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COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
PUBLIC HEARING AND PUBLIC MEETING
BEFORE THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

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- - -
Wednesday, 11/14/01
11 a.m.
Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, PA
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9 BILL 010646 - An ordinance amending Chapter 20-500 of
the Philadelphia Code, entitled "Councilmatic
10 Districts," by revising the boundaries of the
Councilmatic Districts, under certain terms and
11 conditions.

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PRESENT: COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANNA C. VERNA
COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE L. BLACKWELL
14 COUNCILWOMAN BLONDELL REYNOLDS BROWN
COUNCILMAN DARRELL L. CLARKE
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18 COUNCILMAN RICHARD T. MARIANO
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19 COUNCILMAN MICHAEL A. NUTTER
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20 COUNCILMAN ANGEL L. ORTIZ
COUNCILMAN FRANK RIZZO
21 COUNCILWOMAN MARIAN B. TASCO

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2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good morning,
3 everyone. I do apologize to our witnesses for the
4 delay.

5 This is the public hearing for the
6 Committee of the Whole regarding Bill No. 010646. I
7 would ask Mr. McPherson to please read the title of
8 the bill.

9 MR. MCPHERSON: Bill No. 010646, an
10 ordinance amending Chapter 20-500 of the
11 Philadelphia Code, entitled "Councilmatic
12 Districts," by revising the boundaries of the
13 Councilmatic Districts, under certain terms and
14 conditions.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Our first
16 witness?

17 MR. MCPHERSON: Dr. Smiler, President of
18 Bridge Pratt Business and Professional Association.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Is Dr. Smiler
20 here?

21 (Witness comes forward.)

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good morning,
23 sir. Kindly identify yourself for the record and
24 proceed with your testimony.

25 DR. SMILER: Thank you.

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2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You're welcome.

3 DR. SMILER: My name is Dr. Irving Smiler.

4 I have been practicing podiatry for 51 years at 1546
5 Pratt Street.

6 Earlier on in my career, I joined the
7 American Division Frankford Post. Several years
8 later, I was invited to join the Frankford Lions
9 Club. At a later date, I became interested in the
10 problems of the Frankford community. The
11 neighborhood was going down fast: People did not
12 feel safe; patients did not want to come to
13 Frankford or to my office; streets and sidewalks
14 were not clean; stores were closing rapidly.

15 The Bridge Pratt Business and Professional
16 Association was formed in 1988. At the present
17 time, I serve as its president. Our mission is to
18 improve the business, residential, and
19 transportation environment in the area. Several
20 other prominent organizations started about the same
21 time.

22 The overall theme is turning a
23 neighborhood around. The organizations working
24 together can boast of the Frankford Plan Main Street
25 Program and construction of a \$180 million Frankford

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2 Transportation Center. This will be the finest
3 inner-city public transportation center in the
4 nation.

5 New stores are opening. The streets and
6 sidewalks are clean, thanks to the Frankford Special
7 Services District. Crime has decreased and people
8 feel safer. Frankford Hospital built a completely
9 new hospital.

10 All of this could not have happened
11 without the assistance of our City Council
12 representative, Rick Mariano. When we need his
13 help, he listens, studies the situation, and makes
14 positive action. Rick Mariano knows and understands
15 Frankford. He cares about our community.

16 In my opinion, this redistricting plan
17 proposed legislation for the 7th Councilmatic
18 District would be a mistake. Frankford is a
19 multiracial, multi-ethnic, multi-religious
20 community, with 30,000 people at various economic
21 levels. In our neighborhood, people with modest
22 economic means can share in the American dream.

23 On behalf of the Bridge Pratt Business and
24 Professional Association, I urge you to keep
25 Councilman Rick Mariano in Frankford. Help us to

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2 finish the job to make Frankford the best that it
3 can be.
4 Thank you.
5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you very
6 much, sir.
7 (Applause.)
8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The next
9 witness?
10 MR. MCPHERSON: Billy Gambrel (ph.),
11 resident of Frankford.
12 (Witness comes forward.)
13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good morning,
14 sir. Kindly identify yourself for the record and
15 proceed with your testimony.
16 MR. GAMBREL: Yes. My name is William
17 Gambrel, from the 7th Councilmatic District. I am
18 currently vice president of the Frankford Chargers
19 Athletic Association, Athletic Director, and
20 community work person --
21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Excuse me, sir.
22 The noise level is much too high. I think you
23 deserve a little more respect than that.
24 Please speak into the microphone.
25 MR. GAMBREL: Thank you very much.

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2 I've worked very hard in the community,
3 I've tried to support Frankford for years and years,
4 and I've done things that I, you know, want to do to
5 make the Frankford community a much better place to
6 live and to raise the children and a nice community.
7 And we have long waited for a councilman to service
8 us the way Councilman Mariano has served us. We are
9 very pleased with his service, and I would like to
10 see things stay the same as it's been in the area,
11 with no change of any plans or anything, because we
12 certainly have a lot of improvement in the Frankford
13 area, especially with our young, and I would like to
14 see that continue to be that way, and we can
15 continue to do the same thing we can to support the
16 elderly and the people of the Frankford community
17 for which is well needed in order to keep a safe and
18 healthy community.

19 And I'm very appreciative of everything
20 that's going on right now, and I'd like it to stay
21 that way. Thank you very much.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you so
23 much.

24 (Applause.)

25 MR. MCPHERSON: Our next witness is Father

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2 Pazzoli.

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Is Father

4 Pazzoli here?

5 (Witness comes forward.)

6 FATHER PAZZOLI: Good morning, Council

7 President.

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Please identify

9 yourself for the record, Father.

10 FATHER PAZZOLI: Council President Verna

11 and members of Council, my name is Father Bob

12 Pazzoli. I'm (indiscernible)at St. Francis De Sales

13 and the pastor of St. Joachim parish in the

14 Frankford section of Philadelphia. Founded in 1845,

15 St. Joachim has been a vital part of Frankford, even

16 before the town was incorporated into our city in

17 1854.

18 Our neighborhood, Frankford, is quite

19 unique -- from the Historical Society on Orthodox

20 Street to the Civil War Museum on Griscom Street,

21 from the many churches and faiths that offer worship

22 services and social services to the variety of

23 cultures and races from which our neighbors come.

24 From the 1700 era homes in the east to the mansions

25 in the northwest, our neighborhood is definitely

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2 unique.

3 And though the neighborhood has been
4 through some difficult times, there is a resurgence
5 happening. Many churches and community
6 organizations have come together and have worked
7 with our councilman to bring about many positive
8 changes, and Frankford is once again, we are happy
9 to say, coming back to life.

10 Since 1997, St. Joachim parish has made a
11 concerted effort to revitalize ourselves as a member
12 of the Frankford community. As part of our
13 revitalization effort, we have joined the Eastern
14 Pennsylvania Organizing Project, known as EPOP, and
15 have worked to organize ourselves as a faith-based
16 community in addressing issues in our neighborhood.

17 This revitalization has led St. Joachim
18 EPOP to partner with the Frankford Group Ministry
19 Community Development Corporation and Councilman
20 Mariano in addressing the issue of abandoned houses
21 in Frankford. We seek to recycle housing, not tear
22 it down. In light of the EPOP blight plan for the
23 City of Philadelphia, as I am sure you are, aware
24 establishing an effective and viable partnership to
25 bring about change, it takes an enormous amount of

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2 time and effort. Relationships are vital if the
3 partnership is to be successful. An important part
4 of this relationship is knowing each other and
5 sharing each other's visions and concerns.

6 At this critical time in the history of
7 our neighborhood, I would need to speak against any
8 proposal for redistricting that would not only
9 disrupt our present partnership with Councilman
10 Mariano but would, more importantly, interfere with
11 any progress that is presently being made, and,
12 worst yet, it would be a redistricting proposal that
13 splits or divides a town, a neighborhood that has
14 been together since the 1800s, killing any progress
15 and any chance for life for the sake of some
16 compromise.

17 Thank you for allowing me to testify,
18 Councilwoman.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you,
20 Father.

21 FATHER PAZZOLI: You're welcome.

22 MR. MCPHERSON: The next witness is
23 Vincent Catanzarro (ph.), Executive Director of the
24 Holy Family Neighborhood Center.

25 (Witness comes forward.)

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2 MR. CATANZARRO: Okay, My name is Vincent
3 Catanzarro, and I am the executive director of the
4 Holy Family Neighborhood Center. I have been the
5 director there for about two years, and it is an
6 urban mission, and we are deeply involved with the
7 Frankford community.

8 As far as my observations, they are
9 objective, and I want to say clearly that Councilman
10 Mariano has been very effective in providing
11 programs and assistance to the people of Frankford,
12 so I represent not only myself but I represent my
13 organization and the people that have expressed that
14 to me.

15 He has been very effective in supporting a
16 neighborhood playground and park, which was taken
17 from a blight program -- in other words, a situation
18 where there were many abandoned cars -- and he
19 assisted us in developing this particular
20 playground. It is a beautiful playground, it's
21 still being built, and it is a testimony [sic] to
22 his cooperation with the people.

23 As far as the councilman, he is an
24 advocate for all of the people because I have seen
25 this time and time again. People that are in need,

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2 he does come to their service.

3 We are establishing an advocacy program
4 which will represent many of the people in East
5 Frankford so that they can have one voice, and we
6 have about 60 to 80 names, and the Councilman has
7 been very effective in providing this.

8 My organization works with the elderly and
9 the young. We have after school tutoring programs
10 and situations that empower children to do well in
11 school. The councilman has also assisted us in
12 after-school tutoring programs.

13 I would say at this point what I'm telling
14 you is an observation and -- that is clear. I see
15 that the councilman has been effective, and I would
16 say at this point, don't rock the boat, because East
17 Frankford is having the resurgence, and the
18 neighborhood is coming back. You could see it
19 within the stores, and the people have a sense of
20 hope.

21 Thank you.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Thank you so
23 much.

24 (Applause.)

25 MR. MCPHERSON: The next witness is Steve

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2 Culbertson.

3 (Witness comes forward.)

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good morning,
5 sir.

6 MR. CULBERTSON: Good morning. My name is
7 Steve Culbertson, the executive director of the
8 Community Development Corporation of Frankford Group
9 Ministry. I'm also representing Reverend Robin
10 (indiscernible), the executive director of
11 Frankford Group Ministry.

12 I've been working in Philadelphia in
13 community development for about 12 years. I've
14 worked in various capacities in various
15 neighborhoods, and the question that I really have
16 today for the Council is, when you've got something
17 that really works and where you have a neighborhood
18 that really is working closely with a councilman to
19 revitalize the community, why change it?

20 We have, all of us that are gathered here,
21 a really good relationship with Councilman Mariano
22 and his staff. We are bringing back Frankford.
23 Property values have gone up, Frankford Avenue is
24 feeling resurgent, there are many new stores there,
25 there are some antique stores, there's a new cafe.

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2 Why are we going to change it for the sake of
3 political expediency?

4 I think that it's really important that
5 keep Frankford together. I think it's really,
6 really important that we keep Rick Mariano as our
7 councilman in this area of Frankford for the
8 foreseeable future. Besides, they've just gotten
9 used to me being a pain in their ass, and I don't
10 want to have to train another group of staff at a
11 councilman's office.

12 Thanks a lot.

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

14 (Applause.)

15 MR. MCPHERSON: The next witness is Kate
16 Clark.

17 (Witness comes forward.)

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good morning.

19 MS. CLARK: Good morning. My name is Kate
20 Clark, and I'm the executive director of Frankford
21 United Neighbors Community Development Corporation
22 and Neighborhood Advisory Council. I'm also the
23 chair of the Frankford Plan 2000.

24 Most of the people who have sat here
25 before me have basically said everything that I have

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2 wanted to say. Mr. Culbertson summed it up
3 beautifully -- if it's not broken, why fix it?

4 Councilman Mariano has been representing
5 those persons in the Frankford community in the 7th
6 Councilmatic District wonderfully when each of us
7 come into his office and look what we need to get
8 done for the resurgence of this community. And this
9 community is on the move, we are being revitalized,
10 because if that weren't happening, I don't think
11 we'd be sitting here today discussing this wonderful
12 community.

13 So, therefore, why are we changing the
14 horse in the middle of the stream?

15 We really need to keep Councilman Mariano
16 there. We need for this body here to move on to
17 continue to fight for the people of the City of
18 Philadelphia. We need to talk about the
19 Philadelphia blight plan so that we can take care of
20 other business here in the city.

21 Thank you.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Thank you.

23 (Applause.)

24 MR. MCPHERSON: The next witness is Ken
25 Roach (ph.).

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2 (Witness comes forward.)

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good morning,
4 sir.

5 MR. ROOCH: Good morning. My name is Ken
6 Rook, and I represent the Community Development
7 Corporation of Frankford Group Ministry. I run the
8 Frankford Street program. My job is to work with
9 the businesses on the avenue.

10 Because of his knowledge in Frankford and
11 its problems, Councilman Mariano has been very
12 supportive of both new business and expansion. He
13 constantly expresses that the business merchants
14 include the Frankford community in their plans for
15 future growth. He's always supportive of our
16 promotions and community events by his attendance
17 and genuine interest for our concerns. His staff
18 reacts quickly in solving problems as they arise,
19 which is a reflection of Councilman Mariano's
20 dedication.

21 Frankford needs all the help it can get in
22 its quest for returning to its former status as a
23 main shopping center. Losing Councilman Mariano
24 would be a serious setback for the Frankford
25 community and the business district.

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2 Thank you.

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

4 (Applause.)

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair
6 recognizes Councilman Kenney

7 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you, Madam
8 President.

9 I just wanted to take the opportunity
10 during the course of this testimony, which is very
11 favorable to Councilman Mariano, and I think he
12 deserves their kudos. I just want to say that as a
13 resident of the 1st Councilmatic District, I'm
14 extremely happy with the support and representation
15 of my district councilman, Councilman DiCicco, who
16 has worked very hard to improve the business climate
17 in South Philadelphia and has cleaned our streets
18 and has done lots of things to make our neighborhood
19 a better place to live.

20 So since we're giving kudos out, I wanted
21 to talk about my own district councilperson,
22 Councilman DiCicco, who's doing a wonderful job.
23 And if anyone has the opportunity to be represented
24 by him, I'm sure they'd be happy with his service.

25 Thank you.

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2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

3 Our next witness?

4 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Carol Shirley.

5 (Witness comes forward.)

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good morning.

7 MS. SHIRLEY: Good morning, Madam

8 President and distinguished members of Council. My
9 name is Carol Shirley. I come today as a
10 representative of the Frankford Business Association
11 and as a business owner in Frankford.

12 I'd like to start with a quote from
13 Rousseau. I'll keep my remarks brief, even though
14 my papers look a little heavy here.

15 "The world of reality is limited. The
16 world of imagination is boundless."

17 Our reality may limit us to having to
18 accept the redistricting of Frankford, and this
19 would be a great mistake at this juncture. Our
20 imagination, however, includes the hopes of
21 maintaining our district, keeping Rick Mariano as
22 our councilman to do the job he was elected to do,
23 and to grow with the arts, business, and community
24 that has taken on a life of its own in our village
25 of Frankford.

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2 Have any of you been to Frankford lately?
3 Have you seen the shops that are growing? Have you
4 seen the smiles on the faces of our residents
5 because of the beauty that's being brought into
6 their community? Have you heard about the film that
7 has just been completed, done about the Frankford
8 community, sponsored by the Lion Theater, Frankford
9 United Neighbors, and the Frankford Historical
10 Society? This film is about to be introduced into
11 the Sundance Film Festival.

12 Do you realize how important it for us to
13 keep our district and our councilman, Rick Mariano?
14 He's been a great supporter of all of the wonderful
15 things that are happening there.

16 If you haven't been to Frankford, if you
17 don't realize the work, the love, the dreams that
18 have gone into making this community vibrant, to
19 bringing it back, then how can you make a decision
20 to divide this district, and how does it go through
21 the loss of our councilman?

22 Frankford, with the support of many
23 wonderful and hard-working people such as Rick
24 Mariano, has been like a rainbow coming out with the
25 sun that's shining in our community at this time.

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2 We cannot afford to lose this momentum. We need
3 Mr. Mariano. We need our district to continue the
4 success of this community. This is not the time to
5 rearrange the pieces of this puzzle. It may never
6 fit in the same way again.

7 I say this as a business owner in
8 Frankford, as the treasurer and representative of
9 the Frankford Business Association, and as someone
10 concerned for the future of a growing, thriving
11 business district that has been neglected for many,
12 many years.

13 Rick Mariano has been our councilman
14 during this wonderful renaissance that Frankford is
15 experiencing. This is a crisis within our
16 community. That our district would be restructured
17 could be disastrous to our stability and our
18 continued growth and success.

19 Rick Mariano has been a great supporter of
20 the rebirth of the business district in Frankford.
21 He has supported the arts in our district and is a
22 strong supporter of the Frankford Plan 2000. Also,
23 the Frankford Arts Festival, which, within just two
24 years, has brought artists, performers, visitors,
25 dignitaries, community groups from all over in the

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2 City numbering in the thousands to enjoy the
3 Frankford Art Festival.

4 Rick Mariano has been supportive of our
5 problems and concerns regarding abandoned and
6 deteriorating buildings. The fight on crime and
7 graffiti in this area has become extremely
8 aggressive with the support of Rick Mariano. He
9 listens, he understands the needs of this area. He
10 needs to be here right now.

11 We need this leadership and his
12 understanding. We need the close working
13 relationship with our council representative. Rick
14 Mariano has a representative at our business
15 association meetings that listens to our concerns
16 and tries to help us work through problems. Rick
17 Mariano's office is accessible to his constituents,
18 has a friendly, helpful staff. And they keep in
19 touch on a grassroots level.

20 Frankford is diversity, art, laughter,
21 community. Frankford is a village of dreams that is
22 becoming a reality. Frankford is strong and
23 growing. Frankford needs to remain the district
24 that it has been, and we need Mr. Mariano.

25 I leave you with these four words of

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2 Stella Carol Mann: Desire, ask, believe, and
3 receive.

4 We as the people of Frankford desire our
5 dreams. We ask that we remain the district we are.
6 We believe in the future of Frankford, and we hope
7 to receive all that we desire. Keep our district
8 intact. Keep Rick Mariano as our councilman

9 Thank you.

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Thank you very
11 much.

12 (Applause.)

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: The Chair
14 recognizes Councilman Mariano.

15 COUNCILMAN MARIANO: Thank you, Madam
16 President.

17 Carol, I want to thank you for all that.
18 And I've been called a lot of things, even today,
19 but I've never been called a rainbow before. So I
20 don't know what to say. Thank you. Thank you very
21 much.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Our next
23 witness.

24 MR. MCPHERSON: Ellsworth Barrett.

25 (Witness comes forward.)

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2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good morning,
3 sir.

4 MR. BARRETT: Good morning, Madam
5 Chairwoman.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Please identify
7 yourself for the record.

8 MR. BARRETT: Madam Chairman, I was born
9 in Frankford eighty years ago. My parents has been
10 there for a hundred years. I'm a member of the
11 (indiscernible) church, which is a part of the
12 Underground Railroad. We have a long history, and
13 I'm currently a liaison with Rick Mariano.

14 Now, when me and Rick was talking, all the
15 committeemen, you couldn't get nothing done 'cause
16 the committee would say, You go back to your
17 territory and I'll stay in mine. So Rick appointed
18 me liaison. I get to all the people. People start
19 calling me and (indiscernible), Go down there and
20 see and this get this done. So I followed, you
21 know? I try to organize the people, see? But we
22 ain't all the invisible man, you know?

23 And so Rick is the first councilman to
24 ever win 2 terms in 25 years. These people are not
25 crazy, they know that a councilman gets up there and

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2 he doesn't do nothing, and East Frankford is the one
3 they (indiscernible) on. They don't want to do
4 nothing for East Frankford, you know? So Rick won a
5 second term, you know? And so we're with Rick, and
6 Rick is a man of labor.

7 And, Madam Chairman, let the record show
8 that Rick is a man of labor. If it wasn't for
9 labor, we wouldn't have been able to exist after the
10 depression and World War II. I (indiscernible) for
11 25 years, incidentally.

12 And, Madam Chairman, also let the record
13 show that I believe that this is not redistricting;
14 this is a jerrymander for political purposes this is
15 set up and for a jerrymander. That's what it is.

16 And, Madam Chairman, let the record show
17 the fastest way to the Northeast is I-95 'cause this
18 road is difficult. Thank you very much.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you very
20 much, sir.

21 MR. BARRETT: And stick with Rick.

22 (Applause.)

23 MR. MCPHERSON: The next witness is Victor
24 Vasquez.

25 (Witnesses come forward.)

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2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good morning,
3 sir.

4 MR. VASQUEZ: Good morning, Madam
5 President and members of Council and guests. My
6 name is Victor Vasquez, and I'm here representing
7 the Pennsylvania Latino Voting Rights Committee,
8 Philadelphia Chapter.

9 Again, as two months ago, I'm here with a
10 very heavy heart. Two months ago, I spoke before
11 this body, just a few days after the World Trade
12 Center disaster. And a couple of days ago, New York
13 City experienced another disaster, which has
14 impacted the Latino community there and here. So
15 it's -- my condolences to everyone and their family.

16 We were pleased that the Mayor vetoed the
17 redistricting bill that was passed by this body
18 because it did not satisfy, in all fairness, the
19 Latino community. And essentially what we have been
20 seeking as a voting rights committee is fairness for
21 the committee and for the community.

22 And so, the restructuring -- the committee
23 that was set up after the Mayor's veto to address
24 the redistricting process is one that I think, and
25 our committee feels, should be incorporated into

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2 future processes of this nature and this body; that
3 is, a committee made up of members of the Council to
4 organize and orchestrate the redistricting process.

5 And I think that we'd like to see, Madam
6 President and other members of this body, enact the
7 appropriate regulations so that the next
8 redistricting process can be a little bit more open
9 and a little bit more fair.

10 Although we are pleased with the plan that
11 we've seen put forth by the committee last week,
12 which increases the Latino percentages in the 7th
13 Councilmatic District to 44 percent, we must go on
14 record, Madam President, establishing that we have
15 some concerns with this bill.

16 We, of course, have always argued for the
17 largest percentage of Latino presence in the 7th
18 Councilmatic District, but by the same token, we've
19 also argued for a compact district and not the
20 dividing up of communities. And in the current
21 bill, 010646, it concerns us that there are some
22 divisions of the 23rd Ward and the 35th Ward that
23 are being taken out, which, again contributes to the
24 strangest-looking City Council map in this proposal.

25 In particular, I want to call the

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2 attention of this body to the one place where this
3 proposed 7th Councilmatic District connects, which
4 is Oxford Circle. I, for the life of me, still do
5 not understand what it is about that particular
6 connection that makes it our (indiscernible) because
7 the proposed 179th Legislative District by the state
8 Reapportionment Commission also connects the
9 district right there. That's the antithesis to
10 contiguity, an issue that's already been raised.

11 And so we have a serious objection to the
12 way that this map is constructed. So that we want
13 to go on record saying that we support the bill in
14 terms of the 44 percent inclusion of Latinos in the
15 7th Councilmatic District, but we do have serious
16 reservations about the way this map looks and the
17 lack of contiguity and the lack of compactness.

18 Finally what I would like to say is
19 reiterate that I would hope that this body looks at
20 the experience of this redistricting process and
21 implements one that is more fair, that the option of
22 a committee of the body, which has been working for
23 the last couple of weeks, become the norm, and that
24 the process be more open and not just exclusively
25 incumbent-driven.

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2 Thank you, Madam President.

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

4 Are there any questions or comments from
5 the committee?

6 The Chair recognizes Councilman Ortiz.

7 COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: We looked into seeing
8 how compact it was because we had to maintain the
9 integrity of the Feltonville area where the Latino
10 community is at.

11 So the issue here is -- because I -- your
12 comments may be misunderstood here, you know, in
13 terms of the support for the plan as it currently
14 stands.

15 MR. VASQUEZ: Yes.

16 COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Or there's a
17 misunderstanding here and I would wish that you
18 would make that very clear.

19 MR. VASQUEZ: Well, let me repeat,
20 Councilman.

21 We are in support of bill, but we have
22 some reservations, and our reservations have to do
23 with the shape of the district.

24 We think that it was very important to
25 have included, as you pointed out, Feltonville,

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2 where I'm a resident, in a more contiguous fashion,
3 but we are still troubled by the way the district
4 snakes across.

5 The last time we were talking to
6 Councilmembers before the bill was actually passed
7 and vetoed by the Mayor, we had the opportunity to
8 circulate -- I think Councilwoman Tasco and a couple
9 of others had the opportunity to look at Council
10 redistricting maps from 1960, 1970, and 1980. And
11 if you look at those maps and compare them to the
12 1990 and the current proposed maps, you will see a
13 drastic difference in the configuration of the 7th
14 Councilmatic District over a 50-year process period.

15 It is maybe coincidental that it's in the
16 7th Councilmatic District where the Latino
17 population has grown. And so there is some
18 correlation there that is disturbing to us, that you
19 go from 1960 to 1970 with fairly compact districts
20 and then you begin to see a shift in the way those
21 districts are configured.

22 And the 7th Councilmatic District,
23 Councilman Ortiz, if you look at that map, you know,
24 an elementary school student could tell you what's
25 wrong with the map as it looks.

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2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: But what
3 percentage of Latinos were there in the 60s?

4 MR. VASQUEZ: Well, it was -- the point is
5 not what percentage but where they were.

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And the fact of the
7 matter is, if you look at the --

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You have to
9 identify yourself for the record.

10 MS. SANTOS: Maria Quinones Santos, a
11 member of the Latino Voting Rights Network.

12 If you look at the 1963 map, which would
13 be our ideal, what you see is, our community is
14 compact, and what you would have found at that
15 particular time is that probably more than half of
16 our community was within those boundaries.

17 I think the concern that we have -- and
18 it's the concern that you heard this morning from
19 members of the Frankford community, which we have to
20 join 'em in that, because we've worked very hard in
21 the Latino community to develop the infrastructure,
22 revitalize our communities.

23 What concerns us in the shift of in the
24 way this district attempts to loop the Northeast to
25 growing communities, Latino and minority growing

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2 communities and Frankford, is that it stalls the
3 process of development that is going on that we, as
4 new immigrants and as new folks coming into those
5 neighborhoods, want to be part of the revitalization
6 process. We don't want to divide progress that's
7 already going on.

8 The Frankford community is an important
9 component -- Northwood, Oxford Circle. Those are
10 our growing communities that are changing
11 demographically, and we want to make sure that the
12 work that's being done continues as we migrate into
13 those neighborhoods.

14 This district, what it does is, it tears
15 that up. It breaks it up in the east part.

16 COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: So what you're
17 suggesting is that we eliminate the top part of the
18 district and make it compact, eliminate the top part
19 of the --

20 MS. SANTOS: The Latino Voting Rights
21 committee's first goal is to enhance the 7th
22 Councilmatic District. Its second goal is to keep
23 communities together, communities that share
24 schools, that share churches, that share businesses.
25 And we believe that this map could better represent

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2 that.

3 COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: This map better
4 represents that?

5 MS. SANTOS: Could better represent that.

6 COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: But then how do you
7 achieve a 44, 45 percent Latino district?

8 MS. SANTOS: For whatever reason, there is
9 this -- and Victor talked about it. There is this
10 need to link up the southern part of the Northeast
11 with the top part of the Northeast. We don't --

12 COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: You're creating a
13 10-district map; you're not creating one district.

14 MS. SANTOS: No, and what we're saying is
15 that if you look at the '63 map and the '71 map, it
16 will show you -- in fact, we presented to this
17 legislative body a map that was 51 percent, and it
18 was very compact and took into account all of those
19 things. We didn't come and ask for that. We said
20 we wanted a 45 percent map that we believed achieved
21 our two goals, which is enhancing the district and
22 keeping communities intact.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair
24 recognizes Councilman Kenney.

25 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you, Madam

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2 President.

3 Let me take you back for a moment to the
4 '91 process. My understanding as to the creation of
5 this snake-like district occurred -- if I'm wrong,
6 correct me -- occurred in '91 as a result of trying
7 to create a more Latino-influenced district in the
8 7th district, and that's -- in order to do that and
9 to get a bill that was politically acceptable to the
10 Councilmembers who had a vote on it, that was --
11 that regrettable shape came into being.

12 Is that correct or not?

13 MS. SANTOS: No. In fact, the reaching of
14 the Northeast happens -- it begins in the '70s, and
15 the '83 map -- I believe there was an '81 and an '83
16 map. The '83 map is the one that goes and really
17 draws the Northeast into what we consider to be a
18 lower Northeast.

19 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I wasn't in Council at
20 the time; I had just been elected and waiting to be
21 sworn in in '92, and I remember the battle going on
22 in here. At the time, it was, I believe,
23 Councilmember Matlack attempting to accommodate the
24 Latino community and to create a more
25 Latino-influenced district, which wound up

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2 extenuating, I guess, or exacerbating the snake-like
3 feature of this district.

4 At that time, were you opposed to that?
5 Or what was your position at the time?

6 MS. SANTOS: Yes.

7 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: You were opposed to
8 the --

9 MS. SANTOS: And Victor was a part of
10 that, so I'll let him...

11 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: And what was your -- I
12 don't remember the testimony at the time. What was
13 the --

14 MR. VASQUEZ: We were again basically
15 trying to accomplish two goals: One, the largest
16 possible percentage of Latino voters in one
17 district; and as compact a district as possible.

18 In '91, we ran into the same problem we've
19 run into this year around, and that is that the
20 process is dominated largely by incumbent interests,
21 which, you know, I can understand, but it's not
22 supposed to be that way.

23 And so that's why. In my opinion -- and
24 this is just my opinion -- we get some of maps that
25 we get.

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2 But if you look at the way the district
3 are shaped, the 7th Councilmatic District has the
4 strangest shape. And our hope would have been for a
5 better-looking map.

6 The percentages of this bill we support a
7 hundred percent.

8 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: It seems that during
9 the course of this process, the difficulty has been
10 attempting to reach the numbers that we're trying to
11 reach, while at the same time being compact.

12 What's more critical to you? Is it the
13 percentages or is the compact nature? If you can
14 only do one, what's more important; the compactness
15 or the percentages?

16 MR. VASQUEZ: Well, it's testing that you
17 raise that, Councilman Kenney, because we had this
18 discussion with Councilman Mariano, and he asked us
19 the same question. In fact, he said, Would you
20 accept, you know, 41 or 40 percent or 42 percent?
21 You know, and we said to him, Councilman, the
22 percentage is important to us but a compact district
23 is equally important because you need to consider
24 where the community is going.

25 And so the percentages, you know, can go

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2 back and forth, but it's a compact map that is
3 really going to help the development of a community.

4 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: One of the problems
5 that we face with the veto of the last bill was the
6 Mayor's insistence on a percentage that was a
7 reasonable percentage for the Latino-influenced
8 district to have. I mean, in some ways, we're all a
9 little confused because we're being pushed and
10 pulled by various forces; some of those forces are
11 issues of incumbency and politics, some of those
12 forces are what the Mayor thinks he wants and wants
13 us to do, by advocacy groups like yourself who are
14 trying to, you know, get the best arrangement
15 possible for the people you represent.

16 It is a Herculean and almost impossible
17 task to make everybody totally happy, and I know
18 you're realistic enough to know that that's not
19 actually going to happen.

20 But I guess the correspondence I've read
21 would indicate that your support your testimony --
22 and I think your testimony indicates it, your
23 support of the plan that we're reviewing as we
24 speak.

25 MR. VASQUEZ: Yes, that is correct.

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2 We didn't have direct correspondence with
3 the Mayor relative to the reasons why he vetoed,
4 other than what he indicated to Council in terms of
5 the map that was approved by Council not reflecting
6 fairly the growth of the Latino community. That's
7 as much as we got from the Mayor in terms of his
8 interests. I don't know that he may have expressed
9 to someone else that he was looking for a particular
10 percentage; he didn't express that to us.

11 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Well, it was in his
12 veto message

13 MR. VASQUEZ: Okay. I didn't see the
14 specifics around percentages.

15 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: So let me try to just
16 cull this down. Would you urge the members of
17 Council to vote for this bill as presented today?

18 MR. VASQUEZ: If they're not going to make
19 it more compact, yes.

20 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Okay, thank you.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you very
22 much, sir.

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

25 (No response.)

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2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

3 Do we have anyone else to testify on this
4 bill?

5 (No response.)

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Seeing none, the
7 committee will stand in recess until 1:30.

8 I would ask that Councilmembers DiCicco
9 Mariano, and Krajewski please come to my office.

10 (Meeting recessed at 11:44
11 a.m.)

12 - - -

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Committee of
14 the Whole is recessed until 9 o'clock tomorrow
15 morning.

16 (Proceedings end at 2:00 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing
proceedings of the Council of the City of
Philadelphia's meeting of the Council Committee of
the Whole of Wednesday, November 14, 2001, are
contained fully and accurately in the stenographic
notes taken by me upon, and that this is a true and
correct transcript of same.

RE: Resolution No. 010646

_____,
Josephine Cardillo
Registered Professional Reporter
and Notary Public

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