teachers they might have had, the
24 instructor for foreign languages they
25 might have had, and the kind of athletic

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2 programming that is taken for granted in
3 suburban schools.

4 The work of fixing
5 Philadelphia's schools is not going to be
6 easy, but it is possible. Parents like
7 myself need to know that institutions
8 that are wealthy in the City are doing
9 their part also. PILOTs are not only a
10 way of putting money where it is needed.
11 They are also a vital way to communicate
12 support for children and families in the
13 City. I cannot see the City going
14 forward without PILOTs.

15 Thank you for the opportunity
16 to comment on the resolution. I
17 appreciate it.

18 THE CLERK: Thank you.

19 Next we have Mary Summers.
20 Please state your name and proceed with
21 your testimony.

22 MS. SUMMERS: Good afternoon.
23 Many thanks to the City Council Committee
24 on Children and Youth for holding this
25 important hearing. My name is Mary

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2 Summers. I am a lecturer in political
3 science at the University of Pennsylvania
4 and I have taught academically based
5 community service courses at Penn for
6 almost 20 years. Over these years, both
7 my students and I have learned a great
8 deal from service learning and volunteer
9 programs in schools where experienced
10 administrators and teachers have had the
11 time to play a key role in developing our
12 partnerships.

13 In desperately underfunded,
14 understaffed schools, with constant
15 turnover, however, student volunteers, no
16 matter how well meaning, often only
17 contribute to the chaos. As a result of
18 this experience, I know all too well that
19 service learning and volunteer programs
20 simply cannot substitute for the many
21 millions of dollars that institutions
22 like Penn would pay in taxes if they were
23 not tax exempt.

24 In an era and economy of
25 growing inequality, the City of

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2 Philadelphia has become two cities, one
3 where tax-exempt institutions like Penn
4 and Drexel and Jefferson with enormous
5 resources invest in deluxe high-rises and
6 private police forces; the other, a city
7 where our public schools literally
8 crumble and the jails are packed even in
9 the time of COVID.

10 The results of the inadequate
11 funding of our city's schools have been
12 tragic, a teacher sickened with the fatal
13 disease of mesothelioma, children with
14 lead poisoning, children whose asthma is
15 exacerbated by the air in the buildings
16 where they are supposed to learn to read
17 and, as we have heard, the staff as well.

18 The flip side of these
19 tragedies has been the outrageous farce
20 of Philly Fighting COVID, another result
21 of a civic culture in which wealthy
22 universities have encouraged school and
23 Health Department officials, whose
24 institutions have been starved for
25 funding as well as their own students, to

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2 think the 22-year-old entrepreneur can
3 substitute for serious investments in
4 strong public institutions.

5 Both the students of
6 Philadelphia and the students at
7 institutions like Penn and Drexel and
8 Jefferson deserve to live in one city
9 where private, educational, and
10 healthcare institutions contribute what
11 they owe to ensure all students an
12 education that prepares them to be
13 healthy, informed, and engaged citizens.
14 An agreement for wealthy non-profits to
15 make payments in lieu of taxes to support
16 the City's schools would be an important
17 step toward a better education at all our
18 institutions.

19 I'm grateful for this
20 opportunity to testify. Thank you so
21 much.

22 THE CLERK: Thank you very
23 much.

24 Next we have Aden Gonzales.
25 Please state your name and proceed with

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2 your testimony.

3 MS. GONZALES: Hi. I'm Aden.
4 Can you hear me?

5 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Yes.

6 THE CLERK: Yes.

7 MS. GONZALES: I'm Aden
8 Gonzales and I am a senior at Masterman
9 High School and I have been a student in
10 the Philadelphia public schools since I
11 was in pre-K at Bache-Martin and at Green
12 Woods Charter School for elementary
13 school, and Masterman from fifth grade
14 until where I am now, and I would like to
15 give you a walkthrough of what a day at
16 school looks like for me.

17 So I get to school at 7:30, an
18 hour before school starts, because a few
19 of my teachers have requested help for a
20 few of their students who are failing
21 classes that they're not able to give
22 them personalized attention because they
23 have six classes of 30-plus students
24 each.

25 After math tutoring, I rush to

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2 the library to print out a paper for my
3 English class. There are only ten
4 computers in my school's library for a
5 thousand-plus students, so I have to wait
6 in line for 20 minutes, and once I
7 finally get the chance to go to a
8 computer, they're 2005 Mac desktops, so
9 they take at least ten minutes to print
10 my paper.

11 If I haven't given up by now, I
12 am on my way to advisory in Room 305
13 where in the winter it's so hot, because
14 the Masterman heating only has one
15 setting because it's so old, that we have
16 to wear tank tops in the room or else
17 we're sweating, and in the summer there's
18 no air conditioning, so we're sweating
19 year-round.

20 During lunch, I rush to the
21 guidance counselor's office because I am
22 applying for college and scholarships,
23 and I have to wait on their couch for the
24 entire period because my guidance
25 counselor is responsible for 400-plus

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2 students. They're responsible for
3 getting them into high school, into
4 college, summer opportunities. They're
5 responsible for helping them with
6 personal conflicts. So I have had to
7 wait for hours to talk to my guidance
8 counselor. Often times I end up just
9 looking it up myself later or consulting
10 in other friends, who frankly don't know
11 what they're doing.

12 If I haven't given up from
13 talking to my guidance counselor, I
14 attend a bake sale in the Masterman
15 lunchroom for various clubs to raise
16 money to send themselves to different
17 competitions or to pay for new uniforms,
18 because the school doesn't have the money
19 to financially support these clubs.

20 And I hope that you're thinking
21 that this isn't a normal day, and you're
22 right, because I didn't see any mice or
23 cockroaches, the bathroom wasn't
24 overflowing, there was soap in the
25 bathroom today, which is a rare

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2 occurrence, and the ceiling on the fourth
3 floor hallway, the stairway didn't
4 crumble and debris didn't fall on
5 students. That's happened. And these
6 are the realities of my public school
7 experience.

8 And Masterman has a very, very
9 extensive and supportive home and school
10 association that is able to financially
11 support us in so many ways, so Masterman
12 has it relatively well off compared to
13 many other schools. And students in the
14 School District are being taught that we
15 aren't worthy of clean buildings, we
16 aren't worthy of individualized help from
17 teachers, and worst of all, we're being
18 taught that big institutions like Penn,
19 like Drexel, like Jefferson are
20 untouchable and we can't ask them to
21 contribute their fair share to the City
22 of Philadelphia and to our public
23 schools.

24 So thank you for your time, and
25 this is why I ask that Philly mega

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2 non-profits pay 40 percent of what they
3 would pay in property taxes in PILOTs,
4 more than the \$10 million a year that
5 they've pledged, which I want to note
6 would take seven years to cover the cost
7 of the ventilation devices that the
8 District needs this year to put into our
9 schools before they're safe.

10 Thank you for your time.

11 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you,
12 Aden. Thank you for your powerful
13 testimony.

14 THE CLERK: Thank you.

15 Next we have Paul Prescod.
16 Please state your name and proceed with
17 your testimony.

18 MR. PRESCOD: Hello. My name
19 is Paul Prescod. I'm a public school
20 teacher at Kensington Health and Sciences
21 Academy.

22 I believe deeply in the power
23 and promise of public education, public
24 institutions, and public services, but
25 just like anything else, public entities

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2 cannot thrive unless they are supported
3 with robust funding and resources.

4 The lack of concern for public
5 education shown by our city and state is
6 nothing short of criminal negligence, and
7 this negligence is a matter of life and
8 death for our communities.

9 The School District is still
10 reeling from the devastating dooms day
11 budget passed by Tom Corbett in 2013.
12 Dozens of schools were closed, teachers
13 were laid off, and crucial support staff
14 were cut. These were the years when
15 full-time nurses were no longer required
16 in every school. Two students died
17 because a nurse was not on duty in the
18 school during a health crisis. This is
19 why I say it's a matter of life and
20 death.

21 Most schools don't have
22 librarians or functioning libraries
23 anymore, and City officials then turn
24 around and bemoan the fact that so many
25 of our students are not reading on grade

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2 level.

3 My union, the PFT, has worked
4 to expose and address the crisis of our
5 school buildings. Like many students
6 have said, it's normal to have -- to put
7 up buckets to catch the rain when it
8 falls, for roofs to cave in, for
9 buildings to be infested with mold, lead,
10 rodents, and asbestos. Given how many of
11 our students suffer from chronic asthma,
12 again, this is a life and death issue.

13 But I don't need to tell you
14 this. We all know it, and we have all
15 allowed it to continue. Now is the time
16 to say enough.

17 Almost all of us have
18 sacrificed during this pandemic, and
19 almost all of us pay taxes to maintain
20 the City. PILOTs would make it so that
21 truly all of us are sacrificing and
22 contributing to our public school system.

23 For institutions like the
24 University of Penn, sitting on a
25 \$14 billion endowment, to be exempt from

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2 taxes is a crime.

3 There's all this talk about how
4 Penn can give back to the community.

5 Well, this is it right here. We
6 shouldn't be filling budget holes by
7 taxing working people more. Wealthy
8 institutions need to pay up.

9 We are at a crossroads. The
10 Mayor is claiming we have a \$450 million
11 budget shortfall. Are we going to keep
12 cutting and cutting until there's nothing
13 left? Are we going to keep letting the
14 wealthiest institutions get away with
15 avoiding taxes, let the revenue that's
16 right in front of our face slip away and
17 then keep complaining about the state of
18 our schools, roads, and bridges?

19 PILOTS is both the pragmatic
20 and the moral thing to do. The
21 consequences if we don't will be more
22 costly than half a percentage Penn will
23 lose from its endowment. The
24 consequences of a young generation
25 completely devoid of hope and

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2 opportunities is not something the City
3 wants to face the blow-back of. There's
4 no good opportunity than now to institute
5 PILOTs.

6 Thank you.

7 THE CLERK: Thank you very
8 much.

9 Next we have Lin Lin. Please
10 state your name and proceed with your
11 testimony.

12 MS. LIN: Good afternoon. My
13 name is Lin Lin. I am a junior at
14 Central High School and a youth organizer
15 with Asian Americans United.

16 As a student who went to
17 Philly's public schools my entire life, I
18 support the resolution that is being
19 discussed today.

20 I realize how desensitized I
21 became to the disinvestment in my school
22 communities. I did not flinch when we
23 had assemblies in elementary school when
24 our principal told us that we are losing
25 funding. It was normal that

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2 nine-year-olds supported the whole
3 economy of tissues, copy paper, and hand
4 sanitizers, because the school did not
5 have the money to afford it. It was
6 normal to not find the bathroom sinks
7 working or, if we are lucky, a full roll
8 of toilet paper.

9 I did not take adequate
10 science, music, language classes because
11 my school simply couldn't afford it. It
12 was normal to make good-bye cards for
13 beloved teachers when they had to leave
14 because the administration had to cut
15 faculty members. It was normal to be in
16 an overcrowded room full of 35 kids with
17 thermometers reading 90 degrees. We did
18 not have air conditioning, by the way, so
19 we spent the entire day learning while
20 fanning ourselves with our own notebooks.
21 We opened every possible working window
22 to even catch a breeze so we don't suffer
23 a heatstroke.

24 If you think this is a normal
25 learning environment, please come to our

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2 schools and tell it to our face.

3 These were the conditions of
4 what school meant to me ever since I was
5 seven. I am 17 now. A decade has
6 passed. Not much has changed.

7 As a student of color in
8 Philly's public education system, it has
9 failed to recognize the humanity of
10 myself and my peers.

11 These extreme problems won't go
12 away without proper funding from the City
13 and the School District. Philly loses
14 \$285 million every year in property taxes
15 just from the major non-profits. Let's
16 do the simple math here. This would have
17 more than covered the 38 million
18 projected school budget deficit.

19 Stop using excuses when
20 solutions are right there. As a student,
21 I support this resolution to better
22 understand how property tax exemptions
23 are harming us as students. We will
24 continue to stand with our school
25 communities.

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2 Now I am asking you to stand
3 with us and require wealthy non-profits
4 to pay their fair share to the City in
5 the form of PILOTs, because that is the
6 right thing to do. Young people here
7 today are not begging you to do this.
8 They are demanding you to. It is because
9 we deserve better than the crumbs that
10 are being handed to us for decades.

11 The mayoral election is coming
12 up and I want to remind folks here that
13 the generation that the City Council left
14 behind has grown up and we will not
15 forget what side you decided to stand on
16 during your time here in City Council. I
17 hope we can move forward in healing the
18 lack of trust between the people and the
19 structures of power, or we will vote
20 people in who will support us.

21 Thank you for this opportunity
22 and thank you for your time here.

23 THE CLERK: Thank you very much
24 for your testimony.

25 Next we have Suzi Lin. Please

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2 state your name and proceed with your
3 testimony.

4 MS. LIN: Good afternoon. My
5 name is Suzi Lin. I am currently a
6 sophomore at Central High School and a
7 youth organizer with Asian Americans
8 United. As a student attending
9 Philadelphia's public schools, I support
10 this resolution to understand how the
11 exemption of property taxes is harming us
12 students.

13 For as long as I can remember,
14 attending a public school meant dirty
15 bathrooms, broken doors and chairs, never
16 having enough textbooks, and was always
17 lacking in supplies, whether that meant
18 not enough textbooks or simply textbooks
19 that were outdated and old. Our
20 bathrooms are always lacking toilet
21 paper, flooded, and sometimes the toilet
22 seats are broken. The doors are
23 generally missing a glass or two or
24 perhaps even a doorknob.

25 Each year we are required to

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2 bring in supplies so that teachers do not
3 have to pay out of their own pockets. I
4 used to bring in dry erase markers and
5 white boards for class. My classmate got
6 extra credit for bringing in copy paper
7 for the teachers' lounge because they ran
8 out.

9 I remember having to run to the
10 lunchroom in hopes of being able to
11 receive a hot lunch. What greeted me was
12 always a massive line of students waiting
13 to be served. Each plate handed out had
14 barely enough food to last the rest of
15 the school day.

16 If funding was supplemented by
17 PILOTs, our schools' learning
18 environments would be cleaner and safer.
19 Students will be able to learn without
20 having to worry about having an empty
21 stomach. There will be enough supplies,
22 educational and sanitary, for each
23 student.

24 Today, I am here to say that
25 City Council and City Hall must be

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2 involved in collecting PILOTs for our
3 schools. Our schools are extremely
4 underfunded, and my peers and I are
5 suffering because of it. Wealthy
6 non-profits' tax exemptions impact how
7 much money is going to our already
8 underfunded schools. The bare minimum
9 can be for wealthy non-profits like Penn,
10 Drexel, and Jefferson to pay just
11 40 percent of foregone property taxes to
12 our schools to ensure safe and healthy
13 conditions. The funding issues across
14 Philly public schools would be majorly
15 alleviated by wealthy non-profits paying
16 PILOTs.

17 Thank you.

18 THE CLERK: Thank you.

19 Next we have Chris Cannito.

20 Please state your name and proceed with
21 your testimony.

22 MR. CANNITO: Hi. Good
23 afternoon. Thank you, Councilmembers,
24 panelists, and speakers from the public.
25 My name is Chris Cannito. I'm a member

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2 of Penn Community for Justice, a resident
3 of West Philadelphia, as well as a recent
4 MSW and NPL graduate from the School of
5 Social Policy and Practice at Penn. I'm
6 also formerly involved in education
7 within Philadelphia, and my partner is
8 currently a special educator.

9 I'm here to advocate that Penn
10 makes a long-term commitment towards
11 paying PILOTs. Most of my work as a
12 social worker has been focused on public
13 health and education justice issues for
14 different communities.

15 For our final capstone project,
16 a classmate and myself created an
17 investigative podcast series focusing on
18 the lived experiences of educators,
19 parents, activists, and organizers
20 connected with Philadelphia education
21 during COVID-19. We are proud many of
22 them are participating in this testimony
23 process today.

24 Two major themes came out of
25 our series that echoed much of what has

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2 been said today. First, that our School
3 District is operating in an environment
4 of resource scarcity that hinders much of
5 its capacity to provide safe, adequate,
6 and effective public education. And,
7 second, these issues are deeply engrained
8 and, sadly, are accepted norms for many
9 Philadelphians, whether it's the size of
10 the classroom, toxicity of the buildings
11 or lack of resources for educators and
12 more. These issues as a city did not
13 arise overnight, nor the fact that Penn
14 has the fourth largest Ivy League
15 endowment within America's poorest big
16 city.

17 In 2014, during a chaotic
18 period of school budget austerity
19 measures, the District's then CFO,
20 Matthew Stanski, told WHY? almost half of
21 its then \$2.8 billion budget comes from
22 the City. A little over a third comes
23 from the state. Most of the rest comes
24 from the federal government. This means
25 that when there's a shift in attitudes

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2 and leadership in Harrisburg, let alone
3 nationally, it comes at the cost of those
4 most at risk. In the case of
5 Pennsylvania, it hurts its cities and its
6 most marginalized within them. This
7 makes it unfertile ground to meet the
8 needs of students and the District during
9 the best of times, let alone during a
10 once-in-a-generation pandemic.

11 In 2017, Danielle Floyd, the
12 District's current Director of Capital
13 Programs, also told WHY, no one wants to
14 be in the position of deciding between
15 funding school nurses and making
16 necessary repairs. The education
17 programs come first. We are going to
18 need more money from the outside. We're
19 going to be vocal about our need.

20 Yet, this is where we find
21 ourselves today. Our city has
22 consistently been the recipient of
23 damaging budget austerity measures and
24 outright discriminatory policies, from
25 hatcheting of school budgets to the

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2 generational effects of racial redlining.

3 Funding is only one
4 intervention, but it often equates to
5 focus, and provides flexibility to meet
6 ever-changing needs. If we are not
7 operating with funding scarcity, we can
8 employ more robust measures to remediate
9 our buildings, provide adequate resources
10 for teachers, as well as experiment and
11 try more student- and community-centered
12 approaches. We can invest in actively
13 building trust between the City and the
14 School District and the population.

15 We cannot meet the needs of our
16 students with half effective
17 philanthropic gestures that skim the
18 surface of longstanding ills. Recycling
19 ineffective methods will only continue to
20 harm our students, families, and
21 educators. We need a diversity of
22 methods and tactics to meet the
23 District's needs, and root out the
24 effects of white supremacy within our
25 city.

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2 PILOTs is honestly a simple and
3 accessible resource we are not fully
4 utilizing from a massive public entity
5 that is directly connected to how the
6 City rises and falls.

7 I would like to finish, as
8 someone who owes a lot to Penn, both in
9 experience and student loans, it's
10 hypocritical that there is so much
11 institutional pushback from a school that
12 frames itself as the fourth most
13 innovative in the world. It would be
14 hypocritical of myself to fail to use the
15 lenses, experiences, privilege, and
16 perspective fostered by the institution
17 to not look within myself and the school
18 itself in how we are connected to systems
19 of oppression.

20 Therefore, it is necessary to
21 put Penn to task to make a sustainable
22 investment in our city's future through
23 PILOTs.

24 I am saddened that it is more
25 tenable for me to organize after being

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2 teargassed by the PPD on I-676 than
3 navigate the bureaucratic and
4 close-circuited hierarchical jungle of my
5 alma mater to advocate for innovative
6 changes that could be implemented
7 rapidly.

8 I hope Philadelphia leadership
9 has the willpower to demand Penn follows
10 through with its statements on innovation
11 and ethics for the betterment of our
12 students and city.

13 Thank you so much for your
14 time.

15 THE CLERK: Thank you.

16 Next we have Kate Ratner.
17 Please state your name and proceed with
18 your testimony.

19 MS. RATNER: Hi. My name is
20 Kate Ratner. Good afternoon, everyone.
21 I am really happy to be speaking with you
22 all today. Like I said, my name is Kate
23 Ratner. I use she or her pronouns and
24 I'm a senior at Central High School in
25 North Philly.

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2 I figured I wouldn't come here
3 today to repeat familiar statistics, the
4 overwhelming endowments of our local mega
5 non-profits, our school's barely
6 sustainable budget or the absolute
7 necessity for the University of
8 Pennsylvania, Drexel University, and
9 Thomas Jefferson University to pay annual
10 property taxes to the City of
11 Philadelphia. The raw numbers have not
12 been convincing enough, which I find
13 embarrassing and unfortunate.

14 I'm a pretty lucky kid. I
15 spent eight years in Philadelphia schools
16 with strong alumni and home and school
17 associations, auctions, and dedicatory
18 libraries and playground structures. I
19 go to Central now, and before I went to
20 Albert M. Greenfield School.

21 This is not the norm for
22 Philadelphia School District students
23 and, you know, the privilege I've had in
24 the District, this is not to say that I
25 haven't had to make a meeting with my

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2 counselor a week in advance because she's
3 responsible for the entire counseling
4 department as well as her bracket of 200
5 students between the five counselors
6 taking care of 2,600 students in our
7 school. This is also not to say that I
8 haven't ever sat in class sweating, even
9 in the depths of the winter, but I'm
10 pretty lucky.

11 After high school, I will now
12 go on to study at the University of
13 Pennsylvania, where I will see the same
14 privilege that is unfairly inaccessible
15 to children in my neighborhood, my school
16 district, and my city.

17 I promise that during my time
18 at Penn, I will advocate for those who
19 haven't been designated as the lucky kids
20 with the home and school associations and
21 the alumni associations and the nice
22 library by this corrupt system of
23 deal-making, exchange, and placing
24 business over education equity and
25 inequality.

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2 I can't wrap my head around the
3 fact that I am able to benefit off of
4 Penn's endowment funds, but my fellow
5 Philadelphia students cannot all do the
6 same.

7 The hundred million dollar
8 donation from the University of
9 Pennsylvania to the School District this
10 year was long overdue and an attempt to
11 distract from years of little fiscal
12 support to the City in which their
13 students live and learn.

14 Today, yet again, I confront my
15 future Penn community and demand that
16 they replenish the community that made
17 me -- that shaped me and made me the
18 person that I am today.

19 Thank you very much for having
20 me.

21 THE CLERK: Thank you very
22 much.

23 Next we have Youma Diabira.

24 MS. DIABIRA: Can you hear me?

25 THE CLERK: Yes. Can you state

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2 your name and proceed with your
3 testimony.

4 MS. DIABIRA: Hello. My name
5 is Youma Diabira. I am a senior at
6 Central High School and community
7 organizer for UrbEd.

8 I've been in the Philadelphia
9 School District for 13 years. I spend
10 most of my time on Zoom calls planning
11 events with my peers. I spend most of my
12 time prepping statements to have my voice
13 heard about things that you would think
14 would simply just be done.

15 Yes, I am a student and my main
16 focus should be school, but often times
17 it cannot be, not with the conditions of
18 our public schools.

19 I have been privileged enough
20 to attend Masterman and Central High
21 School, two of Philadelphia's highest
22 ranked magnet schools. They are often
23 the schools that get all the City's
24 attention and money, and even then, we
25 were still suffering with underfunded

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2 buildings.

3 I remember trying to choose a
4 high school as a 14-year-old and having
5 to think about which schools had just
6 lost their counselors or their librarians
7 or their secretaries due to lack of
8 funds. There should never be a lack of
9 funds in education, because a great
10 education is priceless, especially in
11 Philadelphia, which is home to several
12 wealthy non-profits.

13 Going to a Philadelphia public
14 school is going into bathrooms that have
15 12 stalls but only five have tissue or
16 soap dispensers that haven't been filled
17 since freshman year. I'm now a senior.
18 Or having to bring in tissue during the
19 winter for extra credit because we simply
20 can afford it for every single classroom.
21 That's the sacrifice we have to make to
22 get an education.

23 Far too many kids have to
24 sacrifice. I had to travel an hour every
25 morning to get to school, because the

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2 schools in my neighborhood were
3 understaffed and underfunded. Kids
4 shouldn't have to sacrifice like that to
5 get a good education. Our biggest worry
6 should be our next test or what dress
7 we're wearing to prom, not our schools
8 being underfunded.

9 The consequences of underfunded
10 schools have fallen on the shoulders of
11 our educators, our parents, and us as
12 students. So I place it back on these
13 non-profits. I'm asking you to support
14 PILOTs, to support our public schools, to
15 publicly declare that equitable education
16 is your priority, the City's priority.
17 By supporting PILOTs, you show that
18 students and teachers and the parents of
19 Philadelphia are the priority, that fully
20 funded public schools are the priority,
21 that education is the priority.

22 Thank you for your time.

23 THE CLERK: Thank you very
24 much.

25 Next we have Samantha Susson.

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2 Please state your name and proceed with
3 your testimony.

4 MS. SUSSON: Hello. My name is
5 Samantha Susson. Good afternoon, City
6 Councilmembers. Thank you for the
7 opportunity to speak today. I am here as
8 a concerned Philadelphia community member
9 and Jefferson alumna. The statement I am
10 about to read gathered 123 signatures
11 from Jefferson students, staff, faculty,
12 and alumni working in healthcare-related
13 fields.

14 We are dedicated to ensuring
15 that Jefferson takes on the
16 responsibility of ensuring a safe,
17 healthy, and equitable future for the
18 most vulnerable members of our community,
19 our children.

20 In recent years, Jefferson has
21 been expanding its presence in
22 Philadelphia healthcare by acquiring
23 major health systems in the area,
24 including the Einstein system in North
25 Philadelphia. The enterprise currently

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2 has more than \$5 billion in annual
3 revenue, which stands to grow with this
4 latest acquisition.

5 COVID-19 has, of course,
6 impacted that revenue, as it has for
7 health systems across the country. In
8 spite of these losses, Jefferson is not
9 only continuing with its plans to merge
10 with Einstein, an acquisition valued at
11 \$599 million, but also building a new
12 outpatient medical building in Center
13 City valued at \$762 million. Jefferson's
14 growth will eventually yield more
15 revenue.

16 As it continues to expand, we
17 advocate for the inclusion of PILOTs in
18 its budget and a commitment to
19 Philadelphia public schools. We
20 recognize that these expansions are
21 driven by Jefferson's mission to improve
22 lives throughout the City of
23 Philadelphia, but we challenge the notion
24 that increasing its square footage is the
25 only way to accomplish that mission.

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Instead, we propose that Jefferson can also improve lives by creating room in their budget for Philadelphia's public schools, which require at least \$125 million to remediate the lead and asbestos exposure that students face and \$5 billion for all the necessary repairs to make schools safe.

Accessibility to quality healthcare and sustained well-being cannot only consist of increasing the number of healthcare facilities in a community. The educational environment has a significant impact on children's ability to learn and succeed. We know that educational achievement and resources are crucial to current and future health outcomes.

We know that this is not Jefferson's responsibility alone, but if Jefferson is truly committed to the public health of Philadelphia, it must consider the consequences of continued inaction.

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2 Schoolchildren in Philadelphia
3 are three times more likely than the
4 national average to have asthma, and
5 children in our most underserved
6 communities have an average life
7 expectancy 20 years shorter than children
8 in other zip codes.

9 By committing 40 percent of its
10 foregone property taxes, a small
11 percentage of its operating budget, to
12 school repairs rather to new buildings
13 and acquisitions, Jefferson could address
14 this mounting public health crisis, a
15 crisis that only stands to get worse as
16 schools face an increasing budget deficit
17 and necessary repairs become more and
18 more delayed.

19 If Jefferson can commit
20 \$44.2 million to renovate its executive
21 offices in 2020, it can certainly
22 evaluate whether it can make a more
23 substantial contribution to the health of
24 Philadelphia's children.

25 Paying PILOTs would go a long

1 3/3/21 - CHILDREN AND YOUTH - RES. 210034
2 way towards fulfilling Jefferson's
3 mission to improve lives and reduce
4 health disparities in its home city.

5 Thank you.

6 THE CLERK: Thank you.

7 Next we have Lola Milder.

8 Please state your name and proceed with
9 your testimony.

10 MS. MILDER: Hello. I'm Lola
11 Milder. Can you hear me?

12 THE CLERK: Yes. I can hear
13 you clearly.

14 MS. MILDER: Okay. Thank you.

15 Good afternoon. My name is
16 Lola Milder. I'm a senior at Masterman
17 High School and I'm speaking today
18 because our schools are in crisis, and
19 now reality becomes much more painful in
20 the context of the wealthy non-profits
21 that inhabit our city but do not
22 contribute to it, including universities
23 like UPenn, Drexel, and Jefferson.

24 It's so frustrating how these
25 institutions claim Philadelphia and its

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2 people and its problems when it is
3 convenient to them. Philadelphians fill
4 their brochures and their websites and
5 their advertisements and faculty and
6 student bodies, but they refuse to
7 support Philadelphians when it matters.
8 And this is not the precedent. The
9 nation's other wealthiest universities
10 are engaged in PILOTs in addition to
11 contributing civically. So when
12 Philadelphia's mega non-profits point to
13 redevelopment and university police
14 forces and other civic contributions, we
15 have to push them further. We cannot
16 accept that as enough.

17 Our schools need fiscal
18 support, not selective volunteerism. And
19 we don't have the luxury of idleness or
20 inaction. The crisis that plagues our
21 schools threatens the health of our
22 students and teachers daily.

23 We don't have enough counselors
24 at my school to protect the mental health
25 of all of our students. The three

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2 counselors are each responsible for the
3 mental well-being and academic guidance
4 of 400 students. There are days where
5 I've visited their office three times and
6 been continually unable to speak with
7 them, not because they don't care but
8 because they're stretched so thinly.

9 Nor do we have enough support
10 to protect our teachers from exhaustion.
11 Each year my teachers are contributing
12 more out of their pockets for school
13 supplies and juggling larger classes and
14 more students.

15 And tracking the impacts of
16 funding on mental health can be abstract,
17 but the same can't be said for physical
18 health and the safety of our students.
19 We know that the continued exposure to
20 asbestos, lead, and mold spores are a
21 daily threat to our school communities.
22 These hazardous materials don't belong in
23 our classrooms, and neither do rodents or
24 leaking pipes or crumbling ceilings or
25 overflowing toilets, all of which exist

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2 in my school and have for years.

3 In addition to health risks,
4 poor building conditions keep our
5 students out of school and out of
6 classes. Last year teachers at my school
7 conducted class in the lunchroom and in
8 the hallways because their classrooms
9 were exposed to asbestos, and other
10 classrooms had pipes leaking hot air and
11 hot water. That same year asbestos
12 closed six District buildings entirely,
13 displacing hundreds of students. And
14 what I'm saying comes after a long string
15 of upsetting testimonies. It's a really
16 vivid picture of the deplorable condition
17 our schools are in and have been for
18 decades.

19 Our schools are producing
20 activists out of necessity. Looking at
21 the crowd of speakers today, that's so
22 apparent. The energy of students and
23 teachers and community members has been
24 diverted towards fighting for the right
25 to breathe clean air and to work and

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2 study in clean spaces and to have access
3 to textbooks and counseling. That's what
4 we're all doing here today.

5 And I would note that Penn's
6 commitment to contributing \$10 million
7 over the next ten years is a victory, but
8 it shouldn't satisfy or end the
9 conversations we're having about PILOTs.
10 The promise of \$10 million annually is
11 only about a fourth of what Penn would
12 pay under the proposed 40 percent PILOT
13 contribution.

14 If these mega non-profits will
15 not step up themselves, it is the
16 responsibility of our elected officials
17 to reconsider their tax-exempt status.
18 We need your diligence and your action
19 and your bravery now. The fight for
20 PILOTs is the fight for the safety of our
21 students, and I urge you to fight for us.

22 Thank you so much for your
23 time.

24 THE CLERK: Thank you.

25 Next we have Hannah Holliday.

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2 Please state your name and proceed with
3 your testimony.

4 MS. HOLLIDAY: Hi. Can you
5 hear me?

6 Good afternoon. My name is --

7 THE CLERK: Yes.

8 MS. HOLLIDAY: Okay. Good
9 afternoon. My name is Hannah Holliday
10 and I am a resident of West Philadelphia
11 and a former educator. I'm speaking
12 today in support of PILOTs from large
13 wealthy non-profits to the School
14 District of Philadelphia.

15 Non-profits in this city should
16 make payments in lieu of taxes at an
17 amount equivalent to the property tax
18 they would owe for many, many reasons,
19 but I'll focus on two specifically.
20 Number one, because they can afford to
21 and, number two, because it is immoral
22 for them not to.

23 Where I live in West Philly is
24 walking distance from the new building
25 that the University of Pennsylvania just

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2 put up on 40th and Walnut. This gigantic
3 building, all brick and glass, cost
4 \$163 million to build. With that money,
5 Penn could have covered what it would
6 take to remediate the lead and asbestos
7 in Philadelphia public schools and still
8 had money left over.

9 With all of its new
10 construction, billions of dollars in
11 investments, and an endowment that grows
12 every year, Penn can clearly afford much
13 more than the measly \$10 million a year
14 they recently committed to the School
15 District, and they only committed it for
16 the next ten years. The 100 million made
17 for good media coverage for Penn, but it
18 doesn't do nearly enough for our
19 communities or for our schools.

20 This is also the case for many
21 other large non-profits in the City as
22 well, many of which also have large
23 endowments in the billions of dollars and
24 can afford more -- can more than afford
25 to pay PILOTs to our city.

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2 Beyond the fact that these
3 large non-profits can more than afford to
4 make these payments, it is wrong for
5 non-profits that provide healthcare, such
6 as the Children's Hospital of
7 Pennsylvania, Thomas Jefferson University
8 Hospital, and Health Partners Plans, to
9 avoid stepping up to make the payments
10 that would help ensure safe, healthy,
11 green school facilities. By not
12 contributing their fair share to our
13 city, they let our school facilities
14 continue to crumble and poison our
15 children and our educators. They are
16 essentially ensuring that people continue
17 to get sick and require their health
18 services. They also, if I'm not
19 mistaken, still expect everyone to pay
20 their medical bills.

21 These non-profits, whether they
22 like it or not, are part of a system that
23 prioritizes saving money for
24 organizations and businesses over fully
25 funding what communities and families

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2 need. It is past time for large
3 non-profits to grapple with their
4 complicity in this capitalist system and
5 start contributing PILOTs.

6 Thank you.

7 THE CLERK: Thank you.

8 Next we have Zoey Tweh. Please
9 state your name and proceed with your
10 testimony.

11 MS. TWEH: Good afternoon. Can
12 you hear me?

13 THE CLERK: Yes. You sound
14 clear.

15 MS. TWEH: Thank you. Good
16 afternoon. I'm Zoey Tweh, a graduate of
17 class of 2019, a team member in UrbEd,
18 and a West Philly native, now known as
19 the University City native, a
20 neighborhood overtaken with Penn's
21 assistance.

22 We've had a lot of the wrong
23 assistance coming from the untaxed
24 institutions in this city. In the new
25 flourishing neighborhood I grew up in, I

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2 got to attend what used to be one of the
3 foremost, up-and-coming, diverse
4 elementary schools in the City, Penn
5 Alexander. Penn Alexander was a great
6 experience for me. It was full of kids
7 from a range of ethnicities, the
8 passionate teachers, and a
9 well-resourced, well-funded,
10 well-looked-after school.

11 When I attended, it was run by
12 Ms. Sheila Sydnor, a black woman who
13 built up the school from its silver
14 platter beginnings with all the hope and
15 promise in the name Sadie Tanner Mossell
16 Alexander-Penn Partnership School, named
17 after Sadie Tanner, the first African
18 American to earn a Ph.D. in economics in
19 the country and the first black woman to
20 receive a law degree from UPenn Law
21 School.

22 Interestingly enough, we had a
23 great partnership while it lasted, "we"
24 being African American children. I say
25 it was great because for a moment, it was

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2 a demonstration of what could happen when
3 Penn contributes to a community resource
4 and a community that had more than just
5 white Americans.

6 But that quickly changed,
7 because with gentrification comes higher
8 costs of living. And so the neighborhood
9 school had a new neighborhood, and
10 classes began to resemble Sadie's
11 experience, where black children rarely
12 saw peers that looked like them in their
13 classes, because they cannot afford the
14 networking and the housing to have access
15 to this school, because the University of
16 Penn and Drexel and every institution in
17 the City who believes they can choose to
18 drain the City of its resources for free
19 has been working arduously to reconfigure
20 its demographics to watch the people who
21 helped build the City be driven out, to
22 create circumstances necessary to drive
23 them out, and it's not by accident. It's
24 not an accident that some teachers at PAS
25 used to remind us that if we didn't do

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2 well, we'd go to the neighborhood high
3 school, West Philly High. Those kinds of
4 threats shouldn't exist.

5 My former classmates shouldn't
6 have to travel damn near an hour and a
7 half to get to school every morning
8 because the schools down the street from
9 them are either getting shut down for
10 lack of funds or are barely keeping their
11 heads above water.

12 The teachers and parents in the
13 City have been making due the best they
14 can with what little resources we have in
15 our leaking budget, while these untaxed
16 institutions have gone on expanding,
17 leeching and repainting our city how they
18 see fit.

19 I'm curious who this city
20 belongs to, what does it take to not have
21 to abide by the rules. The people most
22 equipped to contribute who are so-called
23 in the business of education, who are
24 so-called about innovation and forward
25 movements have decided who gets to be a

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2 part of that future. They decided some
3 have to come out on top, and chose just
4 what group that would be. And our city
5 has not demanded the respect and
6 contribution they are quick to take from
7 the people who cannot afford it and who
8 are already giving everything they have
9 to be active members of their
10 communities.

11 I'm curious who the City
12 Council serves. Were you voted in to
13 serve the current neighbors living here
14 or are you done with us? Have you given
15 up on who we are and invested in the new
16 Philadelphia these institutions are set
17 on building, a sanctuary city painted
18 white, affluent, private, and privileged?

19 I'm here to remind you that as
20 the saying goes, this is our city and
21 these are our schools. If you live here
22 with us, then you pay just like we pay.
23 You be a part of the right side of
24 history.

25 We've already seen what

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2 graduates of UPenn can do in Oval Office.
3 We are very clear about what these
4 institutions stand for. So this is not
5 about a dream of them caring about the
6 well-being of the community. It's about
7 remembering the certainties in life,
8 doing your part, paying your taxes. It's
9 about reciprocity.

10 We've given plenty. It's your
11 turn now.

12 THE CLERK: Thank you very
13 much.

14 Next we have Ryan Thach, I
15 believe joining us by phone. Please
16 state your name and proceed with your
17 testimony.

18 MR. THACH: Hello?

19 THE CLERK: Yes. I can hear
20 you. Just make sure that you speak
21 loudly so that everyone can hear you.

22 MR. THACH: Thank you.

23 THE CLERK: Please state your
24 name and proceed with your testimony.

25 MR. THACH: Hello. My name is

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2 Ryan Thach and -- hello, Committee. I'm
3 Ryan Thach, a senior at Central High
4 School and a (inaudible).

5 If PILOTs are going to be left
6 unpaid, districtwide students and schools
7 will continue to decline in education and
8 health. My middle school, which had
9 opened in 2000, is a school that stands
10 underfunded. Although being a new
11 building, the departments have to reuse
12 books that are torn and undone. The
13 music department is partly filled with
14 used and broken instruments. There are
15 not many extracurriculars that are
16 available because there are minuscule
17 amounts of resources to allow students to
18 have an option. As usual, the school is
19 literally crippling in areas of the halls
20 as well as the rooms, and school lunches
21 are dissatisfying and militaristic-like.

22 Even back to elementary school,
23 I faced these same environments and
24 problems. Hoping to see a difference in
25 high school, I would come to realize that

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I was entering a similar environment. In my experience, the water systems have problems throughout the year, and teachers and students in their classes have to share books and supplies because of the imbalanced ratio from students to items. Luckily, Central has an alumni that hopes to improve the school through their own donations and grants. Yet, why does the school have to rely on its past students for money to make repairs, improvements, and ensure that all students have supplies?

Although I am thankful for the alumni, this is not enough for Central to work at its most effective due to the fact there are other problems at hand. Yet, if mega non-profits begin to pay PILOTs, our schools will begin to benefit a lot.

Schools like my middle school that are in underfunded communities can finally strive through engaging their students in more effective and healthier

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2 learning environments. I believe this
3 will not only boost the desire to learn,
4 but encourage our students to take
5 opportunities. Providing books,
6 supplies, and technology to these schools
7 will become more prevalent and boost the
8 overall status of the District's
9 education.

10 On the other hand, staff and
11 students won't have to worry about
12 endangering themselves if they have to
13 step foot into (inaudible) intoxicating
14 buildings, again, because due to money
15 given by PILOTs, we can initiate changes
16 to mend those factors.

17 From improving the school
18 environment and even getting the
19 necessary staff that schools need through
20 PILOTs, that should have been achieved.

21 Thank you for giving me this
22 opportunity to speak.

23 THE CLERK: Okay. Can you hear
24 me, Councilmember Brooks? Am I coming
25 through?

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Yes, I
3 can hear you.

4 THE CLERK: Great.
5 Thank you very much for your
6 testimony.

7 Next we have Michelle Weld.
8 Please state your name and proceed with
9 your testimony.

10 (No response.)

11 THE CLERK: Ms. Weld, are you
12 there?

13 MS. WELD: Can you hear me?

14 THE CLERK: Yes. I can hear
15 you now.

16 MS. WELD: I apologize. My
17 camera is not working, so I would -- my
18 name is Michelle Stanfill Weld. I am a
19 parent of two children currently enrolled
20 in the Philadelphia public school system.

21 I would like to express my
22 gratitude for the opportunity to speak to
23 the Council and any and all persons
24 involved in this issue today.

25 I wanted to say that I would

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2 like to implore the University of
3 Pennsylvania, Jefferson, and Drexel
4 Universities to do the right thing in
5 terms of from a base level education,
6 which is what the universities are
7 involved in, and being such, the
8 foundations of education should be
9 protected and upheld.

10 So in our Philadelphia public
11 schools, the right thing to do is to give
12 what you have. The best education is to
13 educate by example. So these
14 universities with high-level degrees and
15 people and systems to include investors
16 with great amounts of money.

17 I as a yoga instructor,
18 certified RYT, a parent, and someone who
19 moved to Philadelphia 20 years ago, I
20 don't see a great deal of change in
21 what's happening. It's very
22 disappointing at best.

23 The examples should be much
24 better in terms of what's given, what's
25 expected, and just producing in our

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2 communities health, education, and
3 support systems that show value for human
4 life and humanity at-large.

5 My, again, idea is that if the
6 highest levels of institutions of
7 education in America cannot at the very
8 least express or show humanity to the
9 masses, then what are they there for?

10 Thank you so much for your
11 time.

12 THE CLERK: Thank you very
13 much.

14 Next we have Samantha Rise.
15 Please state your name and proceed with
16 your testimony.

17 MS. RISE: Thank you so much.
18 Good afternoon. Gratitude as always --
19 (connection issues) -- advocating for our
20 communities and opportunity to speak.
21 Thank you also to all of our youth
22 organizers and educators who have shown
23 up on this call for themselves and for
24 the students that come after them, and to
25 all of the teachers, educators,

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2 parapprofessionals, et cetera, who have
3 become organizers in their best interest
4 in this unprecedented moment.

5 I am not a public educator or a
6 caregiver. I'm not a student. I'm not
7 even a Philly native. I'm a director of
8 a small organization that's dedicated to
9 amplifying the voices that are most often
10 muted and marginalized in the City and I
11 locate myself inside a much broader
12 network of community care.

13 Underground railroads are
14 resources that have appeared in the
15 absence of funding and support, cut off
16 year over year in extreme austerity
17 measures from different mayors, from
18 different city managing directors, and
19 the flat refusal of private companies and
20 non-profit organizations to pay their
21 fair share.

22 I'm here to amplify the demands
23 you have already heard from Philly
24 students and teachers and community
25 organizers, as well as my neighbors,

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2 including next door longtime Philly
3 residents, products of the Philly school
4 systems themselves, and Penn's essential
5 workers, because it's past time wealthy
6 non-profits reconcile the debts they owe
7 this community with permanent, direct
8 payments to the District.

9 So I'm encouraging any kind of
10 investigation or process necessary to
11 green light that process and to enforce
12 it.

13 Chronic underfunding creates a
14 landscape of lack and equality of
15 scarcity and incarceration in our school
16 buildings, and for all of the
17 belt-tightening and the gas-lighting of
18 our educators and students that they're
19 subjected to, all the focus we place on
20 gun violence and on poverty in our city,
21 we overlook wealthy non-profits who
22 promise service and value-added
23 contributions while syphoning
24 generational wealth and unraveling the
25 most vibrant cultural fabrics in our

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2 cities.

3 It's unconscionable to me and
4 to so many others that higher
5 institutions that tout their connections
6 to legacies of education, to the spirit
7 of innovation, billions in trusts,
8 hundreds of millions in tuition annually
9 would profit -- (connection issues) --
10 and those with the most potential.

11 Young people are organizing
12 right now to demand the support that
13 they're owed by these institutions and by
14 the City. These institutions have for
15 decades and centuries benefited from
16 literally living rent free in our
17 communities, but they have the means to
18 remediate lead and asbestos, to provide
19 internet and technology, to prioritize
20 access and resources to local students,
21 and yet year after year they demonstrate
22 who and what they prioritize. They
23 choose profit over Philly.

24 These institutions can't be
25 bastions of innovation and education if

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2 they refuse to address with direct
3 support the vital needs of those folks
4 who are in the shadow of your
5 ever-growing institutions, because
6 overlooking and undervaluing Philadelphia
7 students, staff, and facilities is not an
8 accident. It's strategic. Penn's
9 syphoning labor from black and brown
10 communities while gentrifying
11 neighborhoods and double-dipping land
12 grabs while they increase property values
13 and prioritizing out-of-state students
14 and wooing out-of-state wealth while
15 their own student populations struggle is
16 absolutely appalling.

17 A hundred million dollars per
18 university per year is a reasonable
19 annual contribution, annual contribution,
20 to our city's education system, not a
21 one-time gift in 2020 in the midst of a
22 global pandemic.

23 Private wealthy -- or private
24 companies and wealthy for-profits and
25 non-profits have revealed their

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2 extractive and predatory agendas within
3 Philly communities. And as a direct
4 result of tireless efforts by community
5 and Councilmembers to balance the books,
6 we're starting to see a shift. Still,
7 it's literally pennies on the dollar to
8 the amount that Penn rakes in over the
9 labor of Philadelphia's essential
10 workers, students, and educators.

11 A hundred million dollars over
12 ten years is a strategy to absolve
13 themselves from guilt and responsibility.
14 And I know many on this call will speak
15 to the further injustice of Penn and
16 Drexel's willingness to invest in
17 policing over the heads of students in
18 literal life-threatening conditions.
19 You've heard from them what they
20 experience on the daily.

21 Our city habitually undervalues
22 those essential community members that
23 engine a truly sustainable path forward,
24 and wealthy non-profits encourage that
25 model because they benefit from it.

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2 To the surprise of no one, the
3 folks most impacted by the utter
4 disregard in extracted practices of these
5 wealthy non-profits are also the
6 community members who have imagined,
7 co-designed, and prepared the solutions
8 that will rebalance the toxicity between
9 wealthy non-profits in the City and our
10 communities.

11 So I'm grateful to the
12 Councilmembers who have done the work,
13 been doing the work, and will do the work
14 on this Council and the City Mayor's
15 Office to initiate both an investigation
16 and take immediate action. Our students
17 don't need another task force. They need
18 swift, decisive action in such a moment
19 as this.

20 Penn shouldn't feel entitled to
21 our continuous investment in their
22 mission, their vision or their values if
23 they don't first invest in ours. PILOTs
24 are non-negotiable. They're not an
25 occasional gesture of goodwill. They are

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2 their responsibility to the communities
3 that Penn, Drexel, Jefferson occupy.

4 Our students deserve the world,
5 and the time has come for them to loosen
6 their grip on the resources our hearts,
7 homes, and minds furnish. We don't need
8 another program in lieu of taxes, another
9 project in lieu of taxes, another process
10 in lieu of taxes, another service in lieu
11 of taxes, another excuse in lieu of
12 taxes. Penn and Drexel no longer live
13 rent free in our neighborhoods.

14 Thanks always to the students,
15 the organizers, to you Councilmembers.
16 Thank you for your time.

17 THE CLERK: Thank you.

18 Next we have Heather Atkinson.
19 Please state your name and proceed with
20 your testimony.

21 MS. ATKINSON: Good afternoon,
22 Council, and thank you for taking the
23 time to hear from our community about
24 this important issue. It is so wonderful
25 to see true advocates of our schools in

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2 positions of power in our city today.

3 While many of us have long been
4 pushing for payments in lieu of taxes
5 from our wealthiest non-profit
6 institutions in Philadelphia as simply
7 the right thing to do, this year is
8 different. As we struggle to recover
9 from the pandemic, the City faces over
10 half a billion dollar budget shortfall,
11 with no real relief in sight. The time
12 is upon us to seek any and all streams of
13 revenue to support our services and, most
14 importantly, our schools.

15 As we make budget decisions
16 this year that will negatively impact
17 many of our neighbors, we simply cannot
18 afford not to ask for these payments.

19 Fifteen to 20 percent of the
20 City's total real estate value is owned
21 by non-profits who benefit from City
22 services, but pay nothing to support our
23 city. The City depends primary on
24 property taxes to fund our City services,
25 and when so much land is exempt from

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2 paying, it makes funding those services
3 even more difficult.

4 The University of Pennsylvania
5 alone owns over \$3.2 billion in property
6 for which no property taxes are
7 collected. Let's learn from other large
8 cities like Boston who ask universities
9 and hospitals to pay 25 percent of the
10 amount they would otherwise pay in
11 property taxes. They collect these
12 payments from at least the top 25
13 non-profits in their city, and we should
14 too.

15 In the '90s, dozens of the
16 City's wealthiest non-profits made
17 PILOTs, and it's time that they step up
18 again and do their part to help the City
19 and the school system that is desperately
20 in need of these funds.

21 While the amount of money
22 raised may not be that much when looking
23 at the total City budget, it would
24 certainly be helpful in supporting our
25 crumbling schools and help us to provide

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2 the bare minimum, safe school buildings.

3 Students and teachers are being
4 made sick and in some cases dying due to
5 the time they spend in our toxic schools.
6 This is why I ask that this money be
7 collected and placed in a fund designated
8 for our schools. We need to put our
9 children and their education first. They
10 are the future of this great city, and
11 without priority and investment,
12 institutional racism will continue to
13 hold back our best and brightest from
14 achieving all that we know they can given
15 proper resources.

16 Please go out and fight for
17 this and any funding sources that can
18 uplift our children and our schools.

19 Thank you.

20 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Mr. Clerk,
21 you're on mute.

22 Just one second and I will call
23 the next testifier after Ms. Atkinson,
24 who should be Camille Prairie. If you're
25 connected, if you could proceed with your

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2 testimony.

3 MS. PRAIRIE: Yes. Hello.

4 Good afternoon, Councilmembers and -- can
5 you hear me?

6 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: We can hear
7 you.

8 MS. PRAIRIE: Perfect. Thank
9 you for the opportunity to speak today.
10 I'm a current Drexel alum and a former
11 Drexel student, and those are the
12 experiences that I'll be speaking from
13 today.

14 So during my time as a Drexel
15 student, I observed a lot of divestment
16 from the surrounding community and
17 displacement of lifelong residents in the
18 name of bettering the neighborhood,
19 making life better, investing in local
20 communities, and famously being the most
21 civically engaged university in the
22 country.

23 As an incoming freshman in fall
24 of 2016, I loved hearing this in my Civic
25 101 class. Civic 101 is a required

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2 course for all freshmen in which they
3 must complete three hours of community
4 service to pass. While there is a
5 component of the course that educates
6 students on Drexel's relationship to the
7 surrounding West Philadelphia community,
8 at the end of the day, one cannot pass
9 the course without completing service.

10 As a TA for Civic 101 for a
11 year and a half in the latter part of my
12 college years, I strongly disliked
13 teaching the sentiment that we were the
14 most civically engaged university in the
15 country, because I knew Drexel valued
16 appealing to new students over community
17 engagement.

18 My students were scared to walk
19 into the surrounding Powelton/Mantua
20 neighborhoods at night, falsely under the
21 impression that everyone that lived there
22 was "other," not them, lifelong residents
23 and of course must pose to them a great
24 threat. In reality, mainly older
25 students live off campus because they can

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2 afford to pay rising rent prices in a
3 neighborhood Drexel has been
4 strategically infiltrating with its own
5 students, driving residents out and
6 creating new community centers as a
7 temporary patch-up for deeply rooted
8 issues.

9 Some may say that giving a
10 once-a-week course on financial literacy
11 is better than doing nothing as a way of
12 reparations for driving community members
13 out of their community. I say that lack
14 of recognition of one person's pain of
15 what they have been through in their life
16 of the systemic inequities that
17 contribute to their current place in
18 society and an inability on Drexel's part
19 to recognize that they are part of the
20 problem infects the wound and makes it
21 fester.

22 Drexel is so good at saying
23 what they will do, saying they will do
24 better, saying sorry after the damage has
25 already been done, but they never give

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2 the people of color, the black folks, the
3 Philadelphia residents that they have
4 bought out a seat at the table, and if
5 they did, they wouldn't listen to what
6 that person had to say, because at the
7 end of the day, they have the money and,
8 therefore, they have the power. They
9 have shown time and again they aren't
10 interested in building true community.

11 Drexel is a business, and they
12 have never shown that they cared about
13 the well-being of those they claim to be
14 in relation with.

15 It is beyond time to give
16 Philadelphia its due. Children going to
17 school in the community should not have
18 to suffer from a chronic lack of funding
19 in public schools because Drexel holds
20 monetary power and has used it to excuse
21 itself in truly supporting
22 Philadelphians.

23 I urge the City Council to take
24 part in having Drexel and every mega
25 non-profit in Philadelphia pay 40 percent

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2 of their foregone property taxes in
3 PILOTs to repair our long-neglected
4 schools so that they can take just the
5 first step in repairing this long-damaged
6 relationship.

7 Thank you for your time today.

8 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you so
9 much for your testimony.

10 Dr. Rhea Powell. If you're
11 connected, you may proceed with your
12 testimony, Dr. Powell.

13 DR. POWELL: Thank you. My
14 name is Rhea Powell. Thank you,
15 Councilmembers, for holding this hearing
16 today.

17 As a physician and a healthcare
18 researcher, I have both practiced in a
19 non-profit hospital, actually in several
20 non-profit hospitals, and studied their
21 impact on community health, and I would
22 like to share what I have learned from
23 research done by myself and others on
24 non-profit hospital-community
25 contributions and share how by

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2 contributing to PILOTs, non-profit
3 hospitals have an opportunity to invest
4 in community health in a systematic,
5 sustainable, and community-oriented way.

6 Non-profit hospitals earn their
7 non-profit status by investing in
8 activities to improve the health of their
9 communities, collectively known as
10 community benefits. These community
11 benefits can include things like
12 providing uncompensated or subsidized
13 healthcare for the uninsured, health
14 professionals' education, research, and
15 community health improvement activities.

16 Historically a large portion of
17 the hospital-community benefit spending
18 has gone to uncompensated care, but as
19 more people have gained health insurance
20 in the last decade, hospital costs for
21 uncompensated care have decreased,
22 creating an opportunity for non-profit
23 hospitals to invest in communities in
24 other ways.

25 Currently, community health

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2 improvement activities that hospitals
3 engage in often include things like blood
4 pressure screening programs, providing
5 patient navigators, and programs to
6 reduce smoking. And as a primary care
7 physician, I recognize that these
8 services are very important and can
9 improve the health of the individuals
10 that they reach.

11 Yet, while these existing
12 community benefit activities can be
13 valuable on an individual level, analyses
14 of community benefit investments show
15 that there is little coordination across
16 hospitals that serve a region like ours,
17 nor is there accountability to address
18 highest priority areas as determined by
19 the community or accountability to even
20 demonstrate that these activities improve
21 health outcomes.

22 Moreover, there are important
23 gaps in the types of community needs that
24 are addressed through non-profit
25 hospital-community benefits. Notably,

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2 education and environmental safety to
3 critical social determinants of health
4 are not meaningfully addressed by most
5 non-profit hospital-community benefit
6 investments, nor do most strategies to
7 address community benefits explicitly
8 address health disparities.

9 Payments in lieu of taxes are a
10 way in which our healthcare institutions
11 can help fill those gaps, address these
12 important health determinants, and
13 mitigate health disparities in
14 Philadelphia. Investing in the community
15 through PILOTs does not have to mean that
16 hospitals must stop their community
17 benefit work. A PILOT agreement could
18 incorporate the work that hospitals do
19 through community benefits activities.
20 The PILOT program in the City of Boston,
21 for example, allows eligible institutions
22 to receive a community benefits credit
23 for a proportion of their PILOT
24 contribution.

25 By contributing to PILOTs,

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2 non-profit hospitals in Philadelphia have
3 an opportunity to improve the health not
4 only of the patients that they see within
5 their hospital walls, but also the health
6 of Philadelphians for generations to
7 come.

8 Thank you for the opportunity
9 to speak.

10 THE CLERK: Thank you very
11 much.

12 Next we have Jonathan Goins.
13 Please state your name and proceed with
14 your testimony.

15 MR. GOINS: Yes. Can you hear
16 me?

17 THE CLERK: Yes.

18 MR. GOINS: Good afternoon,
19 Madam Chair and Councilmembers. My name
20 is Jonathan Goins and I'm here to express
21 my support for the call for PILOTs for
22 major non-profit institutions in
23 Philadelphia.

24 I am a graduate of Penn, a
25 former teacher in the School District,

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2 and a parent to one and soon-to-be two
3 school-aged children in District schools.

4 Our eds and meds institutions
5 do a lot for the City, and their
6 significance to our local economy is hard
7 to overstate. Yet, we find ourselves at
8 a time and a place when a lot is being
9 asked of all of us, the front-line
10 workers, City workers, teachers, and
11 parents, and I fully support the call to
12 ask more of our institutions.

13 The need is tremendous in our
14 schools and in our neighborhoods, and the
15 resources at hand are not sufficient. We
16 have asked for PILOTs before in
17 Philadelphia, and institutions gave, and
18 I believe that now is the time to ask
19 again.

20 I understand that environmental
21 conditions in schools are part of this
22 conversation as well. The school my
23 children attend, while 100 years old and
24 showing its age, is far from the worst.
25 Our house fan is relatively new, works

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2 well. The roof was just replaced, and
3 families, community members, and teachers
4 have advocated and fundraised over the
5 years to improve conditions for students,
6 everything from air conditioners in
7 third-floor windows to new playground
8 equipment in the schoolyard.

9 I am well aware that other
10 people's children in other schools are
11 not as fortunate. They're going to
12 school in aging buildings with even worse
13 environmental conditions and without the
14 same resources to advocate for or to
15 address environmental concerns in their
16 schools outside of the underresourced
17 capital improvement process.

18 Penn's recent commitment to
19 funding environmental improvements is
20 much needed and greatly appreciated, but
21 the need in our schools is much greater.
22 It's more immediate, and I believe it
23 will require more of everyone. A steady,
24 reliable, and more significant source of
25 income for our public schools is critical

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2 to addressing current needs and to plan
3 for the future. It's needed to keep our
4 kids in school, to keep our families in
5 public schools instead of leaving for the
6 suburbs or transferring to charters, and
7 it's necessary for equity so that
8 students in struggling schools in
9 lower-income communities have the same
10 opportunities as those in our
11 higher-performing schools in our
12 higher-priced neighborhoods.

13 Our institutions are a great
14 benefit to our city, but they also
15 benefit greatly from it. A handful of
16 our public school graduates will have the
17 privilege of attending Penn maybe at
18 little or no cost. More will go to
19 Temple. Many more will work at our
20 hospitals and universities and in the
21 service industries that support them. I
22 believe the PILOTs are a reasonable ask,
23 a fair ask, but also a good investment on
24 the part of institutions, an investment
25 in the citizens of the City we share.

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2 An institution like Penn owns a
3 lot of land, a lot of valuable land, much
4 of which was historically obtained with
5 support or sanction of the City, state or
6 federal government. Asking them to pay a
7 portion of what their tax bill would be
8 is more than reasonable.

9 Lastly, the public health
10 situation we find ourselves in at the
11 present is an obvious crisis. It's huge.
12 It's easy to recognize as such. But what
13 we've seen since last March is that the
14 pandemic has unearthed and shed fresh
15 light on multiple crises beneath the
16 surface. Racial inequity is a crisis.
17 Gun violence in the City is a crisis.
18 Our drop-out rate is a crisis. The
19 number of students without basic skills
20 in math and reading after 13 years in our
21 public schools is a crisis, though it's
22 one we've accepted as normal.

23 Penn's commitment to
24 environmental improvements is important,
25 but it's basic, a safe classroom and a

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2 safe building for our kids. We must do
3 that and we must provide that across the
4 board, but I believe that we can do more.
5 There is no reason we can't, that we must
6 do more, and that it will take everyone,
7 every citizen, every politician, and
8 every institution in the City, to make
9 real and lasting progress on these
10 issues.

11 Thank you for the time, and
12 thank you for holding this hearing.

13 THE CLERK: Thank you very
14 much.

15 Next we have Stephanie King.
16 Please state your name and proceed with
17 your testimony.

18 MS. KING: Hi. Good afternoon.
19 My name is Stephanie King and I am the
20 President of Kearny Friends, a part of
21 General Philip Kearny Elementary School
22 in Northern Liberties, where my son is a
23 first grader while my daughter is a
24 student at Masterman. I want to thank
25 Councilmember Gym and Brooks for this

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2 hearing and the opportunity to speak. I
3 am here to testify in favor of wealthy
4 non-profits paying their fair share
5 through PILOTs.

6 When I worked at the University
7 of Pennsylvania, I regularly planned
8 dinner parties for faculty networking
9 that cost \$3,000 for fewer than a dozen
10 people. And then I would go home and try
11 to fundraise the \$1,500 a year for the
12 copy paper that the School District
13 couldn't afford to supply to my
14 children's teachers and the students at
15 their school.

16 Penn recently made a donation
17 of \$100 million over ten years, and
18 that's great, but their endowment is
19 \$15 billion and their President makes
20 \$3.6 million a year. They're only
21 donating 2.7 Amy Gutmanns a year. That's
22 all they think the 200,000 Philadelphia
23 School District students are worth.

24 We should not have to depend on
25 charity to educate our children. And not

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2 to pick on Penn. According to the
3 Inquirer, the value of all exempt
4 properties is \$29.6 billion and accounts
5 for 17 percent of the City's total real
6 estate value. Their combined tax breaks
7 equal about \$414 million annually.

8 Why do we care more about these
9 institutions than our children? Where is
10 the next generation of Philadelphians
11 going to come from to attend or work at
12 or patronize these establishments if we
13 systematically throw them under the bus
14 for tax breaks at every turn?

15 Schools should not need to be
16 adopted by benevolent billionaires to get
17 what they need, like Penn has done with
18 Sadie Alexander, to the point that it's
19 called Penn Alexander, and now Drexel is
20 building a school for Powel. What about
21 all the rest of the schools in the City?
22 We just sit around and hope that we're
23 like Little Orphan Annie waiting for
24 Daddy Warbucks?

25 Our children should not have to

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2 be kept like pets. It's not my
3 children's fault they weren't born in the
4 shadow of some shiny new tower that these
5 universities keep building with their
6 millions of dollars. Colleges are
7 building rock climbing walls for their
8 students while our children's classrooms
9 are laced with asbestos.

10 By making these organizations
11 tax exempt, we have made them obligation
12 exempt. We don't let our school students
13 get away with unexcused absences.
14 Philadelphia has gone on long enough with
15 giving these organizations an excuse note
16 for their absence from their obligation
17 to the rest of the City. Philly's
18 wealthy non-profit organizations need to
19 agree to make payments in lieu of taxes.

20 Thank you.

21 THE CLERK: Thank you very
22 much.

23 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you so
24 much, Ms. King.

25 THE CLERK: Next we have Winter

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2 Schneider joining us by phone, I believe.
3 Please state your name and proceed with
4 your testimony.

5 MS. SCHNEIDER: My name is
6 Winter Schneider and I speak today as a
7 non-black transplant to Philadelphia, a
8 former adjunct professor at Drexel
9 University, a parent to a second grader
10 at Samuel Powel Elementary, and a
11 resident of West Philadelphia.

12 I believe that wealthy
13 non-profits like Drexel University must
14 pay PILOTs as a way to begin to heal
15 their structural relationship to the
16 neighborhoods where they themselves grow
17 and thrive.

18 As institutions like Drexel
19 have expanded, they have created,
20 maintained, and perpetuated nothing short
21 of systemic inequity in West Philadelphia
22 and in the City at-large. Systemic
23 inequity and structural violence may
24 sound like abstract terms, but the deep
25 corrosive and generational impact that

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2 school underfunding has on public school
3 students, teachers, and staff is anything
4 but abstract, as you hear today.

5 I got a case of this myself
6 when my son, Idris, a kindergartner at
7 Southwark Elementary at the time,
8 internalized the unsafe, overcrowded, and
9 overstretched conditions in his school as
10 acute stress and self-harm.

11 Drexel as an institution of
12 higher education builds and hoards power
13 through property ownership and real
14 estate deals like the Schuylkill Yards
15 Development Project, which is touted as
16 the so-called knowledge community, but
17 which is also a driving force of
18 gentrification and displacement in West
19 Philadelphia. It does all of this while
20 simultaneously divesting from the futures
21 of the majority of Philadelphia's young
22 people in ways that university
23 programming and services cannot
24 remediate.

25 Drexel, like other wealthy

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2 non-profits that own such a large
3 percentage of the City's land, extract
4 value and grow in their own clout and
5 renown without investing in educational
6 equity in the very city that supports
7 their growth. Universities like Drexel,
8 Penn, and Jefferson create revenue,
9 advance the careers of those who pass
10 through their doors, and innovate
11 ground-breaking research, all without
12 seeding the same possibilities of growth
13 for public school students and their
14 communities in the future.

15 While these institutions have
16 played a historical role in developing
17 the City as we know it, the ends do not
18 justify the means. This deep
19 prioritization and divestment represented
20 so clearly in chronic school underfunding
21 is not the only example of how the means
22 through which wealthy non-profits grow
23 also create and exacerbate conditions of
24 scarcity, which is to say of violence for
25 black, brown, and poor Philadelphians in

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2 particular.

3 Growth without equity is
4 cancerous. Systemic inequity cannot be
5 fixed through the university services,
6 which can be de-funded or forgotten as
7 administrations change or as individuals
8 burn out. The root of this issue is
9 structural, and so must the remedy be.

10 A PILOTs agreement to pay
11 40 percent of their foregone property
12 taxes to address unsafe and toxic school
13 conditions in Philly's public schools
14 represents a way for wealthy non-profits
15 like Drexel to begin to enter into an
16 accountable relationship with
17 Philadelphia and its citizenry, and I
18 urge you to hold them accountable.

19 Thank you for this opportunity
20 to speak today.

21 THE CLERK: Thank you very much
22 for your testimony.

23 Next we have Jolene Calla.
24 Please state your name and proceed with
25 your testimony.

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2 MS. CALLA: Good afternoon,
3 members of the Committee on Children and
4 Youth. Thank you for the opportunity to
5 provide testimony on the proposal to
6 implement a PILOT in the City of
7 Philadelphia. I am the Vice President of
8 Healthcare Finance and Insurance for the
9 Hospital and Health Association of
10 Pennsylvania, or HAP. HAP is a statewide
11 association that represents 240 member
12 organizations across the Commonwealth
13 advocating for healthcare policy that
14 best serves the health and well-being of
15 the patients and communities of our
16 members. HAP also has a Southeast
17 Pennsylvania Advisory Board to address
18 issues arising in that region. It is on
19 behalf of those members in the City of
20 Philadelphia that I appear today to talk
21 about the importance of preserving HAP's
22 exempt status for hospitals, some
23 community work that hospitals are doing,
24 the economic realities of keeping the
25 doors of hospitals open, and the harmful

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2 effects of imposing mandatory PILOTs on
3 community initiatives.

4 First, we'd like to acknowledge
5 that removing environmental hazards in
6 Philadelphia schools is a laudable and
7 important goal and that the hospital
8 community is committed to pursuing health
9 equity for all of our patients.

10 However, looking to the
11 hospital community to address the
12 financial shortfall the schools are
13 facing is not the answer.

14 Despite having the highest
15 poverty rate among America's largest
16 cities, Philadelphia does not have a
17 public- or county-funded hospital system.
18 Private, not-for-profit hospitals fill
19 that need.

20 Hospitals are mission-driven
21 organizations whose top priority is
22 providing high-quality care for all
23 patients, 24 hours a day, seven days a
24 week, and 365 days a year, regardless of
25 where they live, what their health status

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2 is or if they can pay for that care.

3 They are committed to care inside and
4 outside of hospital walls and have been
5 active partners in keeping people safe
6 and healthy and alive, quite frankly,
7 through this pandemic.

8 A mandatory PILOT diverts funds
9 away from many clinical services that
10 hospitals operate at a financial loss,
11 which would otherwise become the
12 responsibility of government or another
13 tax-exempt entity. Some examples of
14 these services include neonatal intensive
15 care unit, addiction services,
16 psychiatric care, emergency and trauma,
17 and special clinics to serve low-income
18 communities.

19 PILOTs also divert funds from
20 the local workforce and development
21 programs, innovative programs to address
22 housing issues, and a myriad of other
23 meaningful community projects and
24 services that hospitals currently support
25 to benefit the most vulnerable local

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2 residents.

3 Each year tax-exempt hospitals
4 are required to demonstrate
5 accountability to the communities they
6 serve by reporting to the IRS on the
7 benefits that they provide using the Form
8 990, and they must make it publicly
9 available. Based on those filings, in
10 2017 hospitals provided approximately
11 \$1 billion in community benefit to
12 Philadelphia residents.

13 Hospitals are also economic
14 drivers in their community. In Fiscal
15 Year 2019, Philadelphia hospitals
16 directly employed 51,948 people and
17 indirectly supported another 60,867 city
18 jobs. They also contributed
19 \$25.8 billion in spending on the local
20 economy.

21 Despite varying degrees of
22 financial challenges, hospitals are
23 committed to being anchor institutions in
24 Philadelphia communities, and through the
25 years, they've demonstrated support for

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2 the City by fulfilling community needs in
3 numerous ways.

4 The COVID-19 pandemic has had a
5 disproportionate impact on economically
6 disadvantaged and minority communities in
7 Philadelphia. In an effort to address
8 this disparity in care, hospitals are
9 working to expand testing and vaccination
10 efforts in Philadelphia's hardest hit
11 communities. They're collaborating with
12 community stakeholders to vaccinate local
13 residents throughout the City.

14 As we speak right now,
15 hospitals are setting up and staffing
16 community vaccine clinics on a volunteer
17 basis in places of worship, recreation
18 centers, schools, and other locations to
19 ensure that the most vulnerable
20 Philadelphians have access to the
21 COVID-19 vaccine.

22 In addition to that highly
23 visible support, I'd like to take a
24 moment just to highlight two other
25 projects that you might not be aware of.

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These projects are part of what is called COACH initiative. COACH stands for Collaborative Opportunities to Advance Community Health. This initiative launched in 2015 and is funded by the hospital community. It brings 18 hospitals and 16 public health community and insurer partners together to identify and address specific local community health needs. Two current areas of focus are on food insecurity and trauma-informed care.

The first project is on food insecurity, which is defined as a lack of consistent access to sufficient nutritious food necessary to lead a healthy life. Nationally, 12.7 percent of households are affected by this. In Philadelphia, that number jumps to 21.7 of Philadelphia residents.

Philadelphia hospitals are leading efforts to address this need. They've collaborated to develop a screening tool that is now used in

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2 clinical settings to connect patients who
3 need food to resources and programs that
4 can supply it on a consistent basis.

5 Improving access to healthy
6 food is an effective way to help at-risk
7 patients and families prevent or better
8 manage chronic disease and improve their
9 overall quality of life.

10 With the economic downturn
11 resulting from the Coronavirus that we've
12 talked a lot about today, more and more
13 people in Philadelphia are relying on
14 this help to meet one of their most basic
15 needs.

16 The second project focuses on
17 treating trauma. We also heard about
18 that today. Trauma results from
19 experiencing events that are harmful or
20 life-threatening and overwhelm a person's
21 ability to cope over time. These
22 experiences cause lasting negative
23 effects on the physical, mental, and
24 developmental well-being of the people
25 involved.

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2 A large body of research shows
3 that the early trauma can affect people's
4 health and welfare in later life. A
5 significant number of children and
6 residents in Philadelphia experience some
7 form of trauma in their daily lives.
8 COACH participants focus on creating a
9 culture of healing, starting with
10 specific supports within the hospital
11 walls and extending into Philadelphia
12 communities to meet people where they
13 are.

14 In addition to the focus on
15 trauma, hospitals are active in the issue
16 of gun violence, from offering preventive
17 services to providing supports for
18 victims and their families. They're
19 active in both research and advocacy to
20 help make Philadelphia streets safer.
21 PILOTs would take away funding that is
22 currently used to support --

23 THE CLERK: Excuse me.

24 MS. CALLA: -- these and many
25 other programs.

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2 THE CLERK: If you can just
3 please conclude your remarks shortly when
4 you're able just so that we can make sure
5 we get to everyone, that would be most
6 appreciated.

7 MS. CALLA: Sure. I'll send
8 you my full testimony, but I would also
9 point out that local hospitals are
10 treating a large number of Medicare and
11 Medicaid patients and, in effect, that
12 reimbursement falls short of what it
13 actually costs to care for those
14 patients. So some of the funding that
15 we're talking about is really
16 contributing to the care of those people
17 in Philadelphia.

18 There's also the impact on the
19 pandemic, and then certainly we can talk
20 about the other reasons and contributions
21 that hospitals make that are beyond
22 clinical, that they serve day-to-day.

23 So for all the reasons
24 previously mentioned and on behalf of
25 Pennsylvania hospitals, we strongly

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2 oppose the imposition of mandatory
3 PILOTs.

4 Thank you.

5 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
6 very much, Ms. Calla, and I appreciate
7 your taking the time to testify. I do
8 understand that you're representing the
9 hospital association. I mean, one of the
10 things I would just take issue with a
11 little bit is that PILOTs have to be in
12 some way perceived as being in opposition
13 to stated hospital roles.

14 If you could just mute your --
15 I think we're hearing a back and forth,
16 Ms. Calla, so if you could just mute.
17 Thank you.

18 So to be clear, there have been
19 a number of partnerships that the City of
20 Philadelphia has had with its hospitals,
21 including recognizing the fact that
22 asbestos, mold, lead poisoning, exposure
23 to unsafe, unhealthy conditions has
24 actually put young people into hospitals,
25 has exacerbated a necessary hospital

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2 visit, including data and very specific
3 case issues that have been made public
4 through the Philadelphia Inquirer's Toxic
5 Schools investigatory reports and other
6 things that we know to be accurate. So I
7 think -- or to have been reported rather
8 and confirmed.

9 So I think in part this
10 discussion should be one in which we
11 should seek an overall investment in the
12 public health and recognize that PILOTs
13 are not necessarily antithetical to that.
14 They can double down on investments that
15 have been made.

16 We recognize your concerns on
17 behalf of your association, and hope that
18 we can still continue to keep the
19 dialogue going. But thank you very much
20 for your testimony.

21 And if the Clerk could please
22 call the next public testifier.

23 THE CLERK: Next we have Adam
24 Bleiman. Please state your name and
25 proceed with your testimony.

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2 MR. BLEIMAN: Hello. My name
3 is Adam Bleiman. I use he in pronouns.
4 I'm an alum of Drexel. I appreciate
5 everyone who put this together, and I
6 really especially appreciate hearing
7 testimony of all the students of
8 Philadelphia public schools and community
9 activists.

10 I went to Drexel from 2011 to
11 2016, and now I am gainfully employed.
12 I'm a member of Socialist Alternative,
13 and I strongly support Drexel, Penn, and
14 other mega non-profits paying their fair
15 share to the City, especially to fund
16 public education.

17 Before, during, and after my
18 time at Drexel in the early to mid 2010s,
19 the University had been growing and
20 expanding, and still is, and its
21 expensive tuition raising. It's no
22 secret that Drexel benefits greatly from
23 its location in the City, attracting
24 students taking advantage of the benefits
25 of its proximity to all that Center City

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2 has to offer, and Drexel very much plays
3 this up in its promotional material,
4 attracting students who go tens and tens
5 of thousands of dollars into debt to
6 attend the institution. Of course, they
7 do not play up the atrocious conditions
8 inflicted upon Philadelphia public
9 schools and students and teachers, as
10 many speakers today have detailed.

11 Drexel has been buying up more
12 land, building new buildings, creating
13 more institutions and initiatives and so
14 on. There is a lot of money flowing in
15 and around Drexel that enables this, and
16 a lot of related companies and a lot of
17 individuals within Drexel as an
18 institution are making a lot of money
19 from this.

20 And with all of this buying up
21 of real estate, building new buildings,
22 and expanding, as other speakers have
23 explained, this continues to result in
24 gentrification, which is negatively and
25 for decades has been negatively impacting

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2 poor and working-class, predominantly
3 black communities.

4 I want to make it clear that
5 Drexel owes its ability to expand and
6 prosper to the City of Philadelphia,
7 particularly the working class of the
8 City, which makes not just the University
9 run, but it makes the whole City run.

10 Without workers preparing food, stocking
11 shelves, running cash registers,
12 collecting trash, repairing gas lines,
13 building homes, delivering packages,
14 operating SEPTA vehicles and more,
15 institutions like Drexel and Penn and
16 others would not be where they are today.
17 And so all these workers that make the
18 City run deserve to give their kids a
19 safe and quality public education.

20 Philadelphia public schools
21 especially and social services in general
22 have been systematically underfunded for
23 decades, resulting in toxic school
24 buildings that even before the pandemic
25 were damaging students' and teachers'

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2 health and abilities to learn and teach,
3 which, again, many people who have
4 testified today have spoken about in
5 great detail, and it's really just awful
6 to hear about.

7 When City government and
8 institutions claim that there's no money
9 to give children an adequate, let alone a
10 high-quality education, that's simply not
11 true. Institutions like Drexel in the
12 City as well as Penn, other mega
13 non-profits have lots of money, and they
14 have a financial obligation to the City
15 that they depend on, and they should
16 absolutely not be exempt from it.

17 So especially now that there's
18 a budget shortfall, it's unacceptable to
19 make the disproportionately black and
20 brown working class and poor of the City
21 pay -- (connection issues) -- that people
22 depend on.

23 But of course this problem goes
24 way deeper and further than the pandemic
25 and the current economic recession that

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2 we're in. It's a structural issue, and
3 it requires a structural solution.

4 City officials should work for
5 the population of the City to ensure
6 equitable and quality public services.
7 The alternative to this, which we've been
8 seeing for decades, as everyone on here
9 knows, is massive entrenched poverty,
10 inequality, and adverse impacts on mental
11 and physical health of youth and adults.

12 And I want to thank Jobs with
13 Justice for putting this on, and I just
14 want to reiterate, we need a green jobs
15 program to overhaul Philly school
16 infrastructure and make buildings healthy
17 and safe, without risk of exposure to
18 asbestos and lead, proper heating,
19 cooling, and ventilation, water
20 fountains. So --

21 THE CLERK: Please conclude
22 your remarks when you can.

23 MR. BLEIMAN: Sure. Sure. I'm
24 almost done.

25 We need to vaccinate teachers,

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2 workers, students, and at-risk family
3 members. We need a democratically
4 elected school board so that teachers,
5 students, parents, and the broader
6 community can have a say. Teachers
7 deserve this. Students deserve this.
8 The City deserves this, and anything
9 less is --

10 THE CLERK: Thank you. Please
11 conclude --

12 MR. BLEIMAN: -- violence in
13 order to protect their interest, and
14 these institutions need to pay their fair
15 share.

16 Thank you so much for letting
17 me speak.

18 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you.

19 THE CLERK: Thank you.

20 Next we have Mary Ebeling.

21 Please state your name and proceed with
22 your testimony. Also, please keep your
23 testimony to three minutes. Thank you.

24 (No response.)

25 THE CLERK: Ms. Ebeling, are

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2 you on the line? Mary?

3 (No response.)

4 THE CLERK: Okay. I don't hear
5 Mary, so we're going to move forward.

6 Rosa Nanasi Haas. Are you on the line?

7 MS. HAAS: Yes. I'm here.

8 Thank you.

9 THE CLERK: Please state your
10 name and proceed with your testimony.

11 MS. HAAS: Hello. My name is
12 Rosa and I'm a current Penn education
13 grad student and member of Penn Community
14 for Justice as well as Socialist
15 Alternative, and I urge Drexel and Penn
16 to help fund not just Penn Alexander and
17 Science Leadership Academy Middle School
18 but all schools across the City.

19 Like other non-profits, Penn is
20 exempt from paying property taxes each
21 year, even though they own \$3.2 billion
22 in real estate and have a \$3.5 billion
23 operating budget. They claim that they
24 are training the best educators to be
25 effective teachers through their graduate

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2 programs. Yet, they send these teachers
3 into underresourced and underfunded
4 schools with no support.

5 In Philadelphia, United States,
6 and globally, the pandemic has laid bare
7 the inequalities of the capitalist
8 system. While Comcast gets a tax break
9 on their \$1.2 billion Technology Center
10 in Center City until 2027, the School
11 District has proposed that students who
12 can't afford WiFi in their homes use
13 hotspots in parking lots to log into
14 their classes.

15 Teachers are forced to address
16 issues of poverty such as the lack of a
17 strong internet connection while Penn
18 robs Philly public schools of hundreds of
19 millions of dollars in much-needed funds
20 to fix crumbling, toxic buildings and
21 bring classrooms into 2021.

22 PILOTS are a demand that
23 students and working-class communities in
24 North and West Philly have had for years,
25 and this renewed push to get Penn and

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2 other universities to pay PILOTs comes
3 after a resurgence of the Black Lives
4 Matter movement for obvious reasons.

5 It is clear that Penn and other
6 huge, wealthy, influential institutions
7 in the City perpetuate more harm to
8 communities of color than good. Penn,
9 Drexel, Temple, Comcast, Aramark are all
10 hugely wealthy institutions that have
11 made their money taking advantage of
12 every corporate tax loophole, hiring
13 anti-union lawyers to stop their workers
14 from organizing for better working
15 conditions, all while taking and using
16 resources and infrastructure from the
17 City.

18 Addressing this crisis will
19 require a real program of taxing the
20 rich, including Penn, Drexel, Temple, and
21 Comcast, along with de-funding and
22 demilitarizing police departments, and
23 using that money instead towards holistic
24 social services, including education,
25 housing, creating jobs to address this

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2 climate crisis, and healthcare to get out
3 of this mess caused by the wealthy
4 hoarding of our resources.

5 Both the democrats and
6 republicans have not stepped up to
7 support schools over the needs of big
8 business. We cannot depend on either
9 political party to save our schools. The
10 ruling class is trying to divide families
11 and educators around the issue of
12 reopening in order to protect themselves
13 from criticism over the current state of
14 our public school system.

15 Throughout the last year, the
16 City as well as these hugely wealthy
17 institutions that control our city have
18 done nothing to repair our crumbling
19 school buildings in the midst of an
20 economic crisis where millions of people
21 could have benefited from a green new
22 deals job program that had been created,
23 had quality good-paying jobs to refurbish
24 our broken school buildings.

25 On top of taxing the rich,

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2 educators, parents, and students should
3 be determining how and when to return to
4 in-person learning by building health and
5 safety committees. Families and
6 educators both want a safe reopening, and
7 both of these groups should be making
8 these decisions for their schools.
9 Health and safety committees should be
10 established that are made up of
11 educators, parents, and community members
12 together with health experts to decide
13 what is needed to make their schools safe
14 for reopening. Those who work and learn
15 in these schools know best what their
16 needs are.

17 In order to fix our collapsing
18 infrastructure and ensure that every
19 student has a school to go to, it will
20 require a tremendous coordinated effort
21 with these school committees coming
22 together and demanding to tax the rich to
23 fully fund our schools.

24 When we fight together, we win.

25 THE CLERK: Thank you very

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2 much.

3 That concludes our list of
4 individuals registered for public
5 comment.

6 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
7 very much to our Clerk.

8 I will ask if there's anyone
9 else present in this hearing whose name
10 we have failed to call and that wishes to
11 offer testimony on the resolution being
12 considered today.

13 (No response.)

14 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Hearing
15 none, I want to thank all the panels and
16 witnesses for their participation. I
17 want to thank especially all of the
18 public testifiers, more than 30 of whom
19 took time out of their day to make an
20 important statement about an investment
21 in our schools, the responsibility of our
22 largest institutions and civic actors,
23 and the importance of us taking action
24 together.

25 I wanted to offer an

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2 opportunity for the bill sponsor to make
3 some closing remarks as well.
4 Councilmember Brooks.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Madam
6 Chair, Councilmember Thomas put in for
7 comment. Should I save my closing
8 remarks after -- he just put it in.

9 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Absolutely.
10 We can have -- thank you so much,
11 Councilmember Thomas, to our Vice Chair,
12 Vice Chair Thomas.

13 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank you,
14 Madam Chair. Thank you for your
15 leadership this evening. I just wanted
16 to again thank the sponsor of the bill,
17 Councilmember Brooks, and of course thank
18 you to all the testimony that we heard
19 this evening. I think it was important
20 to listen to people's perspective and,
21 most importantly, lived experience.

22 I think what we heard today was
23 a lot of testimony from students who are
24 essentially impacted by the decisions
25 that are made by not just the

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2 institutions but as well as us as elected
3 officials. So a lot of the testimony
4 really resonated with me. I appreciate
5 the opportunity to listen to the public,
6 and I just wanted to say thank you, Madam
7 Chair, and your team for facilitating
8 this conversation, and of course thank
9 you, Councilmember Brooks, for
10 introducing the bill and forcing us to
11 have these tough conversations.

12 Thank you.

13 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
14 very much, Vice Chair Thomas.

15 Councilmember Brooks.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Yes.
17 Thank you. So I have to do my thank
18 you's, but first I want to thank the
19 young people, the young people that have
20 invested their time and energy and
21 passion into the future of Philadelphia,
22 and I just want to let you know you're
23 heard loud and clear, and that's why
24 we're here to begin this conversation.

25 And then to the community

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2 members that also took time to stay on
3 this hearing throughout the day to get
4 your passion, your thoughts on record
5 around what it means for us to work
6 together to make sure that our city
7 continues to thrive.

8 To the parents, as a parent and
9 a parent activist, we're in this
10 together, and this fight is really about
11 making sure that the next generation of
12 Philadelphians have all that they need,
13 and we as parents will be held
14 accountable. You know, our children are
15 watching us, so thank you for taking the
16 time to put your thoughts on record.
17 Even I think the 100 or 300 parents that
18 sent a signed letter over to us, you're
19 recognized here too.

20 Our educators, we need you to
21 continue to invest in our young people
22 and giving them the drive and passion to
23 do this work, and I just want to thank
24 you all for the sacrifice and coming into
25 Philadelphia, those that live here or

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2 those that don't live here, investing in
3 our children and the long-term education
4 for that. And I just want you to know
5 that's important to me and it's important
6 to my colleagues.

7 And the last thank you I want
8 to give is to Ms. Calla that brought up a
9 differing opinion on what it means to
10 have PILOTs here in the City, and I want
11 to let you know I heard it, and I hope
12 you also heard the thoughts and comments
13 from the community members, the parents,
14 and the children that spoke as well. And
15 I think that an investment into our city
16 or the work that hospitals specifically
17 do in our city around trauma, around
18 vaccination is very important to all of
19 us, but that does not take away from the
20 fact that we need sound investments into
21 our public schools in order to be
22 preventive of some of the same things
23 that you have mentioned, and also take in
24 account that many of the parents that
25 spoke today are also uses of the services

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2 that the hospitals in the City provide.

3 So I hope we're able to keep a
4 continuing dialogue on what it means to
5 bring PILOTs or SILOTs into the City to
6 make sure that we're funding education.
7 And I look forward to have a deeper
8 conversation about the COACH initiative
9 that you brought up, and I would like to
10 speak to multiple folks that are involved
11 in this conversation, because this
12 conversation is not a one and done. It's
13 a long conversation, and it's going to be
14 tough conversations, and like I said,
15 it's based on making sure that we're
16 creating the best city that we can offer.

17 I thank you to my colleagues
18 for being a part of this hearing and
19 being a part of making it a great day and
20 for the whole team.

21 Thank you so much. I think I
22 got everyone.

23 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
24 very much, Councilmember Brooks.

25 This concludes the public

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2 hearing of the Committee, and we will now
3 recess the hearing until the call of the
4 Chair.

5 I want to thank our public and
6 our viewing public for your time today,
7 and thank you very much to everyone for
8 your attendance. Have a good night.

9 (Committee on Children and
10 Youth adjourned at 5:28 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the
proceedings, evidence and objections are
contained fully and accurately in the
stenographic notes taken by me upon the
foregoing matter, and that this is a true and
correct transcript of same.

MICHELE L. MURPHY
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