

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH
AND HUMAN SERVICES

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Tuesday, March 20, 2012
10:20 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILWOMAN MARIAN B. TASCO, CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS
COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE BLACKWELL
COUNCILMAN WILLIAM K. GREENLEE
COUNCILMAN KENYATTA JOHNSON
COUNCILMAN CURTIS JONES, JR.
COUNCILMAN JAMES KENNEY
COUNCILMAN DENNIS O'BRIEN
COUNCILWOMAN MARIA D. QUINONES-SANCHEZ
COUNCILWOMAN BLONDELL REYNOLDS BROWN

RESOLUTION 120090 - Resolution authorizing the
Council Committee on Public Health and Human
Services to hold hearings regarding the impact
of the proposed FY 2012-2013 state budget on
the public health and human services programs
provided in Philadelphia.

- - -

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COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Good

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morning.

4

Good morning.

5

(Good morning.)

6

COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Thank you.

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Thank you for coming. Welcome to City

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Council Chambers and the hearing,

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Committee on Public Health and Human

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Services Committee regarding Resolution

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120090.

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We will ask the Clerk to please

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read the resolution.

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THE CLERK: Resolution 120090,

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authorizing the Council Committee on

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Public Health and Human Services to hold

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hearings regarding the impact of the

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proposed FY 2012-2013 state budget on the

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public health and human services programs

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in Philadelphia.

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COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Thank you

22

very much.

23

We are going to get started. I

24

was trying to wait for my Vice Chair,

25

Councilwoman Maria Quinones-Sanchez. I'm

1 3/20/12 - PUBLIC HEALTH - RES. 120090
2 sure she has some comments she would like
3 to make. She's on her way downstairs.
4 We will recognize her for her comments
5 when she comes, but let me recognize the
6 Committee members who are here.
7 Councilman Greenlee to my left. To my
8 right, Councilwoman Cindy Bass from the
9 8th District and Councilman Jim Kenney
10 at-large, as well as Mr. Greenlee is
11 at-large, and I'm Marian Tasco, Chair of
12 the Committee on Public Health and Human
13 Services.

14 Recently, Governor Corbett
15 presented his proposed 2012-2013 budget
16 to the General Assembly. In his budget
17 address, the Governor announced plans to
18 collapse a number of human services line
19 items like homeless assistance, mental
20 health services, behavioral health
21 services and child welfare into a single
22 funding stream and provide these dollars
23 to Philadelphia and counties around the
24 Commonwealth in the form of a block
25 grant.

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2 The purported goal for this new
3 Human Services Development Block Grant is
4 to provide flexibility to counties in how
5 they spend dollars for their
6 constituents. However, under this new
7 Block Grant, Philadelphia is proposed to
8 receive a 20 percent reduction from the
9 2011-2012 state budget, and this cut
10 represents a loss of \$42 million in human
11 service programs funds for Philadelphia.

12 Through this guise of
13 flexibility, Philadelphia will be forced
14 to cut funds for homeless assistance
15 versus money for child welfare versus
16 dollars for mental health services.
17 Consequently, this process of pitting
18 vital services against each other will
19 continue throughout the various human
20 services programs provided in
21 Philadelphia.

22 Considering Philadelphia's
23 unemployment rate and the impact of the
24 national recession on our local economy,
25 our constituents truly depend on the

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2 safety net that these human service
3 programs provide for our city.

4 Based on this reason, I felt
5 that it was so important to introduce
6 this resolution and have a frank
7 discussion on the issue. In this regard,
8 I would like to thank all of you who are
9 here today for providing insight on this
10 issue. Collectively, I believe that we
11 can gain an understanding of the impact
12 of this budget proposal and what steps we
13 need to take to move forward.

14 Additionally, I'd like to
15 report that our Council met with the
16 Philadelphia Delegation last week to
17 discuss this issue and other issues of
18 importance to us in Harrisburg. While we
19 do not have any direct influence over
20 these cuts with the Governor, except to
21 raise our voices, for you to raise your
22 voices to show how you think this will
23 impact on us, it is important that you
24 contact also your state legislator and be
25 supportive of that legislator as they try

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2 to fight for change in Harrisburg,
3 because at the end of the day, it will be
4 the vote from the State Legislature as
5 well as the House side and the Senate
6 side. And though most of the folks who
7 are from Philadelphia are -- and I don't
8 want to get political, but it is
9 political -- are democrats, we are in the
10 minority in the House and in the minority
11 in the Senate, but hopefully through our
12 message and their message and
13 conversation with their colleagues on the
14 other side of the aisle can show that
15 Philadelphia is not the only county that
16 will be impacted.

17 They act like Philadelphia is
18 the only county with poor people.
19 Throughout this state, in every county,
20 there are people who require these
21 services that we are going to cut, but
22 they need to understand and know that
23 they fall in the same category as
24 Philadelphians.

25 So it is important while we

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2 talk today we give our voice to this
3 issue, that you give your voice to the
4 folks who represent you in Harrisburg as
5 well as those who don't represent you.
6 It doesn't hurt to let everybody in
7 Harrisburg know, because 203 people have
8 a vote, and we need to contact every last
9 one of them.

10 And in short, they're my
11 comments and very important, and we have
12 to be more mindful of who we send to
13 state government also.

14 The Chair recognizes that
15 Councilwoman Quinones is here. Again,
16 thank you so much for coming, and we
17 would begin the testimony after her
18 remarks.

19 Thank you, Councilwoman.

20 And any other Councilmember who
21 would like to make remarks, please feel
22 free to do so.

23 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Thank
24 you, Madam Chair.

25 We've been talking about this

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2 in Council the last few weeks, and we are
3 extremely concerned, so I want to thank
4 you for your leadership as Chair of this
5 Committee for us to have this opportunity
6 to talk about this item.

7 Over the course of the next
8 couple of months, the City of
9 Philadelphia is going to be approving a
10 budget. There's much talk and much
11 controversy about AVI, about funding for
12 the School District, but one of the
13 things that is really important and I
14 want the folks in this room to understand
15 is that in the last few years, this City
16 Council has had to do the heavy lifting,
17 and the heavy lifting and making tough
18 decisions because we believe these
19 programs that we're about to talk about
20 this morning are safety nets and vital to
21 Philadelphia given the economic
22 situation.

23 We ask that you serve as our
24 ambassadors as we deliberate on this
25 budget for this message, that this is not

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2 about us taxing people because we want
3 to. It is about doing what makes sense,
4 and we can't take away the safety nets
5 that become so important.

6 So whether we're talking about
7 the asset testing of seniors and their
8 ability to have access to food stamps,
9 stuff that is federally subsidized, we
10 really believe that what's going on in
11 Harrisburg is mean-spirited and goes
12 against our own interest here in the City
13 of Philadelphia and the Commonwealth.

14 So we thank you for the work
15 you do, the providers that are here that
16 are our stakeholders and our partners on
17 the ground, but we have an obligation at
18 the end of the day if Corbett doesn't do
19 and the State Legislature doesn't do
20 their jobs, we can't be irresponsible the
21 way they're being irresponsible. Making
22 numbers balance on paper has nothing to
23 do with people's lives.

24 And so I want to thank you all
25 again and say that as we deliberate over

1 3/20/12 - PUBLIC HEALTH - RES. 120090
2 the budget over the next few months, that
3 you understand the heavy task that we
4 have to do here in City Council.

5 So thank you, Madam Chair and
6 my colleagues, for participating today,
7 and we look forward to working with you
8 with the Philadelphia Delegation to try
9 to get more resources from Harrisburg and
10 work with the Mayor to provide a budget
11 that is fair to everyone.

12 Thank you.

13 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Thank you
14 very much.

15 Comments from any other members
16 of the Committee?

17 (No response.)

18 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Okay. We
19 will have questions as we move along.
20 We're going to proceed with panels. We
21 will have the panel come forth, present
22 their testimony, and then we will raise
23 questions at the end of the panel
24 presentation. If you just came in and
25 want to testify, please go to this table

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2 and list your name.

3 The first panel will be
4 Dr. Donald Schwarz, Deputy Mayor for
5 Health and Opportunity; Anne Marie
6 Ambrose, DHS Commissioner; Dr. Arthur
7 Evans, Director of Behavioral Health and
8 Intellectual Disabilities; Dainette
9 Mintz, Director of Adult Services.

10 (Witness approached witness
11 table.

12 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: This is
13 our team in City government who has to
14 deal with all of these cuts and try and
15 figure out how we adjust.

16 Let me recognize Councilman
17 Kenyatta Johnson who has joined us at
18 this table.

19 Good morning.

20 DR. SCHWARZ: Good morning.

21 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Would you
22 state your name for the record, please,
23 and proceed with your testimony.

24 DR. SCHWARZ: I would. I'm
25 Donald Schwarz and I'm here as both the

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2 Deputy Mayor for both Health and
3 Opportunity and the Commissioner of
4 Public Health. I represent our four
5 departments, and we've summarized our
6 testimony in the interest of time. The
7 Commissioners are here so that we can
8 answer any questions that the Committee
9 might have.

10 I apologize in advance for a
11 bit of laryngitis, so I'll do my best to
12 get through and to project.

13 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you.

14 DR. SCHWARZ: Good morning,
15 Chairperson Tasco, members of the
16 Committee on Public Health and Human
17 Services, and thank you for this
18 opportunity to testify on the impact of
19 Governor Corbett's proposed budget on
20 social services in the City of
21 Philadelphia. We believe that it is a
22 critical moment for the City and for
23 Council and for those who are residents
24 of Philadelphia to make their voice heard
25 and to educate others in Pennsylvania

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2 about the impacts of this budget.

3 On Tuesday, February the 7th,
4 Governor Tom Corbett proposed his Fiscal
5 Year 2013 budget, a budget that keeps the
6 total Commonwealth general fund spending
7 level, decreases tax dollars collected
8 from Pennsylvania corporations, and
9 decreases by one-fifth dollars that
10 Pennsylvanians put into programs to help
11 the most vulnerable in our state. This
12 budget is bad for Pennsylvania counties,
13 including Philadelphia, and will harm the
14 most vulnerable in our city in a way that
15 will directly increase the number of
16 homeless on our streets, will reduce the
17 number of individuals with drug and --
18 will reduce the number of individuals
19 with drug abuse issues and mental illness
20 who receive care, and will, as a
21 consequence, likely increase the number
22 of people in our jails.

23 In Philadelphia, we have dealt
24 with ongoing state cuts of social service
25 dollars. During the past four years, as

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2 Councilmembers have already mentioned, we
3 have seen our budgets decline
4 considerably. Between 2009 and 2012, for
5 instance, flexible human services dollars
6 that can be spent in a variety of ways to
7 support individuals in health and social
8 service systems were cut by 57 percent;
9 state dollars used to purchase food for
10 the hungry were reduced by 13 percent;
11 and AIDS prevention funding to
12 Philadelphia was reduced by 40 percent.

13 In fact, after almost four
14 years of continuing cuts, we have become
15 pretty facile at recognizing how and
16 where to make cuts prudently and where
17 cuts are harmful and unmanageable. For
18 example, we have held our budgets
19 constant for homeless services during the
20 last four years while finding ways
21 through partnership with the Public
22 Housing Authority, for instance, through
23 the Mayor's Homeless Plan to increase the
24 City's permanent housing inventory by 55
25 percent for single adults and to increase

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2 that inventory by 194 percent for
3 families, with remarkable levels of
4 housing stability among those who are
5 housed. The number of homeless single
6 adults in Philadelphia in shelters and on
7 the street was down 20 percent in January
8 2012 compared to January 2011. The
9 Department of Human Services has safely
10 reduced the number of children in
11 dependent placements by 27 percent in the
12 last four years. The number of children
13 being sent out of state for mental health
14 placements is down by 80 percent. With
15 this experience, we can recognize where
16 we have opportunities to make productive
17 change and live within our means and,
18 alternatively, where cost-cutting will
19 harm real people and the fabric of our
20 city.

21 The Governor's budget makes
22 harmful cuts to income supports, housing,
23 and services. On its face, the proposed
24 Human Services Development Block Grant
25 could appear to be a reasonable measure.

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2 The Commonwealth has taken seven budget
3 lines and put them together alleging they
4 provide flexibility to counties which
5 will allow better programming for less
6 cost. While flexibility is welcome at
7 the county level, when flexibility is
8 conditioned on such dramatic reductions
9 in funding, the cost to the public would
10 simply be far too high. A full
11 two-thirds of the funding lumped into the
12 Block Grant comes from essential services
13 to those with serious mental illness.
14 I'm going to repeat that. Two-thirds of
15 the funding in this Block Grant comes
16 from essential services to those with
17 serious mental illness. The state worked
18 with counties over 30 years to close and
19 reduce the size of state mental
20 hospitals. This was done by negotiating
21 with counties to provide community-based
22 services, funded by the community mental
23 health dollars in the state budget, to
24 keep those with severe mental illness in
25 communities. These dollars to move

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2 people into the community, called CHIPP
3 and SIPP dollars, are cut by 20 percent
4 in the Block Grant proposal. If counties
5 cannot safely cut these services; that
6 is, if they fund real people, which they
7 do, the reductions to the rest of the
8 items in that single budget line, the
9 community mental health line, will need
10 to be cut by more than 45 percent. This
11 will decimate community mental health
12 services and will not be fixed by the
13 other dollars in the Block Grant.

14 An additional 17 percent of the
15 dollars in the Block Grant come from
16 services for those with intellectual
17 disabilities, some of the most vulnerable
18 of our citizens. This budget cut means
19 that when elderly parents who have kept a
20 mentally retarded or intellectually
21 disabled child at home, when those
22 parents die, the child will likely be
23 institutionalized. Likewise, families
24 who depend on a modest amount of funds to
25 keep a child with intellectual

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2 disabilities living at home rather than
3 in institution will lose this support.

4 Only about 4 percent of the
5 remaining dollars come into the Block
6 Grant from non-behavioral health lines,
7 including critically important homeless
8 assistance dollars and already flexible
9 human service development dollars. This
10 means that these two funding streams
11 could be zeroed out and not make a
12 noticeable dent in the massive cuts to
13 mental health and intellectual
14 disabilities funding.

15 In addition, the Governor's
16 budget would completely eliminate the
17 General Assistance program. General
18 Assistance is truly a subsistence benefit
19 of the last resort for vulnerable
20 Pennsylvanians who have no other income.
21 Eligible individuals receive just \$205
22 per month, which is less than 25 percent
23 of the federal poverty level and has not
24 increased since 1990. The only people
25 who can receive General Assistance are

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2 disabled or sick adults without children;
3 domestic violence survivors, many of whom
4 have just fled their abusers; adults
5 caring for someone who is sick or
6 disabled or an unrelated child; adults
7 participating in drug treatment programs;
8 and children living with an unrelated
9 adult.

10 The Department of Public
11 Welfare estimates that eliminating the
12 General Assistance program will save \$150
13 million per year. It also proposes an
14 additional \$159 million cut to
15 state-funded Medical Assistance to people
16 in former General Assistance categories.
17 These projected savings will be a
18 pittance compared to the additional
19 public costs to support those who become
20 newly homeless and destitute due to the
21 lost of this lifeline.

22 So as we look across the many
23 proposed budget cuts, it's clear that
24 their impact will devastate
25 Philadelphia's social service delivery

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2 systems and will have a real and
3 sustained effect on our citizens and our
4 city. As a result of the proposed cuts,
5 we expect to see a number of things: an
6 increase in people who are homeless with
7 less capacity in the City to serve them;
8 an increase in the street population;
9 families with no place to go, likely
10 landing on the streets; more people with
11 untreated mental illness and substance
12 abuse; an increase in our jail
13 population; an increase in
14 institutionalization; an increased demand
15 for emergency services at our hospitals;
16 as well as an increase in children being
17 placed out of their homes and delayed
18 family reunification.

19 Now that I've talked about the
20 impact, let me comment on efficiency and
21 flexibility, the alleged benefits of the
22 new Block Grant.

23 In a recent opinion piece in
24 the Philadelphia Inquirer, Commonwealth
25 Secretary of Public Welfare Gary

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2 Alexander stated that this budget, quote,
3 "transforms how county assistance
4 agencies receive state funding,
5 implementing block grants that provide
6 more flexibility to ensure services that
7 are tailored best for the community," end
8 of quote.

9 In the Governor's budget
10 document, the Administration writes that
11 the new Human Services Development Block
12 Grant will create, quote, "an
13 unintegrated, coordinated and seamless
14 service delivery system that addresses
15 consumer needs for quality, independence,
16 flexibility and service coordination,
17 while also addressing the need for cost
18 containment and financial integrity," end
19 of quote.

20 For a block grant to serve a
21 purpose beyond reducing expenditures;
22 that is, to actually have a chance to
23 make services more efficient or better
24 for recipients, the funds put into the
25 "block" need to have some reasonable way

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2 to fit together that is more efficient
3 than having them separate. There is no
4 connecting thread to the items put into
5 this block grant proposal that allows
6 synergies or efficiencies. Moreover, the
7 seven items in this block grant are so
8 overpowered by the severe cuts to the
9 county mental health system, there is
10 simply no way to improve efficiency.

11 In a briefing by Deputy
12 Secretary of Public Welfare Blaine Smith,
13 the Department revealed the revenue
14 components of the Human Services
15 Development Block Grant. These sources
16 include several federal block grants to
17 the Commonwealth, like the Social
18 Services Block Grant and the Drug Abuse
19 Block Grant, as well as other federal
20 funds. It has been these funding streams
21 from Washington that have particularly
22 increased the paperwork requirements to
23 counties in the already complex Community
24 Mental Health budget line that have been
25 put into the proposed block grant. These

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2 requirements and the federal categorical
3 funding requirements that go into them
4 mean that for Philadelphia the
5 flexibility and simplicity the Governor
6 trumpeted in the proposal to create the
7 Human Services Development Block Grant
8 are not likely to materialize. We will
9 still have to spend dollars according to
10 federal guidelines and to report on how
11 we used the dollars through federal
12 formula-based reporting forms.

13 Additionally, there are many
14 legislative and court-mandated
15 requirements on the state that relate to
16 the funding lines put into the new block
17 grant. Counties now expect that with the
18 creation of the Block Grant, they will be
19 responsible for these mandates, thus
20 exposing them to new liability. For
21 instance, the federal Olmstead
22 requirements on Pennsylvania may now, for
23 the first time, be shared with counties,
24 placing unreasonable demands on county
25 budgets, including our own.

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2 Essentially, what the
3 Governor's budget proposes then is to
4 take all of the funds for community
5 mental health services, including
6 assessment, cure and housing supports,
7 and all of the funds for intellectually
8 disabled people living in stable homes,
9 and take homeless supports, healthcare
10 supports, treatment for those addicted to
11 substances, and special programs for
12 abused children, and combine them all
13 together. The federal requirements on
14 these funding lines and the imbalance in
15 the real size of the various lines mean
16 that counties will not be able to achieve
17 new efficiencies and will not gain much,
18 if any, flexibility. After doing this,
19 the Governor then proposes to cut the
20 Commonwealth's commitment to the
21 vulnerable by 20 percent and disguise it
22 by calling it the Human Services
23 Development Block Grant.

24 The lack of a reasonable
25 explanation or policy direction provided

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2 for a 20 percent cut to these essential
3 services lays bare the pretense of the
4 seven line item cuts being part of a
5 rational plan to use block granting as a
6 means to create efficiencies.

7 In its 2005 policy brief on
8 block grants, the Brookings Institution
9 highlighted the three philosophical
10 reasons for block granting as follows:
11 First, local flexibility; second,
12 protecting items in the Block Grant from
13 tinkering by legislators; and, third,
14 controlling spending.

15 Given the disproportionate harm
16 created by the cuts made to programs
17 before they were thrown into the Block
18 Grant and the likely continued
19 inflexibility and reporting requirements
20 for the Block Grant, it is clear that
21 this vehicle provides no hope of
22 improving the lives of the mentally and
23 intellectually disabled, the homeless or
24 disabled children or abused children in
25 Pennsylvania. Rather, by reducing

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2 support for those most in need, the
3 proposal merely balances the budget
4 without heed to the human cost at stake.

5 We continue to work with the
6 state to reconsider this ill-advised
7 reduction. We are reaching out to
8 neighboring counties through the
9 Metropolitan Caucus to determine areas of
10 agreement for collaborative efforts. The
11 Mayor and I have traveled to Harrisburg
12 to speak to members of the Legislature.
13 I serve on a committee of the County
14 Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania
15 with others in the human services field
16 that is analyzing the proposed block
17 grant, assessing impact and developing
18 recommendations for counties across the
19 Commonwealth, such as piloting the block
20 grant approach with a few counties to
21 present to the Association for
22 endorsement and then to the state.

23 We look forward to working with
24 you and members of Council to educate
25 Philadelphians and all Pennsylvanians

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2 about this harmful proposal.

3 I am here with my fellow
4 Commissioners, and we're happy to answer
5 your questions. We've included at the
6 end of the testimony the dollar value
7 cuts to the City of Philadelphia and
8 within the state Block Grant and the
9 proportionate cut for each of those
10 compared to the whole.

11 Thank you.

12 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you
13 very much for that critical analysis of
14 what's going on. We appreciate this.

15 I just have a couple of
16 questions. And let me recognize that
17 Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown is
18 with us and Councilman Dennis O'Brien at
19 the table, members of the Committee, and
20 in his chair is Councilmember Curtis
21 Jones.

22 On your Page 4 you talk about
23 the Brookings Institution. Are you
24 saying that they supported this idea of
25 block grant?

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2 DR. SCHWARZ: No. Their
3 analysis was done before this particular
4 block grant and had to do with block
5 granting in general. They were trying to
6 analyze what were the rationale that were
7 used by governments to create block
8 grants in general. And what they point
9 out is, if there are ways to make funding
10 more flexible, that's a good reason for a
11 block grant. Sometimes states or the
12 federal government use block grants to
13 protect funds from legislative tinkering
14 with individual lines, but most often
15 what states and the federal government do
16 is use block grants as a way to hide
17 cuts. And they highlight that hiding
18 cuts is something that's used not
19 infrequently, but needs to be made clear,
20 that that's the purpose for the grant.

21 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Do you
22 have any sense -- and I know you can't
23 kind of report what someone else is
24 thinking, but maybe in your conversations
25 with the Secretary of Welfare, do you

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2 believe that a thorough analysis of this
3 process was given by the Department and
4 that they are aware of all the issues
5 that you have raised on Page 4 about the
6 realization of maintaining a balance?

7 DR. SCHWARZ: I've not had
8 those conversations directly. I think if
9 we look at the increasing detail that the
10 state has put out since the budget was
11 announced, it appears likely that there's
12 been a learning curve. Our hope has been
13 that as that learning curve gets to some
14 reasonable level, the Commonwealth would
15 determine the infeasibility of doing this
16 block grant without harming services in
17 counties. We're waiting for that to
18 happen. It has not happened as yet.

19 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you.
20 I'm going to stop and recognize
21 Councilman Kenney.

22 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you,
23 Madam Chair.

24 Last week I attended a
25 luncheon, and I sometimes go to these

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2 luncheons because I like to hear -- it's
3 not normally a place where I would be,
4 but I like to hear what other people are
5 talking about. And it was a luncheon
6 honoring Governor Corbett at the Union
7 League for the Lincoln Award. And I was
8 invited by a friend, but I happen to sit
9 at a table most with all republicans.

10 I can tell you that there might
11 be a real opportunity for what I termed
12 at the table an agro-urban coalition.
13 They are really, really angry. People
14 who are in counties representing
15 agricultural interests are really angry
16 at the Governor and his budget proposals.
17 And unlike Washington where no one
18 reaches across the aisle for anything,
19 this may be a wonderful opportunity to
20 link the agricultural interest and urban
21 government interest that you're talking
22 about to really kind of wedge this
23 Administration in this budget process.

24 They were really palpably angry
25 at the cuts that he was proposing for

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2 subsidies and other things relative to
3 agriculture and to animal husbandry and
4 to veterinary medicine. All those things
5 they were just clamoring about at the
6 table under their breath while he was
7 getting the award.

8 I would be happy to reach out
9 to that person who invited me to that
10 luncheon and try to set up, and through
11 the Mayor's lobbying efforts and through
12 your lobbying efforts, I really think
13 that might be a marriage that could be
14 made with a mostly republican group of
15 folks who are also angry at the cuts that
16 they're going to anticipate getting, and
17 maybe there's some way you can leverage
18 some votes to get what we both need.

19 DR. SCHWARZ: Sure.

20 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: So if you
21 want to let me know and I'll make the
22 connection.

23 DR. SCHWARZ: Sure. I think
24 we're happy to connect to as many
25 counties as possible and to continue the

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2 education that we've been doing.

3 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: But it's
4 not normally the area of interest that we
5 would think is a common interest, but
6 they're really as angry as we are.

7 DR. SCHWARZ: It affects, I
8 presume, the Veterinary School at the
9 University of Penn, so there is a
10 Philadelphia interest there as well.

11 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Absolutely.
12 Thanks.

13 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you.
14 Councilman Greenlee.

15 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
16 you, Madam Chair.

17 My question is kind of on the
18 same realm, and I know you talked in the
19 end of your testimony about serving on a
20 committee of the County Commissioners
21 Association. Are there other people on
22 that committee from around the state that
23 are in human services, health, that kind
24 of thing? Because the Chairwoman and I
25 were talking before the hearing,

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2 obviously -- and I think she said it in
3 her statement -- Philadelphia is not the
4 only place in the state that needs help,
5 and Councilman Kenney addressed another
6 area that is.

7 Even before this budget process
8 has started, have there been
9 conversations or alerts put out that this
10 kind of thing could be coming throughout
11 the state? Because I'm thinking places
12 like Reading and Altoona and, you know,
13 York. I'm sure there's a lot of people
14 that need help in those places too that
15 are being cut.

16 DR. SCHWARZ: So a number of
17 the associations that all of us
18 participate in for different topics have
19 talked about the Block Grant since it
20 happened. The County Commissioners
21 Association of Pennsylvania worked with
22 the Governor last summer to create a
23 series of criteria for the wise creation
24 of block grants. Those criteria included
25 things like identifying funding streams

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2 where efficiency is possible, working
3 together with the counties to identify
4 counties that have readiness to implement
5 the Block Grant and then doing it on a
6 piloted basis, phasing it in over time,
7 if possible, and other things like that.

8 I think the County
9 Commissioners Association, after the
10 budget came out, was surprised that the
11 principles that they presented last
12 summer were not used in developing this
13 Block Grant, and I believe they've made
14 their concern known. And certainly the
15 members of the Human Services Committee
16 for each county who serve on different
17 committees of the County Commissioners
18 Association have become aware, as the
19 weeks have unfolded and more information
20 has come out, that every county in
21 Pennsylvania is impacted in generally
22 negative ways by this Block Grant. Even
23 counties where they felt prepared for a
24 Human Services Block Grant because
25 they're small, they can move dollars more

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2 easily, the inflexibility because of the
3 inclusion of federal dollars has
4 surprised them and made it more difficult
5 for them to be supportive of the Block
6 Grant as well.

7 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Do you
8 know these people that you're talking
9 about, have they been in touch with their
10 State Senators and State Reps?

11 DR. SCHWARZ: I don't know the
12 answer to that. I know that --

13 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Excuse me.
14 I think the County Commissioners have the
15 Executive Director here today who will
16 testify.

17 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay.
18 All right. Because that's where I was
19 going. I mean, obviously -- because, in
20 a sense, we were talking earlier, you're
21 preaching to the choir here. We know how
22 bad -- we may not how bad, we're
23 learning, but we know it's bad and we're
24 kind of on the same page here. But it
25 kind of surprises me sometimes that folks

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2 in some of these counties don't -- I'm
3 wondering if they even represent what
4 their people want.

5 So I'll leave it at that.

6 Thank you.

7 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: The Chair
8 recognizes Councilwoman Sanchez.

9 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Through
10 these associations, has there been an
11 analysis of the economic impact? For
12 instance, along the lines of what
13 Councilman Kenney was saying, how many
14 people are on that General Assistance
15 list in Philadelphia; do we know?

16 DR. SCHWARZ: We know the
17 value. I don't know the number, but I
18 think there are people who are testifying
19 who can tell you much more the number.

20 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Both the
21 General Assistance numbers and the food
22 stamps numbers, most of that is
23 subsidized by the federal government. Do
24 we know what percentage of it is
25 subsidized?

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2 DR. SCHWARZ: The General
3 Assistance? So General Assistance
4 subsidy is the minority of the dollars.

5 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Right.
6 It's a very little --

7 DR. SCHWARZ: Like somewhere
8 between 22 and 32 percent is the number
9 that occurs to me, but, again, there are
10 people who have looked at that more
11 carefully.

12 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: I'll
13 wait for that.

14 Just because there's an
15 economic impact to people's ability and
16 that's money that stays in Philadelphia
17 and is funneled, and we have such a large
18 unenrollment number for food stamps as it
19 is, that the asset test -- do we have any
20 idea of how many of those folks will now
21 fall off that threshold because of the
22 \$4,500 asset test?

23 DR. SCHWARZ: On food stamps?

24 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: On food
25 stamps.

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2 DR. SCHWARZ: So two things to
3 say. One is, the food stamp asset test
4 happened, and it's happened because of
5 Act 22, which was the law passed by the
6 General Assembly last year giving the
7 Secretary of the Department of Public
8 Welfare much broader regulatory powers
9 than the Secretary has ever had to change
10 the rules on programs. One of the first
11 changes that the Secretary undertook was
12 to change the rules on food stamps. That
13 is not part of the budget process. So
14 that has happened. That will continue,
15 and the budget process includes the
16 savings, but the rules themselves are
17 made through a separate process.

18 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: What's
19 the number of savings that they're
20 estimating?

21 DR. SCHWARZ: So I haven't seen
22 it. The one thing I can tell you about
23 what is in the budget is, the number of
24 rules that will have to be redone is
25 enormous. So seven funding lines, each

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2 of them with separate funding streams
3 into them will all need reporting
4 requirement changes if they can. They'll
5 need matching dollar changes. They'll
6 need allocation formula changes. Those
7 previously would have been done through
8 legislative approval. Now they don't
9 require legislative approval. They can
10 be done through the rules process.

11 But the sheer number of work,
12 the amount of work that has to be done
13 between now and the end of the fiscal
14 year or between the passage of a state
15 budget and the beginning of a new fiscal
16 year is a huge amount of work to do. It
17 means that it's unlikely that we'll know
18 the rules for this Block Grant until a
19 day or so before it's implemented.

20 So enormous number of dollars,
21 enormous amount of cut, huge numbers of
22 people involved in Philadelphia, and
23 probably a day or two of notice about how
24 we're supposed to operate under this new
25 set of rules.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Okay.

3 Thank you.

4 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: The Chair
5 recognizes Councilwoman Brown.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you,
7 Madam Chairwoman. Good morning.

8 Good morning. I rely on former
9 State Representative Kenyatta who has
10 been down this road at the state a number
11 of times, and his good news is that we're
12 on the front end of the debate. My
13 question -- and I'll look forward to the
14 testimony of the Executive Director of
15 the County Commissioners -- I'm curious
16 to know, given your years in government,
17 have you seen this type of circumstance
18 before? Because I'm always looking for
19 lessons learned as we're getting ready to
20 go down this road in this circumstance
21 and under this Governor's leadership.

22 DR. SCHWARZ: So I appreciate
23 your confidence. I have not been in
24 government that long. I've been in
25 Philadelphia a long time; I've been in

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2 government for four years. So others who
3 are coming can probably answer your
4 question better than I can about over the
5 long term have people seen anything like
6 this. I have to say that what people
7 have told me is that it's unprecedented
8 in their experience.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So if it's
10 unprecedented, then I would suspect it's
11 difficult to even predict or get a
12 temperature reading of where we're going
13 to end up.

14 DR. SCHWARZ: I think that's
15 true. The volume of change that will be
16 required and the numbers of dollars that
17 are cut is enormous, and the people who
18 are involved are sufficiently vulnerable
19 and probably out of the mainstream for
20 communication enough that the chance for
21 damage is very real.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you,
23 Commissioner.

24 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: The Chair
25 recognizes Councilwoman Bass.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good

3 morning, Doctor.

4 DR. SCHWARZ: Good morning.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Question

6 for you. Are you familiar with the

7 Benefits Bank and how that operates? I

8 wanted to know if you thought that there

9 might be an opportunity for the City to

10 somehow either use the Benefits Bank or

11 use something similar, which, for those

12 who may not be as familiar with it, is a

13 program that allows you to basically

14 input all of your financial data and it

15 will tell you everything that you are

16 eligible for, whether it may be food

17 stamps assistance, housing benefits

18 assistance, anything and everything that

19 exists that you would qualify for, just

20 to make sure that people don't lose an

21 opportunity, particularly when you look

22 at the cuts, the blows that we're going

23 to be taking likely from the state cuts.

24 DR. SCHWARZ: That's a very

25 important issue and an area where we all

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2 have to be very attentive. So people who
3 live at a time of major change in
4 eligibility need every help, every effort
5 that can be made to help them understand
6 what the changes mean for them and to be
7 attentive to change.

8 Unfortunately, we don't see
9 benefit increases. So we don't expect
10 there are going to be large numbers of
11 new people who are eligible for things
12 that they previously were not. Rather,
13 it will be people who will lose benefits
14 most likely, and going to the Benefit
15 Bank then won't help them find new or
16 different benefits really. For instance,
17 General Assistance being cut will be a
18 sheer cut to individuals, and there's not
19 going to be anything to replace it. So
20 going to the Benefits Bank,
21 unfortunately, won't help people very
22 much in that case.

23 However, what it does raise is
24 if General Assistance is cut but people
25 would still be eligible for Medical

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2 Assistance, one consequence of cutting
3 General Assistance may be that large
4 numbers of people lose their health
5 insurance because they simply don't
6 recognize that they would still be
7 eligible. So we need to undertake a fair
8 amount of education for those people who
9 are losing General Assistance benefits if
10 they would still be eligible for Medical
11 Assistance, to assure that they still can
12 access those benefits.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. So
14 overall you don't think that the Benefit
15 Bank or something similar to that could
16 be --

17 DR. SCHWARZ: I think it's
18 always useful, and I think there are
19 plenty of people on a day-by-day basis
20 whose economic situation changes, but I
21 think that should be good practice in
22 general. For these specific changes, I
23 fear, what we're going to see is people
24 who will know all too well that they've
25 lost their benefits or that the changes

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2 occurred.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.

4 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Do you

5 suppose the state is going to take an

6 all-out effort to educate the people who

7 are going to be harmed by these cuts to

8 let them know what's going on or they

9 have to just kind of figure it out?

10 DR. SCHWARZ: I certainly hope

11 that they do that, but you and I share a

12 point of view on this.

13 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: I'm being

14 cynical. You know that, don't you?

15 The other question, before I

16 get to Councilman Jones, we spent a lot

17 of time here in the early '90s under the

18 leadership of Mayor Rendell to form the

19 CBH, Community Behavior Health program,

20 which we thought was a great idea, which

21 would recapture the funding and put it

22 back into the community, provide more

23 services to people with mental problems

24 and behavior problems.

25 How is this going to impact on

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2 their ability to serve their population,
3 and what happens to all of the maybe
4 savings we were able to recapture to
5 provide more extensive service to a
6 broader audience?

7 DR. SCHWARZ: Very, very
8 important question.

9 Dr. Evans.
10 (Witness approached witness
11 table.)

12 DR. EVANS: Arthur Evans,
13 Commissioner for the Department of
14 Behavioral Health and Intellectual
15 Disability Services.

16 There are basically two pots of
17 dollars for people who are served in the
18 public system, Medical Assistance or
19 Medicaid, and then there are grants that
20 we have for the uninsured. The cuts that
21 the Governor has proposed are to those
22 grants to the uninsured and not to the
23 Medicaid funding that the Department
24 receives.

25 However, there are a couple of

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2 ways that those cuts could impact on our
3 Medical Assistance program. Number one
4 is if the proposal to cut back on General
5 Assistance goes through, it will have a
6 tremendous impact. We have -- the City
7 receives about \$90 million a year for
8 individuals who are on General
9 Assistance. So if that entitlement were
10 to go away, that would be a loss of \$90
11 million of treatment services to the
12 City.

13 Furthermore, cuts to the
14 uninsured have an impact on Medical
15 Assistance indirectly in a couple of
16 ways. You mention reinvestment as a
17 mechanism that we've had in the City when
18 we had years where we had a surplus in
19 the Medical Assistance program. We were
20 able to take those dollars and reinvest
21 them back into the system. We've done
22 that to the tune of a couple of hundred
23 million dollars over the life of the
24 program, and what that has allowed us to
25 do is to provide services to people who

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2 are uninsured, particularly people who
3 are homeless, people who are coming out
4 of the criminal justice system and so
5 forth. And so to the extent that we are
6 cut on the uninsured side, it means that
7 we have more pressure for those surplus
8 dollars to fund those people, and that
9 ultimately means that we have fewer
10 dollars over the life of -- over the next
11 couple of years to serve people who are
12 uninsured. We'll just burn down those
13 dollars much quicker.

14 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: It doesn't
15 help, does it?

16 DR. EVANS: No, it doesn't. I
17 think your question is a good one because
18 all of these things are very interrelated
19 and it's not always apparent when you
20 make a cut here what the ripple effect
21 is, but I can tell you for all of the
22 cuts that we're talking about, there will
23 be a tremendous ripple effect.

24 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you
25 very much.

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2 Councilman Jones.

3 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
4 Madam Chair, and thank you for bringing
5 this Committee this issue. It is vital.

6 We had an opportunity to go to
7 a briefing that you did earlier and talk
8 about what to expect, and I think the
9 last comment sums up my concerns, that
10 it's like a pebble in the middle of a
11 pond and these cuts have rippling effects
12 all over the place. If you look at what
13 it will mean for a reduced rate of health
14 checks for young people for STDs, it has
15 an impact in health services later on
16 down the line. I think we're being penny
17 wise and pound foolish at the state
18 level.

19 If you look at cuts in food
20 stamps, returning incarcerated people who
21 now don't have food stamps are more
22 likely to commit more crimes. If you
23 look at mental health and cuts in those
24 kinds of interventions, the individuals
25 impacted by those diseases will go

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2 somewhere and it will have some financial
3 impact on our budget right here.

4 I guess what my question is,
5 and aren't we also a regional hub for
6 services from other areas, because people
7 come here because we have a slightly
8 wider variety of services to offer people
9 that are vulnerable and poor?

10 DR. SCHWARZ: We don't
11 advertise ourselves as a regional hub. I
12 think there are people who come to
13 Philadelphia because they don't really
14 have a choice. There are services
15 available here simply because of the
16 concentration of individuals and
17 services.

18 In that way, we have spoken to
19 and reached out to the surrounding
20 counties, who recognize not only that
21 they have problems similar to
22 Philadelphia, so the smaller cities in
23 our region will have the same problems as
24 Philadelphia, but also that if
25 Philadelphia is less able to care for

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2 people, it may well ripple back to the
3 surrounding counties. So I think that's
4 a well-taken point.

5 COUNCILMAN JONES: So when I
6 look at, Madam Chair, all of the -- in
7 the briefing they talk about the Medical
8 Examiner's Office and their interventions
9 in the multi-agency mode where they
10 investigate child homicides, infant
11 mortality, children protective services
12 and death, things like that. Is that
13 going to be impacted?

14 DR. SCHWARZ: That's a
15 fascinating question. So probably not,
16 but this budget not from the Human
17 Services Development Fund but the cuts
18 that the Governor put in include cuts to
19 the Vital Statistics funding in the state
20 Department of Health. We receive
21 dollars, a small amount of dollars, but
22 dollars from that Vital Statistics fund
23 that has to do with the money collected
24 for filing birth certificates, death
25 certificates and things like that. Those

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2 dollars help the Medical Examiner with
3 bereavement counseling.

4 So we're trying to figure out
5 is there some way -- we have a fair
6 number of folks in Philadelphia who avail
7 themselves of bereavement after a loved
8 one is either murdered or dies
9 unexpectedly, and the Medical Examiner's
10 Office has provided those services.
11 We're working to see if there's a way
12 with Behavioral Health to help maintain
13 those services. But for those who are
14 uninsured, it becomes a real worry. And
15 it's a small cut. Is it something that
16 would pass notice? Not particularly, but
17 to those families who need it, we think
18 it's important.

19 So what has happened, remember,
20 over the last four years, which I have
21 tried to emphasize, is, we've cut and cut
22 and cut and cut and cut. So we're not at
23 a point where there's a lot of fat in any
24 system anywhere. There's no fat in any
25 system. So a real cut and then a cut of

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2 this magnitude is going to have to have
3 huge impact on people in the City.

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: My thought
5 is that any cut in public health equals
6 an increased cost in ER services at a
7 hospital.

8 DR. SCHWARZ: Yeah.

9 COUNCILMAN JONES: So we're
10 going to see this ripple effect in other
11 sectors of Philadelphia beyond just the
12 initial cuts, and I think we're, in a
13 way, underestimating what the impact of
14 this will be to others, who will then
15 come and seek more funding because of the
16 increases in those areas. So any cut to
17 ambulatory services is an increase to the
18 Fire Department, who is asked to come out
19 in a 9-1-1 emergency.

20 So I'm just trying to get us to
21 put our arms around what the magnitude of
22 these cuts and what they will mean as we
23 go forward.

24 Thank you, Madam Chair.

25 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO:

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2 Commissioner, did you say that the Bureau
3 of Vital Statistics where people get
4 birth certificates? Well, you know, they
5 just passed Bill 934, which they're going
6 to require individuals who want to vote,
7 if they get a photo ID, have to have a
8 birth certificate. So what's going to --
9 it's rhetorical. I'm being funny, right?
10 What's going to happen when they get an
11 onslaught of all these people requesting
12 their birth certificate?

13 DR. SCHWARZ: I don't think
14 that's funny at all and I think that is a
15 serious concern.

16 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: It is a
17 serious concern. None of these things
18 were taken into consideration, but it
19 furtheres the effort to suppress the vote.

20 Thank you.

21 Councilman Kenyatta.

22 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you,
23 Commissioner Schwarz. A couple things.
24 Under the General Assistance program for
25 Fiscal Year 2012, what's the exact

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2 amount? Is that the total, 159 million
3 per year?

4 DR. SCHWARZ: The total amount
5 in the Pennsylvania budget?

6 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yes.

7 DR. SCHWARZ: Hold on for one
8 second, if you would.

9 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Because
10 they're saying they want to save 150
11 million. I just want to know the exact
12 amount that was in the budget for Fiscal
13 Year 2012.

14 DR. SCHWARZ: I'll get it for
15 you. I just have to find the right
16 folder, but I have it for you.

17 So the cash grant line in
18 2011-2012 was \$220,356,000. 220 million.
19 And in 2012-13, it's 66 million.

20 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Sixty-six
21 million.

22 DR. SCHWARZ: That's a
23 \$153,930,000 cut, or 69.9 percent,
24 according to the budget document from the
25 Governor.

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2 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: And you're
3 going to get back with us on exact
4 numbers as to where those cuts are
5 actually having an impact in terms of
6 like Philadelphia --

7 DR. SCHWARZ: We expect
8 somewhere --

9 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: -- Chester
10 County, Montgomery County?

11 DR. SCHWARZ: For Philadelphia
12 we expect something like an \$85, \$86
13 million cut.

14 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Do you
15 have an actual amount of individuals,
16 numbers in terms of people? That's
17 really the question I was getting at.

18 DR. SCHWARZ: There will be
19 others who will testify and I'm going to
20 see to their numbers. I can give you an
21 estimate, but the reason I'm hedging on
22 this is only because there are others who
23 have looked at this more closely and
24 you'll get a more accurate estimate.

25 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: And I want

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2 to be brief with my comments. Just
3 coming from that environment in
4 Harrisburg, there's a couple things that
5 I hope we have an opportunity to walk
6 away with at this hearing, and my
7 colleague Councilman Greenlee pretty much
8 said you're preaching to the choir,
9 because for the most part, we all get it.
10 It's going to have an impact on us
11 significantly as we represent our
12 constituents in the City of Philadelphia.

13 You mentioned that these cuts
14 are real and you mentioned that there are
15 faces that should be attributed to these
16 actual cuts, because a lot of times when
17 you divvy up certain budgets in
18 Harrisburg, you're not thinking about
19 actual real live people and the impact
20 it's going to have on people. So you
21 just basically draw lines through the
22 budget making cuts.

23 I want to encourage all of the
24 individuals who are here not just to come
25 and listen today, but one and first and

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2 foremost, you should be contacting your
3 State Representative and your State
4 Senator, and they should be aggressively
5 advocating in Harrisburg to reduce these
6 cuts. Every State Representative in
7 Harrisburg and State Senator that
8 represents Philadelphia should be holding
9 the line and advocating against this
10 Governor regarding these particular cuts.

11 There will be a budget hearing
12 in Harrisburg coming up soon. I know the
13 Mayor has administration that goes and
14 lobbies, but the people have to go to
15 Harrisburg and lobby as well. And so
16 part of this strategy should also be
17 letting individuals from Philadelphia and
18 the surrounding counties go to Harrisburg
19 and state for the record and let the
20 families go to Harrisburg, let the
21 families go to Harrisburg and talk about
22 how devastating these cuts will be if
23 this budget goes through as proposed.

24 Last, but not least, we do have
25 an Appropriations Chairman on the Senate

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2 side that represents Philadelphia, who is
3 very passionate about the needs and
4 concerns of those who are in the City of
5 Philadelphia. I encourage you to also
6 support him so he can stand and advocate
7 with the Philadelphia Delegation against
8 these cuts.

9 These cuts will be devastating
10 to the City of Philadelphia and the
11 surrounding area, but the ironic part is,
12 if you shut down the City of
13 Philadelphia, the State of Pennsylvania
14 shuts down as well. Forty to 60 percent
15 of our state revenues come from the City
16 of Philadelphia and the five-county
17 surrounding areas, and I think we need to
18 make that known, because a lot of times
19 we just give Philadelphia and those
20 people, but not recognizing that we
21 contribute a significant amount of money
22 to the tax base of revenue in the State
23 of Pennsylvania.

24 And so just while we have
25 individuals who are here, just so we just

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2 don't come and listen and do testimony,
3 from an advocacy standpoint there's a
4 part for us to play while we're in the
5 front end. Because this is a proposal.
6 This is a proposal in the beginning, but
7 I think we need to aggressively advocate
8 on that state level to push back to
9 reduce that 20 percent increasing.

10 I'm going to wrap up on this.
11 One Councilman said, Well, aren't other
12 counties affected. That is true, other
13 counties are affected. But just in my
14 brief experience in being in Harrisburg,
15 sometimes we have individuals on the
16 opposite side of the aisle, except for my
17 colleague Councilman Denny O'Brien and
18 John Taylor, that will pretty much vote,
19 vote based upon a rhetorical and
20 philosophical position separate what
21 actually impacts them in their own
22 counties. So, for instance, they'll vote
23 something that will actually have a
24 negative impact on their county
25 regardless just based upon ideology. So

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2 I think it's very imperative that we
3 aggressively advocate and really inform
4 not just the folks in Philadelphia and
5 the surrounding areas, but all across the
6 State of Pennsylvania. This is a real
7 issue, and it's going to significantly
8 have an impact if these cuts go down the
9 way that they're proposed. So I just
10 wanted to make sure we get some advocacy
11 behind just coming and sitting and
12 talking.

13 That's it.

14 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you
15 very much.

16 Any other questions?

17 (No response.)

18 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you,
19 Dr. Schwarz.

20 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN:
21 Councilwoman.

22 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Oh, I'm
23 sorry. Move up to the mike.

24 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: All right.
25 I'll try to do that.

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2 If I could just briefly
3 summarize what I believe the Governor's
4 position is, and, that is, to reduce
5 spending and no tax increase. And the
6 highlights of his budget would be to
7 eliminate General Assistance programs;
8 20, 30 percent reduction in public
9 funding for universities; as you have
10 articulated, the challenge of the block
11 grants; the education; DPW; 20 percent
12 reduction to the counties on human
13 services; and no educational funding
14 increase.

15 I'd like to ask some process
16 issues, if I can. Last year when the
17 Governor proposed his budget, health and
18 welfare was protected in the Governor's
19 budget address. Could you comment
20 briefly on what happened to health and
21 human services when the budgeteers, the
22 various caucuses and the Governor's
23 negotiated final product, what was the
24 difference between the Governor's budget
25 proposal as reflects in health and human

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2 services? It doesn't have to be finite
3 numbers. I'm just trying to paint an
4 historical perspective as to what could
5 happen this year.

6 DR. SCHWARZ: So there were
7 changes, I think is the best way to say
8 it. Some lines in the budget were
9 increased back to their previous level;
10 some lines sustained cuts over time. But
11 the process, I think, restored some
12 funding.

13 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: The
14 Governor's budget or the final product in
15 the 2011-2012 involved a projected
16 savings in waste, fraud and corruption in
17 the Department of Welfare. To your
18 knowledge, has that number ever been
19 realized?

20 DR. SCHWARZ: Not to my
21 knowledge.

22 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Have you
23 been involved or any of the counties been
24 involved in trying to in any kind of
25 process to find that waste, fraud and

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2 corruption?

3 DR. SCHWARZ: We have. On the
4 community behavioral health side, we
5 are -- the Medicaid agent, remember, for
6 the state have been pressed hard to make
7 sure that all billing of the agency has
8 been legitimate. In addition, the audit
9 requirements on the county have been, I
10 would say, pressed so that we have been
11 in a good way pressed to review, look at,
12 monitor audits that are submitted to us.
13 We've generally done a good job I think
14 in the past. We're trying very hard to
15 do as good a job as possible.

16 The savings that have been
17 identified or the sources of revenue have
18 been minimal. So, in general,
19 Philadelphia County has done well in both
20 of those areas. So while we have
21 redoubled our efforts, I can't say that
22 it's been terribly productive in terms of
23 identifying new revenue.

24 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: And just
25 to be redundant, do you believe that that

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2 process will produce any significant
3 savings in waste, fraud or corruption?

4 DR. SCHWARZ: I don't have any
5 reason to think that it will either yield
6 dollars nor a change in process.

7 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Have you
8 been involved in any planning for the
9 future impact of the implementation of
10 Act 62 -- or 22?

11 DR. SCHWARZ: No.

12 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Have you
13 been involved in any planning for the
14 proposed universal waiver that the
15 Secretary of Welfare intends to promote
16 the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania?

17 DR. SCHWARZ: We've not.

18 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Are you
19 aware that there is a proposal afoot to
20 delay tax cuts, specifically the Capital
21 Stock and Franchise Tax depreciation
22 changes, close corporate tax -- and a
23 proposal to close corporate tax loopholes
24 and find efficiencies that do not affect
25 the well-being of the most vulnerable

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2 Pennsylvanians, and do you support that
3 proposal?

4 DR. SCHWARZ: If I understand
5 what you're saying, I think I would, as
6 long as it supports vulnerable
7 Pennsylvanians.

8 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: My
9 understanding is that the Capital Stock
10 and Franchise Tax cut for this year alone
11 is approximately 2.7 billion. Is that
12 correct?

13 DR. SCHWARZ: That is my
14 understanding as well.

15 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Could you
16 reflect on what impact if we suspended
17 the Capital Stock and Franchise Tax cut
18 for one year, what impact that would have
19 on this general discussion that we're
20 having here?

21 DR. SCHWARZ: If dollars were
22 made available, I presume we could not
23 only make whole again the dollars that
24 are in the seven lines being cut 20
25 percent in the Human Services Block

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2 Grant, but perhaps we could even invest
3 and make more progress in helping people
4 who are most vulnerable in Philadelphia.

5 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: I know
6 this is a rhetorical question, but I have
7 to ask it anyway. Do you believe that
8 the suspension of the Corporate Stock and
9 Franchise Tax would be less onerous than
10 the proposed cuts to health and human
11 services?

12 DR. SCHWARZ: I can only speak
13 about health and human services. I can't
14 speak about other impacts of the
15 potential for changing the tax structure.

16 So for health and human
17 services, anything that brings back into
18 the proposal the dollars that the
19 Governor proposes to cut, anything that
20 restores the cuts would be helpful to
21 health and human services in
22 Philadelphia.

23 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Have you
24 had any discussions with any of our
25 hospitals, our rehabilitation facilities

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2 as to the months that they're in arrears
3 on collections of clean claims?

4 DR. SCHWARZ: We have.

5 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Do you
6 know what the impact is on small
7 businesses when those clean claims are
8 not paid promptly by the Commonwealth of
9 Pennsylvania?

10 DR. SCHWARZ: The estimates of
11 the multiplier effect for a dollar that
12 is lost in revenue for healthcare
13 institutions is anywhere between \$5 and
14 \$20, I believe, depending on which
15 dollars are cut and who is doing the
16 estimating.

17 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Have you
18 had discussions with our not-for-profit
19 providers of health and human services in
20 the areas and the reductions in their
21 workforce that will be affected by these
22 proposed cuts, and, if so, how dramatic
23 would that be?

24 DR. SCHWARZ: So we have not
25 had those conversations yet in detail.

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2 We have had conversations with hospitals,
3 for instance, that are looking at cuts
4 that the Governor has proposed in
5 Medicaid. The problem is, there's a lack
6 of specificity in the budget documents
7 either about the Medicaid cuts or about
8 how the cuts in the Block Grant will be
9 implemented; that is, there are no rules.
10 And we have not wanted to make specific
11 determinations for providers in
12 Philadelphia without any rules from the
13 Commonwealth. This is a huge problem.
14 One, because agencies need to plan, and,
15 two, because government needs to plan.
16 So without rules for this Block Grant, it
17 is very difficult to know what the
18 impacts will be either on agencies or on
19 people, because ultimately our
20 responsibility is to Philadelphians and
21 families whose income may change,
22 families whose ability to care for loved
23 ones may change, individuals who have
24 serious mental illness or substance abuse
25 who are homeless or have drug abuse. The

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2 impacts to those individuals will be
3 real. They are the ones that we are
4 responsible for, and it is very
5 frightening to think about what could
6 happen to people given the short
7 timeframe for any rules and the magnitude
8 of the cuts.

9 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Yesterday
10 I was asking a question and I was
11 reminded by our esteemed Majority Leader
12 that this would probably be a better
13 venue for that question.

14 When you have a cut in funding
15 for the more intensive programs, is that
16 like a water balloon where you push it
17 down and some of those people who require
18 a higher level of treatment will then end
19 up in programs with less intensive
20 comprehensive treatment, and what will be
21 the outcome? What will be the effect on
22 the outcomes of that?

23 DR. SCHWARZ: I think the
24 problem with that is only if we have
25 someone who is a paranoid schizophrenic,

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2 who is stable at home and requires
3 specific treatment, and one of the parts
4 of that treatment has to do with
5 monitoring at home so they take their
6 medication, and the monitoring at home
7 goes away, I don't know what lower level
8 funding we have to provide home
9 monitoring for people who are really very
10 brittle and need to take medication.

11 So for many of the services, I
12 want to be clear, many of the services
13 here, there aren't lower levels that are
14 replacements.

15 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: So that
16 will just disappear?

17 DR. SCHWARZ: So where
18 possible, we will try to support people
19 any way we can, but these are not easily
20 replaced services. If someone is
21 substance addicted and they require -- or
22 they're in substance abuse treatment,
23 removing substance abuse treatment
24 doesn't have an easy substitute.

25 If someone is homeless and they

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2 are getting case management services and
3 case management is taken away, there's
4 not an alternative for that.

5 Part of the problem with the
6 Block Grant is, it presumes that there
7 are ways to change funding streams and do
8 things in a better way that's more
9 flexible. Many of the services that we
10 have were specified by the Legislature
11 over a 30- or 40-year period. There was
12 long debate about whether those services
13 should happen, what are the efficiencies
14 and inefficiencies, and the Commonwealth
15 has monitored and made rules on each of
16 these services and we have developed
17 programs and we put out requests for
18 proposals and we have specific providers
19 who we monitor and individuals in those
20 services. All that work goes away and we
21 have three months to plan.

22 It is illogical that there will
23 be something at the end of the day that
24 looks better than what has taken all this
25 time and all this planning and all this

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2 oversight and all this review. Plus,
3 we're working with people who aren't
4 really able to be flexible necessarily.
5 Many of the individuals who will be
6 impacted by this are very vulnerable
7 individuals, probably the most vulnerable
8 in many ways in our City, and, therefore,
9 any change is going to be hard for them,
10 not to mention significant change. And
11 many of the people who care for those
12 people are living on the edge and doing
13 the best they can with what we can give
14 them and their loved one. That will
15 change as well.

16 We are very concerned about how
17 much we're going to be able to minimize
18 the impacts in some situations and what
19 that's going to mean for people who we
20 have cared about and, as professionals
21 throughout our services, spent our lives
22 trying to protect.

23 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN:
24 Commissioner, the Inquirer did a series
25 of articles that reflected on the effects

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2 of cuts to eligibility for kids with
3 disabilities, people in renal disease and
4 renal failure, their estimates as to how
5 many people were cut specific to
6 Philadelphia. They're touting that an
7 overwhelming majority of those
8 individuals were put back. Can you
9 shed --

10 DR. SCHWARZ: Were -- I'm
11 sorry?

12 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: There's
13 been references that most of those people
14 were almost instantly put back. Can you
15 comment on -- can you illuminate as to
16 whether those people who were cut were
17 actually put back on the rolls and at
18 what personal cost, human cost, was it
19 for them if they were able to navigate
20 through that process.

21 DR. SCHWARZ: So we don't know,
22 is the best answer I can give you. In
23 part, because it is the state that knows
24 who those individuals are. The City --

25 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: They're

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2 not sharing that information?

3 DR. SCHWARZ: I'm sorry?

4 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: They're

5 not sharing that information?

6 DR. SCHWARZ: Well, we received
7 some of that information through
8 Community Behavioral Health, so we look
9 at on a weekly basis the number of people
10 enrolled in Community Behavioral Health,
11 because anyone who is eligible for
12 Medicaid in Philadelphia County should be
13 eligible for Community Behavioral Health
14 services. So the number of people in
15 Community Behavioral Health is an
16 indicator for us. We saw a decline and I
17 think it's safe to say an increase. The
18 problem is, it isn't uniform over the
19 various eligibility categories for
20 Medical Assistance. So some categories
21 have declined and not come back up; other
22 categories have continued to increase,
23 and some have gone up and come down or
24 gone down and come up.

25 So the story isn't simple, and

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2 what we are hearing is probably what
3 you're hearing, and our great fear is
4 that there are disruptions for
5 individuals who have not been made whole
6 and we're trying to find those people.
7 We don't have an easy way to do that.

8 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Can I ask
9 you one more question, and I apologize to
10 the Chairperson for taking up this much
11 time, but we've heard about the asset
12 test on Act 22. I've also heard you
13 testify that you have not been involved
14 in any planning process for future
15 eligibility criteria or decisions or
16 policies that might be coming down the
17 road.

18 Do you have any -- I'm just
19 trying to form this, put this in the form
20 of a question. It's very difficult.
21 Some other things in my head are getting
22 in the way.

23 But very simply stated -- and
24 I've said this several times -- that I
25 wouldn't have given this authority to

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2 Estelle Richman, nor would she have
3 accepted it, because the instant dialogue
4 that's going to take place if the
5 Administration or the Legislature wants
6 to make a cut, then they will just ask
7 the Secretary of Welfare to make the
8 eligibility changes. My concern is that
9 we've seen one small piece of evidence as
10 to how they want to change eligibility,
11 and that's the asset test.

12 Do you have any projections
13 whatsoever and does the County
14 Commissioners and Administrators have any
15 position on what that impact could be of
16 Act 62's implementation? And that, as
17 you've said, is an ongoing process that
18 will be invisible behind the scenes.

19 DR. SCHWARZ: Remember, we
20 don't know the answer yet on the food
21 stamp piece. There are others here who
22 have projections, and I'm going to let
23 them answer that question.

24 What I will say is, remember as
25 well there was an Act 22 regulatory

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2 process that was begun about three and a
3 half weeks ago that has to do with what
4 have been called the loophole kids, so
5 children who are disabled from families
6 whose income is above 200 percent of
7 poverty. Those families receive Medical
8 Assistance, and through the rule-making
9 under Act 22, the Secretary has
10 promulgated a rule saying that those
11 families will now have to pay co-pays.
12 Well, the way that that was done means
13 that service can't be denied to those
14 individuals. So that's really good news,
15 because they're Medical Assistance
16 eligible. So providers are supposed to
17 collect those dollars. Under the
18 physical health part of Medicaid,
19 providers can collect those dollars, and
20 the physical health managed care
21 organizations can cut the dollars to the
22 providers. So a doctor who has a
23 contract with an insurance company can
24 get less money from the insurance company
25 even though the insurance company is paid

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2 by the state. But for counties that have
3 the mental health side of this, we're not
4 allowed to change the funding formulas to
5 providers.

6 So the cut that the state made
7 in Act 22 regulation around loophole kids
8 will actually be a cut from Philadelphia.
9 It's a cut to the counties. Most
10 counties didn't figure that out, because
11 it was hidden in the rules, and the rules
12 were 102 pages or something long, and it
13 took us probably a week and a half to go
14 through the whole thing and trace it out
15 and ask six questions.

16 The number of individual rules
17 that have to be made for the Block Grant
18 is extraordinary. Just the time it's
19 going to take to tease each of them apart
20 and figure out where at the end of the
21 day the rule hits and what it means and
22 then have to write responses and go to
23 hearings and see if we can change the
24 rules, it's an extraordinary amount of
25 work that's going to have to happen, I

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2 figure, in a 30-day period.

3 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Well,
4 Commissioner, I welcome that articulation
5 of that policy. For years my initial
6 advocacy for kids with disabilities was
7 around that specific loophole issue. It
8 is a pejorative term that makes it look
9 like these families are not -- they're
10 breaking the law or they're somehow
11 skirting regulations and getting
12 something they're not entitled to. That
13 is nowhere near what the truth is.

14 One of the issues, as you've
15 wonderfully articulated, the impact is
16 not easily definable. Some of these
17 families have children who break TVs
18 every day or they're so medically
19 fragile, you cannot predict what the
20 instant cost is going to be from a
21 functional standpoint from that family,
22 let alone from a financial impact.

23 The issue around the loopholes,
24 I find it curious that this increase is
25 not considered a fee increase, which is a

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2 tax, but I do believe -- and I'll say
3 this emphatically -- for all those
4 families, I believe this is a tax
5 increase for the most vulnerable in the
6 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and darn
7 it, if they're the only ones that are
8 going to be taxed in this conversation,
9 that upsets me greatly.

10 And I will bring this to a
11 close by emphasizing that the whole
12 discussion around the loophole issue
13 brought us to a resolution where Governor
14 Rendell said that he will leave the
15 loophole kids alone forever, forever.
16 That also resulted in us passing
17 legislation that provided that the
18 insurance companies of the Commonwealth
19 of Pennsylvania under Act 62 collect some
20 of those fees. To date -- and this isn't
21 a question; this is a flat-out
22 statement -- the Commonwealth of
23 Pennsylvania has not implemented Act 62.
24 There's \$28 million a year on the table
25 because they refuse to go after the

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2 insurance companies to implement Act 62.
3 To my knowledge, there are no discussions
4 taking place in the Commonwealth of
5 Pennsylvania surrounding the
6 implementation issue and there's \$80
7 million that is owed this General Fund.
8 At the same time, they're cutting the
9 line item just, just, just to autism by
10 maybe 15 percent. Eighty million
11 dollars, that \$80 million under an
12 informal discussion was supposed to go
13 back to fund the autism waiver and the
14 ACAP program. I'm not greedy enough to
15 say that I want that whole \$80 million
16 for autism, but I'm going to tell you
17 something, that \$80 million belongs in
18 the General Fund for health and human
19 services, and my kids shouldn't be the
20 only ones that are paying the tax in the
21 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the
22 insurance company shouldn't be allowed to
23 skirt their legal responsibility and
24 obligation to pay \$80 million for the
25 diagnostics and for the medical supports

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2 they need to access their education.

3 So I've said my peace, and I

4 know I've taken too much time, but I

5 thank you, Madam Chair.

6 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you

7 very much. We do have about --

8 (Applause.)

9 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you.

10 We have six more panels, so --

11 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: I

12 apologize for that.

13 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: No. It's

14 okay. Just keep your questions short.

15 We do have -- thank you. Any

16 other questions for the Commissioner?

17 (No response.)

18 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you

19 so much for taking time to come in and

20 share with us the issues around this

21 subject.

22 (Applause.)

23 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: I want to

24 say to the other panels, we have the

25 County Commissioners coming next, but we

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2 do have State Senator Vincent Hughes here
3 who will come and make a comment. He is
4 in the Legislature. He's a Senator and
5 Chair of the Appropriations Committee in
6 Harrisburg, and he will give us his take
7 on what's happening there. Thank you.
8 And then the County Commissioners will
9 come forth.

10 (Witness approached witness
11 table.)

12 SENATOR HUGHES: If I may get
13 my notes out.

14 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Yes.

15 SENATOR HUGHES: First of all,
16 let me thank Council for the invitation
17 to come down and just spend a few
18 moments, and I'll take a few moments,
19 because, quite frankly, the length and
20 breadth of the conversation that should
21 be had, some of the details that former
22 Speaker and now Councilman O'Brien talked
23 about are very real, very pertinent, and
24 we need to get into some of those
25 details. They require, I think, me to at

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2 least have two or three more of my staff
3 people here to help walk through line by
4 line some of the issues.

5 I'm just going to give you a
6 general oversight, tell you what it is
7 that we're observing, and really thank
8 you for this collaborative process that I
9 think needs to continue after this point.

10 First of all -- and I've said
11 this publicly, so I'm not speaking out of
12 school -- we're very concerned about the
13 general math that's being utilized by
14 this Administration in terms of how
15 they're calculating their budget. We're
16 very concerned about the math. There's a
17 history in this Administration with
18 respect to its math where -- just to give
19 you a brief example, last year the
20 Governor's folks projected a \$79 million
21 budget surplus for last year's budget and
22 the budget surplus wound up being over
23 \$785 million. It was off dramatically.
24 Okay? We knew they were off from the
25 front end of it when they gave the budget

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2 address in March. We said that they were
3 off. They still held to those numbers
4 all the way up until June of last year
5 when it became clear that they couldn't
6 come anywhere clear. So we have some
7 general concerns about how they're doing
8 their calculations.

9 This year's budget projection
10 for a deficit of \$719 million we believe
11 is probably off by a couple hundred
12 million dollars. It probably should be
13 somewhere close to about \$500 million.
14 The Independent Fiscal Office that was
15 just established by the General Assembly,
16 signed off by the Governor, is supposed
17 to be an independent entity that provides
18 the General Assembly essentially an
19 independent analysis of the numbers in
20 Harrisburg. Their initial assessment is
21 that the deficit is probably closer to
22 about \$500 million. So, again, we're
23 very concerned about the math that's
24 being utilized.

25 One final area, just to talk

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2 about the math, is, there was a
3 determination made by the Governor and
4 the Secretary of Revenue to adopt
5 something called accelerated
6 depreciation. And I'm not going to get
7 into all of the details of it because,
8 quite frankly, it's probably a lot more
9 complicated than most of us can probably
10 comprehend. But they accepted a federal
11 rule that they didn't have to accept.
12 They calculated that that would have
13 probably about a \$200 million cost on the
14 state budget. The numbers are now in.
15 That's probably twice as much. The
16 probably cost on the state budget is
17 probably around \$400 million. A number
18 of professionals at Shippensburg
19 University have substantiated that.
20 Folks at the national level have
21 substantiated that, and that's a national
22 phenomenon. So very concerned about the
23 math.
24 Very concerned about -- as you
25 all know, in any budget process, there's

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2 at least two ways to deal with a deficit
3 reality. You can deal with cuts, which
4 is one way. You can deal with a growth
5 strategy, which is another way. You can
6 try to create efficiencies in government,
7 but you could also try to grow the
8 economy, try to put people back to work,
9 do economic incentives to do projects and
10 create jobs and try to grow the economy.
11 So far, the Administration has not
12 adopted a process to deal or any
13 programmatic agenda to try to grow the
14 economy.

15 In January of 2011,
16 Pennsylvania was the seventh fastest
17 growing job economy of any state in the
18 nation. We were ranked seventh. Now
19 we're ranked in the bottom quadrant.
20 We've dropped from seven to in the bottom
21 25 percent of all states in terms of job
22 growth and job creation and economic
23 development.

24 So the Department of Community
25 and Economic Development has been cut by

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2 about a third. Probably about \$200 to
3 \$300 million of the Department of
4 Community and Economic Development have
5 been cut out. So that's, as you all know
6 in this body, that's projects we can
7 generate, that's funding we can generate
8 from Harrisburg that could come down to
9 the region, come down to local
10 municipalities and invest in local
11 economic development activities. And we
12 have a lot more numbers that can go into
13 a lot of that whole area, but I'll just
14 put those on the side for now.

15 Many of you have heard, getting
16 specifically, in terms of the direction
17 the Administration is going in. Many of
18 you have heard some of my comments and
19 have heard me say that this
20 Administration has his foot on the neck
21 of working individuals and low-income
22 individuals. We stand by that.

23 You've talked a little bit
24 about the policies that have been
25 adopted, the whole piece around food

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2 stamps, the piece around cutting folks
3 off of Medical Assistance and having them
4 have to reprove themselves to get back
5 in. The cuts in education expenditures
6 in the last year's budget, over a billion
7 dollars, has resulted probably about a
8 job loss of 15,000 people across the
9 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, who were
10 teachers and educators and folks who work
11 in the educational system across the
12 state; has forced about 70 percent of all
13 the local school districts across the
14 State of Pennsylvania to raise local
15 property taxes; has forced most of our
16 higher education institutions at least on
17 the public side to raise tuition rates
18 for about 7, 8 and 9 percent, in addition
19 to other fees that they attached on to a
20 student's expenditures.

21 So just to try to give you a
22 general sense of what we're seeing in
23 Harrisburg with respect to the direction
24 of this Administration, where they're
25 going in terms of trying to achieve an

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2 agenda that we don't think is consistent
3 with the needs of the people of the
4 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or is
5 consistent with sound economic policy or
6 sound budget policy to try to achieve an
7 end.

8 We work closely with the City.
9 Dr. Schwarz and his office have been very
10 helpful in terms of giving some very
11 specific and detailed information in
12 terms of the impact on the City of
13 Philadelphia. Those -- I cannot -- I was
14 listening to Dr. Schwarz provide his
15 testimony about how he describes the
16 safety net of services, especially in the
17 behavioral health area and the folks who
18 are living on the margin and how fragile
19 that safety net already is, and with
20 these cuts that will happen, clearly the
21 hole that will be torn in that safety net
22 will be wide, dramatic.

23 The conversation that
24 Dr. Schwarz talked about of that
25 individual who was receiving prescription

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2 drugs for some kind of behavioral health
3 issue and those services are brought out
4 to their homes and if you miss that
5 service -- and all of you know about
6 this. I'm not preaching to the choir --
7 I am preaching to the choir. You all
8 know about this. Someone misses that one
9 day's worth of prescription care, they
10 wind up possibly lost in the entire
11 system, and it could be days, weeks,
12 months before they're ever found again.

13 I see my friend Brian Eury here
14 from the hospital folks.

15 They will wind up in an
16 emergency room somewhere, and that will
17 wind up costing the State of Pennsylvania
18 more money than they've saved in terms of
19 making cuts.

20 And just if I can just roll
21 back. We did an analysis on the whole
22 food stamp piece, and as all of you know,
23 that that reduces no spending of state
24 dollars. In fact, it increases state
25 spending, because you have to spend more

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2 time with state personnel, state public
3 workers trying to do the asset test. The
4 dramatic increase in overtime
5 expenditures in that particular category
6 I think is almost 600 percent of those
7 workers in terms of the overtime that
8 they're putting in to try to deal with
9 that whole area. And many of you know
10 what's happening in most of our public
11 assistance offices. The level of
12 pressure on those workers now to try to
13 deal with the kinds of issues that
14 they're dealing with, in addition to the
15 recessionary reality that exists where
16 there's already an increase on the
17 service area, is dramatic.

18 We've looked at various saving
19 options, because, again, you can create
20 some savings in the Commonwealth to try
21 to minimize the cut. Councilman
22 O'Neill -- and I always want to call him
23 the Speaker.

24 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: O'Brien.

25 SENATOR HUGHES: O'Brien. I'm

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2 sorry. Denny, Speaker, because I've
3 always been calling you Speaker for a
4 while -- talked about the Capital Stock
5 and Franchise Tax. That's a \$275 million
6 reduction that's supposed to go into
7 place in this year's budget. If you
8 suspended that for a year, you could save
9 \$275 million right there. That could be
10 pumped back into the state budget to deal
11 with some of these issues. Or if you
12 postponed it for a half a year, so
13 instead of \$275 million, it was \$140
14 million reduction, then that's \$140
15 million that you can make available.

16 We believe the closing of the
17 Delaware loophole, which has now come in
18 a bipartisan conversation out of the
19 House of Representatives, our assessment
20 is that that's probably about \$150
21 million that could be saved or generated
22 for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

23 We believe that there's
24 probably about \$200 million of federal
25 money that could come to Pennsylvania

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2 that could be utilized to save state
3 spendings.

4 And, you know, I could go on
5 and on. We have a prescription drug
6 program, Madam Chair, that 17 different
7 agencies, state agencies -- 17 different
8 prescription drug programs in Harrisburg
9 utilized by nine different state
10 agencies. Well, we figure if you
11 collapse them into two or three, we could
12 probably save the state about \$25 million
13 just in that area alone, which could have
14 a significant impact in terms of
15 restoring funding into various different
16 areas.

17 On the growth conversation,
18 there's tremendous amount of things that
19 could be done. There's probably about a
20 billion to \$2 billion of work, of
21 spending that could be spent right now
22 out of Harrisburg that could drive
23 economic activity, especially in our
24 transportation conversation. The
25 transportation piece is relevant because

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2 everyone agrees that that's probably one
3 of the quickest and fastest drivers for
4 putting people back to work, because it
5 has a ripple effect, a ripple effect
6 across various areas of the economy and
7 the business structure.

8 When you drive more activity in
9 transportation, when you're fixing roads,
10 when you're fixing bridges, you got to
11 buy concrete. Somebody has got to make
12 that stuff. Folks go back to work. It
13 has an incredible ripple effect.

14 We see a number of different
15 areas where this can go on, and what I'd
16 prefer to do is provide -- to take a lot
17 of what we have here, combine it with
18 some of the documents that we've already
19 prepared in Harrisburg and share it with
20 you in a more detailed fashion so that
21 you can walk through everything and see
22 clearly what it is that's out here.

23 The impact of state services on
24 the City of Philadelphia and the region
25 are dramatic, maybe more so than many

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2 other communities across the Commonwealth
3 of Pennsylvania, because our economy is
4 so inextricably intertwined with state
5 support with our hospitals, with our
6 higher education institutions, the
7 economies that come out of all of this,
8 how everything mixes together. When the
9 state gets a cold, we get pneumonia.
10 When the state chooses to have reductions
11 and not be thoughtful, and not be
12 thoughtful about how to do economic
13 incentives -- if you go back eight or
14 nine years ago, the first year of the
15 Rendell Administration, significant
16 budget problems at that point. We did
17 some efficiencies, we did some cutting,
18 but at the same time, we also did a \$2
19 billion economic stimulus plan at
20 Harrisburg to drive economic activity.
21 The result of that is we've had a lower
22 unemployment rate in Pennsylvania than
23 the national economy. We need more
24 creative thinking going on in Harrisburg
25 to try to get across to this

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2 Administration about what can be done,
3 what the alternatives are and how we can
4 approach this in a much more thoughtful,
5 more compassionate fashion.

6 To put kids in a classroom, 45
7 kids in a public school classroom, to ask
8 students who started off two years ago,
9 started off two years ago going to
10 Cheyney or West Chester or Temple
11 University, paying X dollars and now have
12 already received a 9 percent tuition
13 increase and probably have another 9
14 percent tuition increase on top of that,
15 to ask those students and those families
16 to have to go through that, without
17 looking at these other options, is a
18 crime, and it's a crime being committed
19 on all of Pennsylvania citizens. It's
20 taking the state back. And specifically
21 it's a crime being committed on the
22 citizens of Philadelphia, because it does
23 not respond to the reality that exists
24 here in the City. And, of course, what
25 happens in Philadelphia impacts the

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2 entire region and impacts the entire
3 Commonwealth.

4 I got lots of pages, Madam
5 Chair. I'm not going to do that on you
6 right now. I appreciate you allowing me
7 to come in and speak at this point.
8 Whatever way we can be helpful. We've
9 had a very good close working
10 relationship with this Council, with the
11 Mayor's Office and communicating with our
12 offices with the entire Philadelphia
13 Delegation. Senator Kitchen is our
14 Chair, and very communicative, a very
15 close working relationship. We want to
16 keep that going on, but we do not need to
17 let the voices represented by you be
18 silent in this process. They have to be
19 heard.

20 Thank you very much.

21 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Thank you.

22 (Applause.)

23 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: What do
24 you think our chances would be in
25 influencing the members of the -- well, I

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2 know you can speak on behalf of the
3 Senate, but you've been in the House
4 before you went to the Senate. What do
5 you think the thinking is there in terms
6 of all of this and what impact any of our
7 lobbying and doing a Roxanne Jones,
8 taking buses up to Harrisburg? And we
9 need a Roxanne Jones right now to go and
10 knock down the Governor's door. That's
11 how I met her back in the '70s.

12 SENATOR HUGHES: God bless
13 Roxanne.

14 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: So if
15 there are any Roxanne Jones here, I want
16 to talk to you about going to Harrisburg
17 and knocking down the Governor's door to
18 get the attention.

19 But what do you think the
20 impact -- what will happen in the House?

21 SENATOR HUGHES: Madam Chair, I
22 was -- I'm from a school of belief where
23 you always have to keep hope alive. So
24 I'm always going to be optimistic. I'm
25 always going to be hopeful, always going

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2 to wage the fight.

3 I was at a -- I had lunch
4 yesterday with the CEO, Gavin Kerr, of
5 Inglis House, a major provider of
6 services, probably the largest provider
7 of services for the disabled community in
8 the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, has
9 services up in your area, has services,
10 Councilman, in your area, services all
11 over the place. It is a -- this has to
12 be a grassroots conversation, but it also
13 has to be a CEO/Board member
14 conversation. These Board members for
15 these organizations that -- and these are
16 Board members, most of them are giving
17 their own time, they're not getting paid
18 for sitting on these boards or sitting on
19 these organizations. They're giving
20 their own time. They're spending their
21 own energy. They've got to get invested
22 in this.

23 When Inglis House talks about
24 the kinds of changes that they might have
25 to make to provide services to people,

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2 that's just the tip of the iceberg, all
3 right, of what other institutional
4 providers, but those Board members have
5 to get engaged. They have to speak. The
6 folks don't go to the country club. All
7 right? The Board members do. Okay?
8 They hang out in different areas. They
9 party in different places. Old friend of
10 ours, Councilwoman Tasco, Obra Kernodle,
11 used to talk about who parties with who
12 and who hangs with who. They hang with
13 those individuals.

14 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: They have
15 their gangs.

16 SENATOR HUGHES: They have
17 their crew. And that's fine. We don't,
18 you know, dismiss that, but they must get
19 engaged and see this as important and
20 crucial to the economic vitality of the
21 City and this region. All right? When
22 folks lose services, when we ask
23 children, students, to pay 25 percent
24 more over a cumulative period in tuition,
25 a four-year degree becomes a six-year

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2 process, a six-year journey, becomes debt
3 that they just can't afford.

4 So I think there's an
5 opportunity. I think many members of the
6 General Assembly are, on both sides of
7 the aisle, in both houses, in the House
8 and the Senate, are not comfortable with
9 what is being presented to them right
10 now. They'd like to see something
11 different. They'd like to see a
12 different proposal. We have to encourage
13 them and help them understand that there
14 is a different way to look at this.

15 We are -- I believe that we're
16 fighting not just a budget number; I
17 think we're fighting an ideology here.
18 And I think we have to be very mindful of
19 that as we go forward. But they must get
20 engaged. It's not just the folks getting
21 on the buses, Madam Chair. It's
22 everybody.

23 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: I agree.

24 Thank you very much.

25 Councilman Kenyatta Johnson.

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2 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you,
3 Madam Chair, and thank you, Mr. Chairman,
4 for being here.

5 SENATOR HUGHES: Councilman,
6 good to see you.

7 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: It's kind
8 of spooky, because I was just talking
9 about how you're going to play a major
10 role in helping us and how we need to
11 support you as you advocate for the needs
12 and concerns for the residents of not
13 just Philadelphia but the surrounding
14 counties and those who will be impacted
15 across the State of Pennsylvania as a
16 whole.

17 But I just want to ask just a
18 couple of questions. You talk about
19 there could be a possibility of an
20 additional \$200 million coming from the
21 feds. What actual departments or
22 agencies will be willing to -- would that
23 actually come from?

24 SENATOR HUGHES: One of the
25 areas that we've looked at is probably in

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2 some long-term care areas where there may
3 be some adjustments that could be made at
4 the state level that would allow for us
5 to draw more dollars, more federal
6 dollars down in that area. Now, that may
7 be the largest area that we could do
8 that. It's currently going on. We think
9 it could be tweaked a little bit. They
10 need to be encouraged in that area.

11 That's probably the biggest
12 area. And what I think would be most
13 productive, Councilman, is we get all of
14 our detail folks together and share that
15 dialogue. But that's probably the
16 largest area.

17 But the point that I want to
18 urge, Councilman, is forcing folks to be
19 creative in terms of how they do what it
20 is that they do and maybe think out of
21 the box a little bit. But we believe
22 that that's a huge area that could be
23 utilized.

24 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: And just
25 the other component, and I see you

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2 mention that it would be helpful to get
3 the business community involved. So
4 obviously the Chamber of Commerce, who we
5 support to provide different incentives
6 when they come to us asking for support
7 from businessmen through the surrounding
8 community, businesswomen from the
9 surrounding community, should also have a
10 reaction to this actual budget and how
11 it's going to have an impact on
12 Philadelphia and the surrounding
13 counties. So I want to take a look at
14 that. But I think also the other
15 component, which I have learned in
16 Harrisburg as well, is the role of
17 unions, and supporting both sides, just
18 to be frank, can play a critical role in
19 this budget process from a rank and file
20 perspective and really trying to see how
21 those two components, the union side and
22 the private side, can have an impact on
23 this government. Because, you know, I
24 remain optimistic it's a proposal, and
25 probably however we can be supportive of

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2 you from a strategy standpoint to push
3 back that proposal, because just because
4 the Governor puts it out there doesn't
5 mean necessarily we have to accept it,
6 but only if we can find a way from a
7 strategy standpoint to partner and kind
8 of be supportive across the board to see
9 if we can reduce what his proposal is.
10 And I believe honestly it is ideology
11 that we're fighting against. I mean,
12 Councilman Curtis Jones mentioned this
13 when we talked about this early on, when
14 you look at the numbers with the state
15 budget, there's a decrease in social
16 services, right? There's a decrease in
17 support for higher education, but there's
18 an increase on the corrections budget,
19 particularly Department of Probation and
20 Parole. And if you've never looked at
21 the issue of crime from a public health
22 standpoint, this budget will exemplify
23 how if you decrease the services of those
24 who get high -- I'm not going to be
25 professional -- those who get high,

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2 substance abuse, drug addiction, they
3 don't get the help that they need, they
4 will find it on the street, robbing,
5 stealing. Someone who has a behavioral
6 health problem, which you don't
7 necessarily talk about, in the prison
8 system -- more than 35 to 40 percent of
9 the people in the prison system have
10 mental health issues, takes medications.
11 If they're cut off the rolls under the
12 Department of Human Services, they will
13 resort to crime.

14 And so when I look at the
15 ideology of how this budget is being
16 presented, it's kind of like, okay, well,
17 we know we're going to cut here, but
18 we're going to prepare -- you know, we
19 already got four new prisons going up,
20 but we're going to make sure we have some
21 additional resources for probation
22 officers to begin addressing those
23 individuals who call themselves getting
24 involved in something that's negative.

25 And so we thank you for taking

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2 time out of your schedule and coming down
3 here and really informing us and really
4 bringing this to light. But the business
5 community component is very, very
6 notable, because a lot of times as
7 Council, they come to us for support, and
8 you can't come to us for support and at
9 the same time you're being silent on an
10 issue that very much affects the same
11 people that make your businesses strive.
12 So thank you for that.

13 SENATOR HUGHES: I've had -- I
14 think two points on that. On the
15 corrections side, Secretary Wetzel, who
16 is our Corrections Commissioner, I found
17 to be a very reasonable individual, and
18 if you have not had the opportunity to
19 spend some time with him -- I'm sure you
20 have -- we've tried to help him link up
21 more with the social service sides that
22 Secretary Schwarz and Dr. Evans have been
23 providing through their operation to get
24 a better handle on that, and finally
25 there is some movement on being Smart on

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2 Crime in Harrisburg. We believe that
3 there's probably about \$100 to \$125
4 million worth of savings that can be
5 utilized by dealing with some Smart on
6 Crime policies and non-violent offenders,
7 the same community that you were just
8 talking about. So finally there's been
9 some movement for it on that.

10 I found recently that the
11 business community has been more
12 receptive in a broader sense, but also
13 when you talk in a specific sense. When
14 you talk about the major employers here
15 in the region, the major institutional
16 employers, our hospitals, our higher
17 education, eds and meds, they clearly are
18 prepared to come to the table and talk
19 more. What we need them to do is bring
20 more of their friends with them, and I
21 think this is part of a process to help
22 encourage that.

23 Thank you.

24 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Senator, I
25 know there's always a bone of contention

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2 about the certification of revenues. I
3 can't be specific, but a little birdie
4 told me that the revenues are on the
5 upswing. So from a strategic standpoint,
6 I would caution against doing an early
7 budget until all those numbers are in.

8 SENATOR HUGHES: We are not
9 advocates of doing an early budget, but
10 we do know -- I mean, tax -- we think the
11 Governor is wrong on his budget deficit
12 projections. We think he's front-loaded
13 the hole, to make it a larger hole on the
14 front end, so that his budget proposal
15 can force more cuts. We know that tax
16 receipts are running about 1.2 percent
17 ahead of last year's tax receipts. This
18 is all without economic development
19 activity going on. This is all without
20 job creation activity going on that can
21 be funded, that can be funded right now
22 in various different -- and PENNVEST and
23 our Commonwealth Financial Authority, on
24 the transportation initiative alone, 35
25 states have utilized a federal provision

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2 called a Garvey Transaction. In fact,
3 SEPTA has utilized the provision called a
4 Garvey Transaction where you take a
5 portion of your federal dollars coming
6 down to transportation and you securitize
7 that. You securitize that. That has no
8 impact -- so it's paid off of your
9 federal dollars coming in. It has no
10 impact on the state spending.

11 Virginia, I believe, just did a
12 \$300 million transaction to put into
13 their roads and highways and bridges.
14 That's part of a \$1.5 billion plan.
15 They're not spending any state money.
16 They're utilizing only a piece of their
17 federal money to go and securitize it
18 more and bring more money to the table.
19 That puts people to work.

20 I'm not sure what we're waiting
21 for. We're waiting for a bridge to fall
22 down? I'm not sure, but that's an option
23 that is out there available right now.
24 That's growing the economy. That's
25 adding to that financial statement, as

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2 you talked about, Mr. Speaker. That's
3 how that works. Those are options that
4 are out there that could be done in a
5 number of different areas that we think
6 are the path we need to go down.

7 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you.
8 Councilman Jones.

9 COUNCILMAN JONES: I will be
10 brief, Madam Chair. We have an ambitious
11 schedule before us. But I want to thank
12 the Chairman for coming down, taking time
13 out of his fight in Harrisburg to protect
14 Philadelphia. I had an opportunity with
15 a couple of other Councilmembers to go up
16 to Harrisburg early on, and Councilman
17 O'Brien is right on point and Councilman
18 Johnson is right on point. This is a
19 philosophical ideological budget
20 gamesmanship that is happening.

21 Early on, your staff pointed
22 out that the projections for the
23 shortfalls were disingenuous, that in
24 fact we were achieving -- if you in
25 gamesmanship set the projections very

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2 high in the beginning and then when the
3 actuals start to come in and they are not
4 what you projected them to be falsely in
5 the beginning, then you sharpen your
6 knife for severe cuts to complement your
7 philosophical political view, which is
8 Philadelphia is a foreign country in the
9 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

10 So as we look at this and then
11 it's embarrassing when those projections
12 start to even exceed what you falsely put
13 them up to, then what do you do? You
14 fall back on the fact that you just are
15 mean-spirited and want to elevate your
16 political platform not just in the
17 Commonwealth, but in a national way, in a
18 national way. And Governors are taking
19 this opportunity to not put forth the
20 kinds of revenues that can help the most
21 vulnerable of us in cities. And I just
22 want to thank you, Senator, Chairman, for
23 coming down here and sharing that with
24 us.

25 I want to point out that City

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2 Council has been meeting with the state
3 delegation, both in the Senate and in the
4 House. More often we are exchanging
5 information. We're finding out what's
6 going on because of your efforts and
7 other efforts in the House to kind of get
8 our act in order to prepare for what we
9 have to fight against at the state and
10 federal level. So we thank you for
11 sharing that information with us today.

12 SENATOR HUGHES: Thank you,
13 Councilman.

14 If I could add one point, and
15 I'll wrap up here. We have a -- one
16 thing that I'd like everyone to pay
17 attention to is, as you all know, there's
18 been a settlement with the banks in terms
19 of the foreclosure issue. Madam Chair,
20 it's something that I know you're very
21 familiar with and worked on many years.
22 And Pennsylvania is scheduled to receive,
23 I believe, \$79 million to help deal with
24 that.

25 Now, we in the Appropriations

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2 hearings process, Secretary of Banking, a
3 number of other individuals in the
4 Administration came before the
5 Appropriations Committee and we asked
6 them specifically what their plans were
7 for that \$79 million, and we wanted it
8 all to go, we wanted it all to go to the
9 HEMAP program, all to go to the HEMAP
10 program. In fact, the Secretary of
11 Banking indicated that he wanted it all
12 to go to the HEMAP program, which is
13 Homeowners' Emergency Mortgage Assistance
14 Program. I remember. All right? And
15 I'm not sure if the Secretary of Banking
16 checked off his comments with the front
17 office, but the front office has been
18 silent, the Governor's Office has been
19 silent on where those dollars should be
20 going. And I put -- I make note of that
21 because in Wisconsin where Governor
22 Walker, the notorious Governor of
23 Wisconsin presides, he has made a
24 decision to utilize his share to try to
25 fill a budget hole in Wisconsin.

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2 And so there is apparently some
3 latitude that exists in the context of
4 that settlement of how those dollars can
5 be utilized. So I guess I'm kind of
6 alerting this Council to be on notice on
7 that, and it may be appropriate if a
8 message or an intent from Council -- I
9 don't want to tell you how to do what you
10 do, but you know how to do what you do --
11 be sent to the appropriate individuals
12 with a statement of your concerns about
13 how those dollars should be spent.

14 We still continue to have a
15 major foreclosure crisis across the state
16 here in Philadelphia. We get the
17 spreadsheets on a daily basis. The one
18 number that remains consistently red of
19 all of our categories -- I receive
20 categories -- is in the housing area,
21 where it's just a huge deficit. And that
22 deficit is more than just a number,
23 that's people's lives, that's people's
24 issues, that's people's circumstances
25 falling into a very deep and troubling

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2 hole. So just put a note in that.

3 And I would be remiss if I
4 didn't mention seeing my good friend and
5 colleague Senator Joe Rocks, former
6 colleague Joe Rocks. Once a Senator,
7 always a Senator. That's how we kind of
8 operate. Once a Speaker, always a
9 Speaker. But I, again, want to thank
10 this Council for its willingness to bring
11 the Senate to this Chamber to discuss
12 what's going on in Harrisburg.

13 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you
14 so much. We appreciate your coming. We
15 again recognize the relationship between
16 this Council and the State Legislature,
17 the Senate as well as the House. Never
18 worked so closely with them as we are
19 this time.

20 We did pass -- I introduced a
21 resolution on HEMAP, sent a resolution to
22 Harrisburg. We will follow up,
23 pinpointing that now that these dollars
24 are there, that those dollars should be
25 used for the HEMAP program.

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2 SENATOR HUGHES: Exactly.

3 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: And so we
4 thank you so much for coming and sharing.
5 I appreciate getting your e-mails
6 relative to what's happening in
7 Harrisburg with the budget and your
8 analysis. We appreciate the information.
9 And so, again, thank you for coming.

10 SENATOR HUGHES: Thank you very
11 much, Madam Chair. Thank you all.

12 (Applause.)

13 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: We now
14 want to call up the County Commissioners.
15 We want to thank them for coming and
16 taking time to be a part of this
17 discussion, because, you know, we are
18 Philadelphia County. We do have
19 surrounding counties.

20 We also have -- is Mr. Doug
21 Hill, Ms. Brinda Carroll Penyak,
22 Ms. Joanne Kline, is she here, Mr. Eric
23 Goldstein and Brian Eury. Would you come
24 forward, please.

25 (Witnesses approached witness

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2 table.)

3 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: We wanted
4 to sort of give a picture that this issue
5 is not just impacting on Philadelphia
6 alone, that the surrounding counties, and
7 we also have a County Commissioner
8 Association, which is made up of all the
9 counties across the state who deal with
10 legislative issues in Harrisburg, and
11 we're pleased that they have come to join
12 us also. Thank you.

13 Are you Mr. Hill?

14 MR. HILL: Yes.

15 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Would you
16 please state your name for the record and
17 begin your testimony. And thank you all
18 for coming.

19 MR. HILL: Thank you. And it's
20 my pleasure to be with you today. I'm
21 Doug Hill. I'm Executive Director of the
22 County Commissioners Association of
23 Pennsylvania, and with me is Brinda
24 Caroll Penyak, who is Deputy Director of
25 the Association and also heads our Policy

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2 and Government Relations team. I'll be
3 presenting a few remarks. Brinda will be
4 helping me as we get into questions and
5 answers following the presentations by
6 the rest of the panel.

7 And at the outset too, I also
8 want to thank and acknowledge Senator
9 Hughes and Speaker O'Brien for the many
10 years of assistance and understanding and
11 leadership that they have given us on the
12 kinds of issues that we're testifying
13 about this morning.

14 I'm not going to do any formal
15 remarks. We did distribute to you our
16 statement on the proposed 2012-2013
17 budget, and that's in front of you. That
18 is really a compilation of 80 or so line
19 items that we follow that affect county
20 government and how they're being treated
21 in this proposal, and you'll notice that
22 of those, the Priority 1's almost all
23 relate to human services.

24 There's no question that this
25 is a difficult budget, and the folks of

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2 today's hearing is the fact of the 20
3 percent cut in seven line items that are
4 a part of a much larger budget. Even by
5 the Administration's own estimates, the
6 overall funding levels for county human
7 services lines decreased by about 3
8 percent, and that's across the board, and
9 we can comment on that in a little bit
10 more detail later.

11 But I think it's also important
12 to note that this is a continuation of
13 what's been about an eight-year freeze or
14 decline in many of those same line items,
15 and so it is very much a critical issue
16 for us.

17 But the centerpiece of today's
18 hearing is the block grants and the
19 proposal to merge parts of seven lines
20 into a single block grant program and
21 then to effect a 20 percent cut in those
22 lines.

23 I think at the outset it's
24 important to say that even though they
25 are linked in the context of the budget,

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2 we believe we need to treat them as two
3 separate issues, and the reason for that
4 is that block grants, as you heard in
5 Dr. Schwarz's testimony, can be a valid
6 and useful strategy in human services
7 delivery, but we need to consider that in
8 a separate context from the funding
9 that's attached to it. So if the Block
10 Grant is simply a mechanism to effectuate
11 cuts, then we haven't achieved what we're
12 really intending to achieve.

13 In that context, our
14 Association has been a long supporter of
15 block grants. Right now, as you all
16 know, most of the human services we
17 deliver are through narrow categorical
18 programs. We all know very well that
19 most families that present to us have
20 multiple -- can have multiple issues, and
21 that could be mental health issues,
22 substance abuse issues, and secondary
23 children youth issues, and right now we
24 have to treat those as separate
25 categories, often with separate providers

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2 and certainly out of separate funding
3 streams. And that's really not the most
4 efficient way to deal with families in
5 need. And so we have for some time
6 supported a reasoned and structured
7 approach to moving to a block grant
8 concept.

9 So we do support, on a
10 conceptual basis, moving to block grants,
11 but there are a number of issues with
12 what has been proposed so far. Certainly
13 there is not a lot of detail in the
14 proposal, but that will be coming.

15 Dr. Schwarz indicated that he's
16 part of a work group that our Association
17 convened. We also have Allegheny County
18 involved and we have a number of other
19 larger and smaller counties involved as
20 well. And what we are doing is
21 developing a comprehensive approach on
22 how block granting might work within the
23 context of these lines, but, more
24 importantly, in a broader context of the
25 other human services lines as well. That

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2 is not a short-term project. That is not
3 something that we can accomplish in the
4 13 weeks between now and the July 1st
5 beginning of the 2012-2013 budget.

6 Last year, we anticipated that
7 there was going to be a block grant
8 proposal as a part of that budget. We
9 talked to the Administration prior to the
10 proposed budget's release. Ultimately as
11 we worked through the process, we were
12 able to achieve the language in Act 22,
13 which required DPW to work with counties
14 to develop pilot programs, and then of
15 the pilot programs that worked, replicate
16 those in a broader context in the
17 2012-2013 budget.

18 Last October, we presented an
19 18-page detailed outline of those funding
20 streams, where the opportunities were for
21 block granting, where the opportunities
22 were for other efficiencies in service
23 delivery, and that's something that we
24 have been discussing behind the scenes
25 with DPW from that time until now.

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2 Unfortunately, the pace hasn't been what
3 we might have liked. We had hoped to
4 have pilot programs in place by now.

5 And so it is with some
6 trepidation that we support moving
7 forward with some concept of block
8 granting, but our core support for that
9 remains the same. It is not something
10 that we can do wholesale, statewide,
11 every county 1st of July. It has to be
12 a -- there has to be a phased-in
13 approach. We have to start with the
14 counties that have the capacity
15 administratively and fiscally to adapt to
16 block grants, and then we have to allow
17 time for the other counties to properly
18 plan, properly restructure and, as they
19 are able, to properly put in place these
20 types of -- this type of administrative
21 structure.

22 On the fiscal side, I mentioned
23 earlier this is the eighth or ninth year
24 of a steady series of freezes and cuts.
25 Very clearly to us, a 20 percent cut in

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2 these lines is unsustainable, and in our
3 budget piece, we have indicated that we
4 have to -- the starting point has to be
5 maintaining -- at least maintaining the
6 funding levels from the current fiscal
7 year. And when I talk about the current
8 funding levels, I mean what was
9 originally appropriated. As you know,
10 we've also been subject to a budgetary
11 freeze at the beginning of 2012.

12 We have some understanding, at
13 least from many members of the General
14 Assembly, that they don't like the level
15 of cut that's been proposed. They are
16 willing to work toward a different
17 number. We don't think it's incumbent
18 upon us to suggest what an appropriate
19 cut should be, and so our starting point
20 is at least hold us harmless from where
21 we are now and allow these programs to
22 continue.

23 We are also involved -- the
24 question was asked earlier regarding \$400
25 million that DPW is charged in finding in

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2 waste and fraud. We have been involved
3 with the Department in a number of
4 respects trying to find cost savings
5 elsewhere. The MATP program is one
6 example. Behavioral Health is another,
7 and certainly there are others as well.

8 We, though, have been emphatic
9 that we are not the agents of waste and
10 fraud. That does not exist at the county
11 level, and it's inappropriate to try to
12 find the \$400 million savings on the
13 backs of the programs that we're
14 providing at the local level.

15 Moving forward, you had some
16 discussion of revenue alternatives. I
17 think it's also valid to have a
18 discussion of where the Commonwealth's
19 fiscal picture really lies. This will be
20 the first budget in which some of the
21 estimates are prepared by the new
22 Independent Fiscal Office. Already
23 there's a divergence of opinion on where
24 the Commonwealth is going to finish this
25 fiscal year, perhaps as much as \$200

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2 million worth of difference there. We
3 have had discussions, as I said, with a
4 number of legislators on where their
5 opinions lie on some of the cuts and
6 other things that have been proposed.
7 And so we think that there are
8 opportunities there to restore funding
9 levels to where they need to be.

10 I also need to emphasize that
11 we do have a productive working
12 relationship with the Corbett
13 Administration. We were called in in
14 advance of the Governor's budget proposal
15 this year to have some preliminary
16 discussions on where block granting might
17 go. They were not willing at that point
18 to talk about funding levels, but they
19 were and are willing to talk about how
20 block grants can be put in place
21 productively. And there's certainly
22 recognition of the broad array of issues
23 that we're going to face if we are going
24 to be able to do this successfully. We
25 begin to talk about things like

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2 maintenance of effort or county joinders
3 or any number of different administrative
4 issues that have to be dealt with in
5 order to bring program areas together and
6 efficiently provide those services.

7 But at the core, block granting
8 does present us that opportunity if we --
9 and it really runs at both ends of the
10 spectrum. At the administrative end
11 right now if you take these seven lines,
12 we're doing seven plans, seven reports,
13 seven audits in seven different DPW
14 agencies. If we can block grant that,
15 one report, one budget, one plan, one
16 audit.

17 At the other end of the
18 spectrum, and perhaps more importantly,
19 when we deal with families with multiple
20 issues, if we can block grant and if we
21 don't have to narrowly fit each piece of
22 that family's issues into a separate
23 category, we can certainly provide more
24 holistic coverage, more holistic services
25 to that family and much more efficiently.

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2 And so we think it is worth pursuing on
3 that basis.

4 Let me just conclude by saying
5 that we do have additional resources on
6 the budget available on our web page,
7 pacounties.org. We continue to populate
8 that as additional information is
9 developed, and we hope you'll take
10 advantage of that.

11 We do also appreciate
12 Dr. Schwarz being part of the discussions
13 that we're having on this and other
14 issues, as well as other staff in the
15 Administration who participate in other
16 affiliate groups of ours.

17 And I'll just finally say that
18 as an organization, I think you
19 appropriately recognize that the smallest
20 county is no different from Philadelphia
21 in the types of services that we provide
22 and the citizens that we are trying to
23 serve. And so we remain committed as an
24 organization, as a statewide group, to
25 assuring that an appropriate safety net

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2 is there and is available.

3 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you
4 very much.

5 Who is going to be next?

6 Let me ask -- well, we'll wait
7 until the testimony is over and then I'll
8 ask a question. Go ahead. Would you
9 identify yourself.

10 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Yes. My name
11 is Eric Goldstein. I'm the Administrator
12 for Behavioral Health and Developmental
13 Disabilities in your neighboring
14 Montgomery County. Thank you for giving
15 me this opportunity to speak with you
16 today on behalf of Montgomery County and
17 its citizens.

18 I have a lot of things in my
19 testimony that are very similar to what
20 Dr. Schwarz said, what Dr. Evans has been
21 saying all along. Dr. Evans and I have a
22 wonderful relationship. Michael Covone
23 and I have a wonderful relationship. I
24 just want to make a few quick comments
25 then.

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2 This is the year that we're
3 supposed to take 30 people out of
4 Norristown State Hospital. The story was
5 going to end at that, but it really
6 begins there, because we can't do that if
7 this is going to be the budget that's
8 going to be in place.

9 The impact on homelessness,
10 emergency rooms, all the things that were
11 mentioned by people who spoke earlier
12 will be doubled and tripled. We built
13 this infrastructure over a 30-year period
14 of time, and now in one year it could be
15 taken down. Again, I don't mean to be
16 repetitive and redundant, so I want to
17 address a few other things.

18 We've been working very hard
19 for the last number of years on
20 supportive housing, employment. These
21 are the things that will be threatened
22 enormously by these budget reductions.
23 It seems to me that with the Corbett
24 Administration requesting us to move
25 people along, get them off the rolls, get

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2 them self-sufficient, the whole idea is
3 counterintuitive. Cut the funds that
4 would get people employed and get them
5 off the rolls doesn't make any sense to
6 me.

7 For individuals with
8 developmental disabilities, fewer
9 families now will be receiving services,
10 period.

11 Secondly, that safety net is
12 enormous for developmental disabilities
13 or intellectual disabilities, as they
14 call it in other places. That safety net
15 will be taken down, and there will be a
16 scary situation at least in every county
17 at one point or another during the year
18 where someone will have no place to live,
19 no place to go and no way to think it
20 through.

21 I think that the other matter
22 that gets ignored sometimes when we look
23 at this budget is that it does affect the
24 drug and alcohol system. Even though
25 these funds come from the Office of

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2 Mental Health, it is also the Office of
3 Mental Health and Substance Abuse
4 Services. Their funds are already
5 woefully low, and now with reductions in
6 Act 152 and BHSI funds, which are there
7 for people who fall through the cracks,
8 who can't stay on Medicaid for whatever
9 reason, with those funds now being
10 threatened, we're going to have an
11 enormous problem with people with drug
12 and alcohol problems not being able to
13 receive treatment.

14 My conclusion actually in
15 writing is, throughout my county and
16 region as a whole, we see an increased
17 cost in emergency service, jail days,
18 physical health service, demands on
19 shelters, stress in urban areas, and
20 agency unemployment. These are costs
21 that may very well equal the reduction.
22 Yet if it's going to cost that much to
23 make up for what they're reducing, they
24 may be equivalent. That doesn't seem
25 fair or sensible.

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2 The effect on the region as a
3 whole will find many people without homes
4 and services and nowhere to go to receive
5 them.

6 Thank you.

7 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Thank you
8 very much for your testimony.

9 Ms. Kline.

10 MS. KLINE: Good morning. I'm
11 Joanne Kline, the Director for Aging and
12 Adult Services in Montgomery County, and
13 as Eric has mentioned and everyone here
14 today has, we're delighted to be
15 included, because this is not just an
16 issue for Philadelphia. As CCAP has
17 mentioned, this is an issue across every
18 county across the state, and in
19 Montgomery County just as here in
20 Philadelphia, the cuts in the recent
21 years have been substantial. In my
22 office alone, we manage the Human Service
23 Development Fund and the Homeless
24 Assistance programs. Both of these funds
25 have seen dramatic reductions in recent

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2 years, up to 71 percent in the HSDF
3 funding just recently, and on top of that
4 now to be told 20 percent is significant.

5 At a very key time in our
6 county and in the City of Philadelphia
7 when homelessness and housing is really
8 something that we have been able to
9 address as an issue, not just an issue
10 locally but regionally as well, we're
11 developing a blueprint for housing that
12 is based in many ways on some of the
13 concepts that began here in Philadelphia,
14 and it's beginning to work in our county.
15 We're very encouraged by that. However,
16 with a 20 percent reduction, it is going
17 to be very difficult for us.

18 We applaud the concept of a
19 block grant if it can be done
20 appropriately and if it can be funded.
21 Unfortunately, this does not have the
22 foresight necessary. What is happening
23 is, the strings that are attached already
24 to the numerous grants that are very
25 disparate in nature are being put

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2 together in one large and unwieldy block
3 grant that really challenges us at the
4 county level to then decide who can we
5 choose, how can we choose.

6 And if I could digress for a
7 moment, I'll just tell you a story. One
8 of our discussions in our Commissioner's
9 office recently we were talking about
10 that. It almost feels as if you're a
11 member of a very large family with a lot
12 of children whose shoes are just worn
13 down, and you're looking and you're
14 trying to decide how you can address the
15 need. They all have tremendous need.

16 We all have tremendous needs,
17 and in trying to decide with 20 percent
18 less, so many in need, where is the
19 priority and looking ahead to the
20 long-term impact on the counties, that is
21 of a significant concern in Montgomery
22 County as well as in Philadelphia.

23 So I applaud the comments of
24 everyone that has come before us and the
25 County Commissioners Association for

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2 being here as well.

3 Thank you.

4 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you
5 so much for coming. We appreciate it.
6 We have a great cooperative relationship
7 with Montgomery County, and we thank you
8 so much for coming.

9 Mr. Eury.

10 We'll ask the questions, so
11 don't leave. We'll have questions at the
12 end of your testimony.

13 MR. EURY: Good afternoon,
14 Madam Chair and the Committee. Thank you
15 very much for the opportunity to testify
16 today. I'm Brian Eury, Legislative
17 Director for the Delaware Valley
18 Healthcare Council of HAP. We represent
19 and navigate for more than 50 acute and
20 specialty care hospitals and health
21 systems, over 30 facilities that provide
22 inpatient behavioral health systems and
23 20 physical rehabilitation facilities.
24 On behalf of the hospitals in the City
25 and the region, DVHC welcomes today's

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2 discussion on Resolution 120090,
3 otherwise the proposed Human Services
4 Development Fund Block Grant. The Block
5 Grant in itself is an initiative,
6 important aspect proposed for this fiscal
7 year in the Pennsylvania Department of
8 Public Welfare, but what we have found
9 out, it has also provided a brighter
10 light on some of the other proposals that
11 are coming through to the public
12 Department of Welfare in this year's
13 budget.

14 Deputy Mayor Schwarz has
15 already gone through all the appropriate
16 funding cuts, about \$41 million total to
17 Philadelphia in terms of 37 of which to
18 Department of Health and Human Services
19 and 7 million to Department of Health.
20 As part of the City's healthcare safety
21 net, hospitals in Philadelphia and the
22 entire Delaware Valley are extremely
23 concerned about the proposed Block Grant
24 as it's currently written on the City's
25 most vulnerable. These cuts include

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2 about \$320 million in addition to General
3 Assistance program that provides bridge
4 support for low-income people who are
5 temporarily unable to work. General
6 Assistance affects roughly 31,355 people
7 in Philadelphia, which is roughly 50
8 percent of the enrolled -- total
9 enrollment of General Assistance in the
10 Commonwealth, and when you add the
11 surrounding collar counties or the
12 suburban counties, it roughly
13 appropriates about 58 percent. So once
14 again, it's about 60 percent of all
15 enrollees in General Assistance are
16 coming from the Southeast.

17 General Assistance, as I've
18 already mentioned, is temporarily
19 disabled or sick adults without children,
20 domestic violence survivors, adults
21 caring for someone who is sick or
22 disabled, and adults participating in
23 alcohol and other drug treatment
24 programs.

25 Besides limiting cash

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2 assistance, next year's budget calls for
3 changes in General Assistance
4 eligibility, which will make it more
5 difficult for those with temporary
6 disabilities to qualify for Medical
7 Assistance health insurance. As a result
8 of that, we're expecting a negative
9 projection of \$24 million to bad debt,
10 which basically just goes back into the
11 system and just increases the overall
12 cost of healthcare in the state but also
13 by nation.

14 It also -- combining the impact
15 of the General Assistance and reductions
16 to the Medical Assistance payments, we're
17 looking at a complete sustained payment
18 cut of about \$36.55 million in the
19 Southeast alone, Philadelphia and the
20 surrounding counties. These cuts are on
21 top of already a strained system battling
22 still the onset of the recession from
23 December 2007 when we had an increase of
24 20 percent in Medical Assistance, and
25 we've also found that the percentage of

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2 adults without insurance has increased 15
3 percent from 2008, and visits to
4 emergency room use has been on the rise.
5 In the past year alone, we have a net
6 increase of about 4 percent.

7 Now, that's just the Southeast.
8 So that's the six counties -- or the five
9 counties. But when you look at the
10 individual hospital within your district,
11 that can be up as high as 7 to 10 percent
12 increase in emergency room use.

13 Hospitals operate seven days a
14 week, 365 days a year, 24 hours a day.
15 We have a moral obligation. We treat
16 everyone who comes through the door, and
17 we want to continue to do that, but these
18 programs, these proposals if not funded
19 correctly, if this proposal makes it
20 through the General Assembly and is
21 passed by the Governor as currently
22 written, you're going to see an increased
23 use of the emergency room, which is
24 longer wait times, more severe patients
25 as patients will stay home for longer

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2 times and then when they do present,
3 they're already in a much more severe
4 case as they would have been a month
5 beforehand when they first initially got
6 sick. The trickle down, it's basically,
7 in our mind, it's a cost shift. It goes
8 from the state to the county and then
9 from the county to the hospitals. So it
10 really is a huge concern to us.

11 And we appreciate the
12 opportunity to present our comments
13 today, and we look forward, as always, to
14 working with you and this legislative
15 body, not on just this issue but every
16 issue coming through that involves
17 healthcare.

18 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you
19 very much. We appreciate your testimony,
20 and thank you for waiting. When we have
21 these hearings, they tend to go a little
22 longer, but people come to present their
23 information.

24 Dr. Schwarz talked about how
25 the present current system took years and

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2 years to build and sort of work on, and
3 now we're going to change the whole
4 system that's taken 30 years, as
5 Mr. Goldstein said, and just collapse it
6 into three or four months and say let's
7 change it. And so I think that it needs
8 a little more discussion, slower
9 implementation, if that's the way they're
10 going, but just not to throw services out
11 the door that people can't access.

12 Councilman Denny O'Brien.

13 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Madam
14 Chair, I'm very dedicated to try to be
15 brief. I know I'm --

16 COUNCILWOMAN TASCIO: Please.

17 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: -- mostly
18 challenged, but I will say that -- and
19 I'll bring up one other point. When I
20 wrote Act 62, there was a safety net put
21 in that the Commonwealth would pay if the
22 insurer is denied. They cut your budgets
23 by \$28 million. You got to get up off
24 your butts and tell them you want your
25 money. Act 62 owes the Commonwealth of

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2 Pennsylvania \$80 million, and that's
3 money that affects your services.

4 I'm not as optimistic, Doug, of
5 the implementation of a block grant. It
6 took us 25 years to do the prison reform
7 package. I don't see where the
8 professional development is if you're
9 going to cut 20 percent. I don't see
10 where the cross training and cross
11 agencies, Eric, is going to happen. You
12 have people with developmental
13 disabilities who also have mental health
14 issues, not counting the developmental
15 disabilities who lose their parents and
16 also have depression issues, which is
17 also a very discounted mental health
18 issue.

19 Brian, the fact that you are
20 asked to absorb Medical Assistance cuts
21 is just absurd. When the insurance
22 companies cut the budgets of the Delaware
23 Valley Healthcare Coalition back in the
24 '90s, that resulted in the hospitals
25 cutting nursing positions. Then -- it's

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2 like the water balloon. When you cut
3 those nursing positions because you have
4 to cut actual costs, medical errors go
5 up. Nurses stop going to nursing school
6 because they can't get jobs. It's the
7 same thing that's going to happen over
8 here with our providers like SPIN and
9 PATH and all the wonderful social service
10 agencies. When these jobs disappear,
11 that creativity goes along with it.

12 It took us seven years to
13 negotiate ACAP with CMS, seven years, and
14 a long time to do the adult waiver. The
15 whole thing that's missing here -- and
16 that's why the Chairperson, Chair Lady
17 was very indulgent with me -- there is no
18 process to bring the communities in to
19 represent that we understand who they
20 are. You cannot create the efficiencies
21 that are necessary unless bring them in.
22 The buy-in has to be first and we can
23 start talking about creating some
24 efficiencies. I'm very concerned about
25 this. I'm glad that you're here, and I

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2 will end my brief remarks.

3 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Thank you.

4 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: I hope

5 they were brief enough.

6 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Is anyone

7 else going to testify?

8 (No response.)

9 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Thank you
10 so much for coming. We appreciate your
11 testimony, and we appreciate you, County
12 Commissioners, for sending us your
13 information.

14 (Thank you.)

15 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Thank you.

16 (Applause.)

17 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: We'd like
18 to now call Panel 3: Senator Joseph
19 Rocks, Henry Nicholas, Paul Sachs,
20 Sharmain Matlock-Turner. She was here.
21 She may have had to leave. And Sister
22 Mary Scullion had to leave, but she left
23 her testimony, which will be part of the
24 record. Oh, Sharmain is still here.
25 Thank you.

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2 (Witnesses approached witness
3 table.)

4 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Good
5 afternoon.

6 MS. MATLOCK-TURNER: Good
7 afternoon.

8 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Who is
9 going first? Senator Rocks, I think we
10 have you first. Good afternoon and thank
11 you for your leadership. You were our
12 State Senator for a long number of years
13 and very helpful to our community.

14 SENATOR ROCKS: Thank you,
15 Madam Chairwoman and distinguished
16 members of Council. Thank you for the
17 honor and, more importantly, for the
18 opportunity.

19 When you move in grade from
20 Senator to CEO, I will tell you one of
21 the things that becomes intolerant is
22 redundancies. And so having heard all of
23 your valued testimony today, I will
24 not -- I'll leave my statement, three
25 pages long, to your submission. I would

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2 like to make a couple of points that
3 listening to the experts that you
4 assembled here today and depth of concern
5 around these cuts, these issues.

6 It has been my privilege now
7 for over 12 years to be Chairman and CEO
8 of the largest not-for-profit provider in
9 the United States of behavioral health
10 services. We are involved in the whole
11 array of mental health services,
12 including addictions, children's services
13 whereby coming to know not just
14 Representative and Speaker O'Brien
15 extremely well over the years, but
16 admiring his unbridled passion over
17 children on the autism spectrum. I will
18 tell you in NHS today, we have over 2,700
19 children on the autism spectrum within
20 our care.

21 Across seven states, I have the
22 privilege of employing over 13,000
23 people. They all pay taxes. Most of
24 them have not only education but clinical
25 and professional degrees that goes with

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2 the delivery of our services, in addition
3 to a very committed, dedicated, direct
4 care workforce.

5 Of those 13,000, strange
6 people, they have mortgages, they make
7 car payments, they too pay tuitions. So
8 once in a while as a CEO of an endeavor
9 of this size, I do get to remind my other
10 business colleagues while we're not in
11 the business of making iPods, we are in
12 the business of very fragile and
13 vulnerable lives to be cared for. We
14 also are a very major business enterprise
15 and take the responsibility of that
16 seriously as anybody who is out there
17 making widgets today, except we think our
18 call and our responsibility is much more
19 serious.

20 In Philadelphia, we are by far
21 the largest provider of these services,
22 including therapeutic family and
23 therapeutic foster care. At our one
24 clinic, the largest in this country
25 today, right on the edge of Fairmount

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2 Park -- I'm very happy whenever I see my
3 suburban colleagues here. A little over
4 900 heroin-addicted people walk through
5 our door at 5000 Parkside Avenue today.
6 They do it seven days a week. It is one
7 of the best managed and highest
8 accredited treatment facilities in this
9 nation. We're very proud of the work
10 that we do there, and, quite frankly, the
11 cuts that we are staring at would cause
12 us to greatly cut back on what is the
13 level and the quality of those services,
14 as one example.

15 In Philadelphia, we do serve
16 15,780 adults and children across all of
17 our services, our service lines. There
18 are 3,200 staff that are citizens of
19 Philadelphia. Our combined revenues here
20 with the City and the state and federal
21 government primarily as our funder, it's
22 a little over \$130 million and a payroll
23 of approximately \$92 million that we have
24 in Philadelphia County alone.

25 I did want to make mention to a

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2 couple of statements that were made. We
3 are the only provider of these services.
4 I have consumers that come from 67
5 counties of Pennsylvania. So that's
6 every county of Pennsylvania. And for
7 those who may want to be aware of this --
8 Secretary Alexander maybe should hear me
9 state this, although I'll do it to him in
10 person -- I'm not treating any mentally
11 ill white tail deer nor black bear. The
12 clients that we have come from every
13 county of this Commonwealth, where we do
14 employ just in Pennsylvania alone over
15 10,000 people. We operate over seven
16 states out of 700 facilities.

17 The depth of what is proposed
18 here and the way that it's being done, I
19 have now lived through my days entering
20 community mental health services after
21 coming back from the military and
22 graduate school, as a Board member,
23 founding member of Interac, through my
24 House years, through my Senate years and
25 now the privilege to lead an entity of

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2 this mission and importance, I have
3 served under eight Secretaries of
4 Welfare. If you ever had asked me if I
5 would dream of the day when I would look
6 at what is proposed, not just in this
7 budget but what is happening in and out
8 of that department -- and I've been
9 through the Helen O'Bannons of the world
10 and the John F. White, Jr.'s of the
11 world, the Estelle Richmans. I've been
12 through Feather Houstoun. It didn't
13 matter if they were democrat or
14 republican, to be very frank about it.
15 There's something that goes with the role
16 of being a Secretary of that department
17 in this Commonwealth that requires a
18 sense of advocacy on behalf of the very
19 vulnerable lives in this Commonwealth.

20 Never did I believe -- and,
21 Councilman, you made mention of it, and I
22 heard it mentioned by one of your
23 colleagues -- that an ideology would
24 dictate what was to happen. There's no
25 big mystery here. IDD services are

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2 targeted to be hit the worst.

3 If you looked at the Medicaid
4 budget, and while I leave you a lot of
5 numbers, they're not new to me. I sat in
6 the second chair of Appropriations in the
7 Senate of the Commonwealth. Thank God we
8 have the lionhearted Vincent Hughes who
9 is there and on the forefront of trying
10 to take this challenge on, as he
11 effectively does, by the way. But this
12 is not about numbers, as has been said.
13 In Medicaid, it takes \$1.6 billion in
14 Pennsylvania for any one of us, several,
15 about 200-plus providers in Pennsylvania,
16 in the world of intellectually challenged
17 people to provide those services. It's a
18 big number. It sticks out.

19 This has been an audit
20 exercise. This has not been by this
21 department in its budget-making having
22 anything to do with the lives that they
23 are legally charged to protect. I agree
24 with Senator Hughes. I'm not the first.
25 I think I'll be a leader in the CEO ranks

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2 and with Board members to greatly
3 mobilize every voice that we can.

4 The last thing I'll leave you
5 with -- and so sincerely thank you for
6 this forum and what you're doing here
7 today. You know, it's interesting, if
8 you look at an overall \$29 billion state
9 budget where you pick the cuts, the
10 people that we're here talking about
11 today and the sincerity of this exchange,
12 this conversation, often have no voice at
13 all. So it's us. It's you.

14 Thank you for this opportunity.
15 Thank you for what has been your
16 leadership. And certainly in
17 Philadelphia this will be devastating to
18 this city. Commissioner Schwarz said it
19 very effectively and well as to the size,
20 yes, Denny, of the safety net, the hole
21 that can be torn in a city like ours.
22 And the absurdity of this in the end -- I
23 have O'Brien's impediment. We just had
24 our national holiday on Saturday, and
25 it's double fold for Denny and me. We're

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2 not only born Irish; we're very Irish.

3 We come from centuries of storytellers,

4 and then on top of that, I'm a

5 politician. So you got to cut me off

6 here any minute, Sharmain or Paul.

7 What it is that we are facing

8 that has to be taken on, the absurdity of

9 it is if all this would go forward, the

10 cost is more in the end. That's not even

11 the cost in human lives. It's the dollar

12 cost of this. There's a reason that

13 we're the largest provider in every state

14 that we're in of IDD services. The state

15 couldn't do it. Their asylums got shut

16 down, either by judicial edict,

17 legislation or advocacy.

18 Do you know that a person today

19 with an intellectual disability still

20 state institutionalized is double the

21 cost of what it is at NHS for us to

22 provide a higher quality of service and

23 to care for that person? Double. So

24 what are we going to do? Give everybody

25 back to the state? You're going to

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2 reopen your institutions, get your butts
3 sued within a month by the Justice
4 Department all over again?

5 There is no sense in this
6 direction and where this is going, and
7 the voices that are needed have to be
8 ours, because too many of the people we
9 represent, they have no voice.

10 Thank you, Madam Chairwoman,
11 very much.

12 (Applause.)

13 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you.
14 Thank you very much.

15 The Chair recognizes Mr. Henry
16 Nicholas.

17 MR. NICHOLAS: Thank you, Madam
18 Chair.

19 Madam Chair, this is a
20 historical event. It is the only place
21 and the only time in history that both
22 the management and the union are at the
23 same table with the employees. The
24 employees who work in this system, they
25 are the angels of mercy.

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2 Joe articulated all those
3 Secretaries of Health that we both have
4 interacted with over the years, but we've
5 come, all of us. Our members are here.
6 Your constituents are here. They are the
7 angels of mercy. They are the members of
8 my union. They are the ones who work
9 seven days a week around the clock doing
10 their level best to make sure that there
11 is a semblance of dignity provided to
12 those who they are trusted to care for.

13 Now, we're here and we would
14 impose on you to hear from those who have
15 given their all to take care of them.
16 They are here. I represent those workers
17 who provide the services across the
18 Philadelphia area, the more than 3,000 of
19 them, in every single district, providing
20 every speck of care.

21 It would be unjust if you
22 believe that as a result of the action
23 taken by the Commonwealth that the people
24 who give more than their fair share be
25 asked to give even more. It is

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2 unrealistic, if you would, that if we are
3 required to have to compete with Walmart
4 in terms of whether there's going to be
5 workers who will show up to provide this
6 care, whether they should punch out and
7 go to Walmart, because this act puts us
8 in that place.

9 For those of us who was
10 compassionate enough to rise up and
11 believe that the institutional lives of
12 this care was an unjust proposition and
13 fought for the change that we now have,
14 it is this -- this puts us at no other
15 option.

16 I've been here in my 52 years
17 in Philadelphia. This is my third time
18 before this Council. It is those issues
19 that are so passionate and so meaning and
20 the ones that require justice that forces
21 us to be here.

22 We have some options. The
23 people we take care do not. We have the
24 option to take those patients who we
25 fought for their freedom back to the

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2 state and say, Here they are. They now
3 belong to you. What happens if that
4 happens?

5 We are here pleading for your
6 intervention, because without your help,
7 those who need our help cannot be
8 expected to humanly ask for it. Most of
9 the people that my members take care
10 can't ask for the help that they need.
11 They need us around the clock. And we
12 need you, one, to hear from some of the
13 angels of mercy who work tirelessly,
14 fight with me all of the time, because
15 they want to know why are they forced to
16 be more passionate and more compassionate
17 than the rest of the citizens, without
18 justice and respect.

19 And so we urge you, if time
20 permits, just to hear -- they're here.
21 They are Joe's employees, they are my
22 members. And the union, the members and
23 their boss have never sat at the same
24 table together in history. This is a
25 historical moment, and we urge you to

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2 hear from them, because they are jewels.
3 No one else would do this work. And if
4 we are not able to get out from under
5 this crisis, this will have a tremendous
6 impact on every community across the
7 City.

8 Thank you so very much.

9 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you.
10 We're going to hear from them next, but
11 we want to finish with this panel and
12 then we'll call up the members to
13 testify.

14 Next, Mr. Sachs.

15 MR. SACHS: Thank you, Madam
16 Chairperson and distinguished
17 Councilmembers. I'm Paul Sachs. I'm
18 Executive Director of NHS Human Services
19 of Philadelphia, but I'm here
20 representing the Philadelphia Coalition,
21 which is the 11 longstanding members of
22 the Philadelphia community who operate
23 behavioral health and intellectual
24 disabilities services.

25 In the interest of time and

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2 also in the interest of avoiding
3 repetition, I'm going to go through some
4 of the comments I have, and you have my
5 written testimony.

6 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: All the
7 testimony will be entered into the record
8 in its entirety. So it will be part of
9 the record.

10 MR. SACHS: Okay. Good.

11 These 11 agencies were
12 established in 1963 under the Community
13 Mental Healthcare Act under President
14 Kennedy. And just for purposes of
15 clarification, behavioral health services
16 refer to services for people with
17 psychiatric or mental health diagnoses,
18 as well as substance abuse disorders.
19 Intellectual disability services refer to
20 people who have reduced intellectual
21 functioning and disabilities in everyday
22 living, such as communication, self-care
23 and home living. And consistent with the
24 Community Mental Health Act, the 11
25 Coalition agencies have continued to

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2 provide services over many years and are
3 the actual safety net of the Philadelphia
4 community. We employ over 4,200
5 employees and serve 76,000
6 Philadelphians, children, adults and
7 families each year.

8 We've already heard about how
9 the proposed budget cuts will cause a
10 tremendous obstacle and tremendous cuts
11 to our services. I'll enumerate those,
12 but let me also say that Philadelphia is
13 a national and international model under
14 the leadership of Dr. Evans. We have
15 collaborated with him, and, in fact, just
16 yesterday, I was touring a group from
17 Canada that had heard about what's
18 happening in Philadelphia with behavioral
19 health services and had visited our
20 agency as well as some others from
21 agencies you may be hearing from later.
22 So we don't really want to lose that, and
23 that's potentially lost in this process.

24 Some of the specific problems
25 that -- one other point that I'd like to

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2 add as another data point to what was
3 mentioned before. Yes, Philadelphia is
4 overrepresented in terms of the number of
5 General Assistance citizens, 51 percent
6 of all statewide, but I also want to add
7 Allegheny County is only 9 percent, even
8 though that's another large populous
9 county.

10 The types of problems that
11 we're likely to see if these cuts go
12 through are reduced services across the
13 board for behavioral health; mental
14 health services on the outpatient basis,
15 the wait list will be the rule, not the
16 exception; emergency medications and
17 funding for that; emergency services for
18 people during the course of the day; 400
19 residential beds for -- residential
20 rehabilitation beds for individuals with
21 mental illness may be lost, and I'm going
22 to say a little more about residential
23 closings in a moment. And in the past
24 when people have not been able to get
25 Medical Assistance right away, we've had

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2 these funds available so people can get
3 services and then move to Medical
4 Assistance when they get it and continue
5 services. If people are cut off from
6 Medical Assistance and cut off from
7 General Assistance funding, that's
8 closing the door to access. And if
9 there's one thing the Coalition agencies
10 have as their forefront is maintaining
11 access. We are open to everybody, no
12 matter what their source of funding is,
13 and we are open throughout the week and
14 do everything we can to reach out to
15 people as well as to serve them. We are
16 not closing the door, and we may have to
17 do that or at least make tremendously
18 long waiting lists if these cuts go
19 through.

20 We also do a large amount of
21 homeless outreach as well as outreach to
22 individuals in the community who are on
23 the verge of homelessness, and the
24 opportunity to do these outreach services
25 will be tremendously reduced by this

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2 process if these cuts go through.

3 I want to also mention or add
4 to Councilman Jones' metaphor about a
5 pebble in a pond. I say it's more like a
6 bolder, and let me talk about what some
7 of the ripple effects are going to be or
8 the waves that are going to splash. As
9 you heard, people will be going to
10 emergency medical hospitals or to crisis
11 centers if they're not able to get the
12 needed services. But they're not just
13 going to go for mental health disorders,
14 they're not just going to go for
15 substance abuse disorders. They're going
16 to end up in medical emergency rooms.

17 Without behavioral health
18 services, people may not be able to
19 manage their medical care well, and we're
20 going to see an increase in medical
21 hospitalizations for things like
22 diabetes, pulmonary problems, cardiac
23 problems, the kinds of things that
24 co-exist with mental illness and with
25 substance abuse. People who are living

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2 with very few resources and who are the
3 most vulnerable are vulnerable in every
4 way, not just in terms of their
5 behavioral healthcare.

6 I want to piggyback on what was
7 just said in talking about the other
8 aspect of the implications of this, which
9 is the impact on the workforce. We are
10 looking at some major reductions in
11 workforce, and most of the people, the
12 vast majority of the people that work at
13 Coalition agencies, are Philadelphia
14 residents. I have personally closed six
15 residential programs and laid off several
16 dozen staff members over the past two
17 years in response to other budget cuts,
18 and I'm going to leave today and I'm
19 going to go back to my office and I'm
20 going to walk down the hall and see staff
21 members and know in my mind that that
22 person may be somebody that I need to
23 speak to about a layoff if this budget
24 goes through. And every one of those
25 persons had my e-mail and had my phone

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2 number so I could get them a job, and I'm
3 sure that's true for my other Coalition
4 colleagues, and I will try to do the same
5 thing again. And I have sat at the table
6 with both of our unions, but I won't have
7 as many options if this budget goes
8 through this way.

9 So I'd like to just say in
10 closing that this is a major problem.
11 The Coalition welcomes the opportunity to
12 represent what we're doing to City
13 Council and to advocate with you as well.
14 We know that Philadelphia is an
15 outstanding behavioral health city. It
16 has become a place where people with
17 mental illness, substance abuse,
18 intellectual disabilities can live and
19 become contributing members of society
20 and actually come here rather than go
21 elsewhere to get services. And we also
22 know historically that it has been a home
23 for all sorts of people over our history,
24 and we don't want to deny that history
25 and undo what has been done.

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2 So we welcome your advocacy
3 along with the Coalition in working
4 against these budget cuts. And I'd be
5 happy to take some other questions after
6 we hear from the other panelists.

7 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you
8 very much. Very interesting information.

9 The Chair recognizes Sharmain
10 Matlock-Turner.

11 MS. MATLOCK-TURNER: Thank you
12 very much, Councilwoman Tasco, and thanks
13 to the members of Council. I know that
14 this process is a long one for you and
15 there are a lot of people who want to
16 talk, and I know some of us will be
17 repetitive, so please bear with us, but
18 we do think that the points are
19 important.

20 I'm excited and pleased to be
21 sitting here and being a part of such an
22 effort from people across the counties,
23 from our elected delegation, certainly
24 from your advocacy to say that we have to
25 stand up to this.

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2 My name is Sharmain

3 Matlock-Turner and I'm pleased to give
4 testimony this morning on behalf of the
5 Urban Affairs Coalition. It is no doubt
6 that we are aware that we live in a
7 period of history where governments at
8 all levels are opting for increasingly
9 stringent austerity measures to offset
10 the lasting impacts of the economic
11 recession and hopeful recovery. These
12 measures have fallen quite heavily on the
13 side of cuts to education and public
14 welfare programs, the programs that are
15 most important in moving people out of
16 poverty.

17 Those assembled here today know
18 I am no stranger to the work of the
19 tremendous non-profit organizations
20 serving the region's working families.
21 As President and CEO of the Urban Affairs
22 Coalition, our over 75 program partners
23 are an integral part of the social
24 service fabric of Philadelphia and the
25 surrounding counties, supporting more

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2 than 150,000 individuals whose lives are
3 impacted by the Coalition each and every
4 year.

5 So I just want to bring three
6 messages to add to the messages that
7 you've heard from others. The first is
8 what you already know, that the \$41
9 million in cuts to health and human
10 services programs will have a devastating
11 impact on Philadelphia's most vulnerable
12 citizens and on the non-profit
13 organizations that serve them. As the
14 City's presentation to PICA shared, the
15 34 million in proposed cuts to prevention
16 services and programs will be felt by the
17 homeless, those recovering from drug and
18 alcohol addiction, as well as youth and
19 young adults. In some cases, the
20 programs serving these populations will
21 close their doors, as you've heard. In
22 addition, the \$6 million in proposed cuts
23 to health programs will undoubtedly help
24 many people -- will hurt many people,
25 including those with HIV and AIDS.

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2 As this is a multi-year trend
3 in government allocations, I have
4 witnessed how each dollar cut from social
5 service or education programs alters the
6 lives of people trying to make a better
7 life for themselves and their families in
8 spite of multiple barriers to success.
9 Stripped of social supports, people are
10 far more likely to drop out of school, go
11 to or return to jail, remain addicted to
12 drugs, become homeless, go hungry, stay
13 unemployed and, in some cases, actually
14 lose their lives.

15 My second message is that City
16 Council must find ways to help offset
17 these cuts in your own budget and to
18 reach out, as you have, to the
19 delegations in the General Assembly to
20 try to encourage them to not make these
21 devastating cuts. We encourage you to
22 explore options within your own budget,
23 as difficult as that may be. We also
24 need our representatives in Harrisburg
25 and in Washington to focus on solutions,

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2 not politics. For example, I have raised
3 the concern that the prison budget has
4 gone untouched while services to the most
5 vulnerable are being slashed. We
6 appreciate Governor Corbett's choice not
7 to increase the prison budget this year
8 and the efforts that Senator Hughes
9 talked about to try to improve the
10 system. Yet, we aren't yet seeing the
11 savings that we know are there.

12 Right now it costs taxpayers
13 \$267 million a year because we are having
14 people return to prison instead of
15 funding our safety net. This is not only
16 the right thing to do, but it's also a
17 smart thing to do to make sure that we're
18 investing in the needs of people.

19 Another example which Senator
20 Hughes talked about is the Homeowners'
21 Emergency Assistance Program known as
22 HEMAP, which has already saved over
23 20,000 homeowners from foreclosure. As
24 you know, there's a approximately \$69
25 million in discretionary funds that the

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2 Attorney General has as the result of a
3 national settlement with major lenders
4 over unfair foreclosure practices. It
5 seems that the right thing to do and the
6 smart thing to do would be to use those
7 funds to fight foreclosure.

8 And, finally, I know that many
9 of you in government have challenged us
10 in our own sector to do a better job.
11 You certainly have heard from
12 organizations here that are working
13 extremely hard to make sure they stretch
14 every dollar. As you know, we presented
15 to the City Council several weeks ago
16 what it means for our organizations to
17 join together and to share back-office
18 services. That helps us to stretch
19 dollars further, and so we encourage you
20 to continue to support those kinds of
21 innovations.

22 However, in closing, my voice
23 is one of many calling for a fair budget
24 for Philadelphians and Pennsylvanians.
25 Each of you have personally witnessed

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2 people in your community who have
3 completed their GEDs, recovered from drug
4 addiction, returned from prison to lead
5 successful lives and more. You know
6 these successes happen as a result of the
7 work of non-profit organizations that
8 form our City's safety net. These
9 programs are not handouts to be cut.
10 They offer a hand up the economic ladder.

11 As you continue to tackle this
12 problem, please remember that we are
13 counting on you to represent our views,
14 to find ways to protect the most
15 vulnerable and to ensure a prosperous
16 Philadelphia for all of its citizens.

17 Thank you very much for the
18 opportunity to speak today.

19 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you
20 very much. And we call on you and your
21 community to also go to Harrisburg and
22 testify before the budget hearings to let
23 them hear your voices, in addition to
24 what we will do, but we certainly need
25 the community. We're going to look up

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2 and there's nobody behind us, and we know
3 that there has to be some organization to
4 get people there.

5 We're going to have to take a
6 five-minute break for the stenographer,
7 but right when we come back, Henry, we
8 will have those individuals who are here
9 to testify. We're going to have the
10 members from 1199 C come forth and
11 testify when we come back.

12 Thank you very much. They've
13 been here a long time, as well as
14 everybody else, but we want them to
15 testify.

16 Five minutes. Thank you.

17 (Short recess.)

18 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Good
19 afternoon. We're back in session,
20 reconvening the hearing. We'd like to
21 have those ladies who are here to come
22 and have a seat at the table. Ladies and
23 gentleman. Thank you. I'm sorry. I
24 didn't see.

25 (Witnesses approached witness

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2 table.)

3 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Would you
4 please state your name for the record.
5 And we hope that you will try to -- we
6 have a couple more panels to go today, so
7 we'd like to hear your comments, and
8 thank you, my committee person from the
9 49th Ward, who works with us in our Logan
10 area. Thank you very much for coming.

11 MS. WILLIS: Good afternoon.
12 My name is Johnnie Willis.

13 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO:
14 Councilwoman Sanchez is going to take
15 care. I'll be right back.

16 MS. WILLIS: My name is Johnnie
17 Willis. I'm a teacher at an early
18 intervention program. I work for the
19 Consortium. I have been there for about
20 30 years, 30 years or more. So I've seen
21 like a lot of changes.

22 When I came in here today,
23 before I heard all this information, I
24 was concerned. Now I'm frightened.

25 Some of the things that have

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2 happened in my program in the early
3 intervention is, we have seen some slight
4 changes already. I have a classroom of
5 two sessions, 13 children in the morning
6 and 13 children in the afternoon. When I
7 first started working in this field,
8 there was lots of money. We had speech
9 therapists, about three speech
10 therapists. There was a nurse. There
11 were two social workers. Each classroom
12 there was two teachers, and it was about
13 three assistants, and there were 14
14 children. Currently, I work with one
15 assistant and there are 14 children.

16 When we first started, there
17 was breakfast, there was lunch, and there
18 were two snacks. There's no breakfast,
19 no lunch, and snack is provided by the
20 parents and by myself. We had like lots
21 of materials. Now I buy like a lot of
22 materials for my children if they need
23 it. So the changes and everything have
24 been crucial.

25 What I do in my classroom, I

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2 work in five different skill areas - in
3 social/emotional, I have cognitive, fine
4 motor, gross motor, adaptive, and maybe a
5 couple more that I have forgotten at this
6 particular time. There is a supportive
7 staff there. There are teachers. There
8 is a speech therapist, and there might be
9 a physical and an OT, occupational
10 therapist.

11 My day is very full. We are
12 very, very, very, very necessary. We
13 keep -- we help parents understand like
14 their children's special needs. When I
15 first started, most of our children were
16 mentally retarded. They had like speech
17 delays. My classroom now is mostly
18 autistic children. And if anyone know
19 anything about children with autism, you
20 know that that is a job. I have been
21 bitten. I have been hit. My assistant
22 has been like in the hospital like from a
23 bite from one of our children. I can't
24 imagine these children being like without
25 services.

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2 Right now the program has been
3 affected very slightly by some of the
4 cuts. We are funded by Art Dell (ph).
5 We have been furloughed for two weeks,
6 one in June and one in, I think it's,
7 August, which impacts like on salaries
8 and how you accrue vacation and like all
9 of those kind of things like from the
10 cuts. It is extremely hard like right
11 now because we don't have -- we just
12 don't have the things that we need for --
13 like to run like a classroom. I don't
14 have the money like all the time for toys
15 and everything, but I do the best that I
16 can.

17 I can't imagine -- all the
18 things that I heard today, I just -- I
19 came here with some hope that maybe,
20 okay, yeah, there's going to be like some
21 money, you know, a budget cut, but then
22 maybe we'll still make it. Now I'm not
23 really sure.

24 I can't imagine not having
25 services for these special needed

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2 children. They would suffer. Our
3 parents, a lot of our parents are
4 limited. We help them understand and
5 understand like their children. We help
6 them provide like services. We are -- I
7 think that more than a teacher, I think
8 that I'm a surrogate mom, because we do
9 like everything. We walk parents through
10 going like to the doctor. If they need a
11 hearing appointment, we tell them like
12 where to go. Some of our parents don't
13 even know that their children can't hear
14 or they don't understand, you know, like
15 what's going on. So we help them there.

16 So I beg you to help us keep
17 like these services.

18 Thank you.

19 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Thank
20 you. Thank you for the work that you do.
21 We completely understand how difficult it
22 is, and we thank you for -- as President
23 Nicholas talked about, you guys are the
24 angels, so we --

25 MS. WILLIS: We are.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Thank
3 you.

4 Anyone else? You want to just
5 register your name for the record.

6 MS. KANE: Good afternoon.
7 Thank you for this opportunity. My name
8 is Ronnie Kane. I am a mental health
9 worker for the Northwestern Human
10 Services' Children's Reach program. Our
11 consumers range from three to five years
12 of age. They're diagnosed with ADHD,
13 ODD, autism and many more. Within our
14 program, we focus on the principle of
15 resiliency. We provide care and support
16 for the community.

17 The children, they come at 9
18 o'clock and they leave at 3:00, five days
19 a week. Cutting programs like this would
20 be detrimental because it would not only
21 take me out of a job -- I'm a year and a
22 half out of college, I have tuition to
23 pay, bills to pay -- but, more
24 importantly, the consumers will be at
25 risk of criminalization and

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2 institutionalization.

3 Yesterday while in circle time
4 I usually ask my kids what's on their
5 mind and how is their night last night,
6 and one of my kids, Javier, he said,
7 Miss Ronnie, the cops were chasing a guy
8 and they shot him. They didn't shoot me
9 yet, but... And then one of the other
10 kids, Isaiah, he interjected and said, If
11 a cop shoots me, I'm going to shoot him
12 back.

13 So what then do you say to a
14 child who already has their mind set that
15 he will be shot?

16 So my question is, if these
17 jobs are cut, what will happen to the
18 children?

19 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Thank
20 you.

21 Proceed.

22 MS. BENNETT: Good afternoon.
23 My name is --

24 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Can you
25 move the mike closer to you.

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2 MS. BENNETT: All right, dear.

3 My name is Sylvia Bennett and I
4 work in the field of mental health and
5 behavioral health. I've been 27 years
6 there. And I've seen the beginning, and
7 I hope I'm not seeing the end. I brought
8 people from Penhurst when they were
9 released from Penhurst, and you wouldn't
10 believe what you saw when you brought
11 these people from Penhurst and put them
12 into a stable living environment. They
13 began to be, over the years, happy,
14 healthy, getting more care.

15 I care for people now. I work
16 a 17-hour shift. I care for people that
17 need medication. They get my support by
18 taking them to doctors, taking them out
19 on outings and everything. If this
20 budget is -- if this is a cut, it's going
21 to hurt these people bad. These people
22 need us. It's going to hurt me bad to
23 see them hurting bad.

24 I beg of you, please work with
25 us. We want to go to Harrisburg. We

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2 want to speak. We want to take our
3 consumers up there and ask for help. We
4 don't need another cut. They really need
5 your help.

6 MS. JONES: Hello. My name is
7 Carolyn Jones and I work for the IDD
8 services at Northwestern, the Association
9 for Independent Growth. What I'd like to
10 speak about is a safety issue.

11 With the budget cuts going on
12 now, what we've been seeing is that
13 they've been removing staff, a lot of
14 staff from the houses. Some of the
15 houses were double coverage and now
16 they're making them single coverage,
17 which puts the safety of the consumers as
18 well as the safety of the staff at risk.

19 And I just want to say that we
20 just -- we can't do these budget cuts.
21 We can't, because they need -- the
22 consumers, the individuals that we serve,
23 they need our support very much.

24 Thank you.

25 MS. DAUGHTRY: Hi. My name is

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2 Deborah Daughtry and I'm a DSP worker
3 under IDD Services with NHS/TAIG, and
4 I've been employed there for 17 years.

5 Recently, I just started
6 noticing the impact of where these cuts
7 would be. The people that I've been
8 working with, I have been working with
9 them the duration of the time of my
10 employment there, and their health has
11 recently started declining. Everyone
12 that works with them, my co-workers, we
13 have been there the duration. We're
14 seeing the impact with hospital
15 insurance, even with home therapy.
16 Everything that would be of an assessment
17 for them is declining.

18 And we understand that at
19 times, that sometime you may have to make
20 a little snip here and a little snip
21 there, but not like this. This would be
22 a harsh impact.

23 When I first came up here, my
24 whole thing was going to be 20 years ago
25 they wanted it to be normalization, and

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2 20 years later, all the promises and
3 things that they put in place, now
4 they're declining on it. What type of
5 Governor do we have that we voted in to
6 do something like that? And we beg that
7 he has a whole search of heart and soul
8 about this, because the impact of these
9 cuts is not only going to hit the
10 clients, but the people that give the
11 quality care and all around.

12 Thank you so much.

13 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you
14 very much for your testimony.

15 MS. BENNETT: Good afternoon.
16 My name is Shirlene Bennett and I work
17 for NHS/TAIG, and I've been employed
18 there for 23 and a half years. I've also
19 went to school through the union, got my
20 Bachelor's Degree in Behavioral Health to
21 learn more about the disability of the
22 people that I work.

23 I work in the behavioral
24 health. I work with IDD, and I also work
25 in the mental health, the drug and

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2 alcohol. I work in all three
3 departments. I work at the Atrium in the
4 day program for the consumers that come
5 there during the week. I work with the
6 families that need and don't understand
7 the disability of their children. But we
8 have adults now. I work with the adults.

9 I have seen the improvement
10 that we made from the time they started
11 up to where they are now. And some of
12 them have some very serious mental
13 disabilities, along with the behaviors
14 where they cannot stay at home. We have
15 to work with them. We are well educated
16 on the job to redirect them in some of
17 the things that they do when they're out.
18 Where a lot of people look at us strange
19 when we're out with the disability, but I
20 don't feel that way. I feel proud when
21 I'm out with them, because I can see the
22 improvement. And through our programs
23 that we have here, we have made life
24 better for them. They have -- they're
25 independent. They live on their own.

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2 They feel good about this. And if we cut
3 the services, some of them won't be able
4 to do this. Some of our consumers cannot
5 live with other people. They have to
6 live independent because of their
7 disability. Medication doesn't help
8 them, because they seek attention. This
9 is something they were born with. We
10 have to thank God that it's not us, and
11 if each one of us looked at them and see
12 that this could be you, what would you
13 do? What would you want? And this is
14 how we work with our consumers. If this
15 was my child, this is my mother, this was
16 my sister, my brother, what would I want
17 for them? And if we look that way, I
18 think Corbett would probably think a
19 little differently if he just come and
20 visits some of these places and see the
21 improvement that these people have and
22 see how they think and how happy they are
23 to be living in a decent home and be able
24 to travel and do things.
25 They cut the budget. A lot of

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2 the things that they have, it's hard even
3 getting clothes for them, because we have
4 to wash their clothes every day, because,
5 you know, they have different issues,
6 different behaviors. Some wet
7 themselves; some don't. But their
8 clothes don't last as long as ours do.
9 So that's more money.

10 The food that they eat, they
11 eat differently than we do. We have
12 diabetics. We have some people that's
13 small weight. They have to have Ensure.
14 Ensure is expensive. A lot of people
15 don't realize. Even young people take
16 Ensure because of their metabolism.

17 I had a gentleman that I took
18 out to the basketball game the other day,
19 and the issue with him was, he like to
20 hoarder, he like to keep things in his
21 pockets. He has so much stuff that he
22 couldn't really play ball. And we were
23 in a field where they had basketball and
24 children playing. Now, he wanted to play
25 his CD and play ball, too. So I had to

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2 redirect him. It took me about 20
3 minutes to redirect him to put the stuff
4 up. That's not an easy task. And to
5 eliminate these type of services, it will
6 cause problems. Now, if he wasn't
7 redirected, he could have hurt one of
8 them children out there.

9 Two days ago I heard on the
10 radio where somebody got shot at the
11 Belfield, playing basketball. Now, that
12 person probably -- they probably could
13 have caught him and he probably would
14 have pleaded innocent and it wouldn't
15 have cost the City that much. But with
16 this young gentleman, if something
17 happened, he would have had to go to
18 court. It would have cost them more
19 money to go to court. It would cost
20 money for him to go to a psychological
21 evaluation. And these cuts is going to
22 cause more problems with these consumers
23 than what they paying now, because they
24 going to increase the problem. And this
25 is what we're here for, to decrease the

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2 problem and make it better.

3 Some of our people work. They
4 have part-time jobs. They feel proud.
5 They paying taxes. It's not a big
6 amount, but they still contributing to
7 society. And I just hope that when you
8 go to Harrisburg, that you think twice
9 about the families that's going to be
10 affected, the people in the neighborhood
11 that's going to be affected, and these
12 people that can't help themselves.

13 They didn't ask to be born this
14 way, but God made everybody differently.

15 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you
16 very much for your testimony. Thank you.

17 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you very
18 much. I appreciate you hearing us today.
19 My name is Martin Johnson. I work as a
20 direct care counselor for the Overbrook
21 Friedlander program, which is a
22 subsidiary of Overbrook School for the
23 Blind. I work with deaf, blind, mental
24 retardation individuals, and they are the
25 ones that are going to suffer the most

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2 from these budget cuts.

3 It's so easy to dismiss them,
4 because they don't really have a voice
5 and they can't speak for themselves. So
6 we're here on behalf of them and on
7 behalf of ourselves, because we work in
8 this field. We're the ones who see them
9 daily and we're the ones who see the
10 things when there are budget cuts such as
11 this that affect them. It affects them
12 right away, as opposed to other people
13 who are able to probably subsidize us or
14 come up with a way to subsidize what
15 they're missing. They're unable to do
16 that, so we provide direct care for them
17 every day and every night.

18 They don't know any dangers,
19 because we let them know where the
20 dangers are. They can't let us know or
21 they can't let someone know that they're
22 in pain or they're feeling sad or they're
23 feeling happy. You have to interpret
24 those behaviors when you see them, and
25 that only comes with working with them

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2 continually. It's just like you know
3 your child. You know when your child is
4 not feeling right. You know when your
5 child is happy. You know when your child
6 is sad. You know when your child is in
7 pain. You know when there's something
8 wrong with that child. Well, we
9 interpret these things for them.

10 Without the funding from the
11 government with supplies for the funding
12 for their activities and pays our
13 paychecks, it cuts programs and it cuts
14 people. When you cut programs and you
15 cut people, then the end result is those
16 individuals go lacking. So we're trying
17 not to let that happen.

18 Yes, it's about
19 self-preservation, yes, but also it's
20 also about caring about the individuals.
21 I've worked with them for 18 years. In
22 18 years, I've seen many people come and
23 go, but still we're still there and we
24 still provide the care and the love and
25 just the basic overall -- what I want to

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2 say is what you and I take for granted.
3 Every day we're able to get up in the
4 morning. We decide what we want. We
5 decide whether we want to go to work. We
6 decide whether we're going to go shopping
7 today, whether we're going -- we decide
8 whether we're going to just maybe just
9 loungue around. They don't get to do
10 that. And if someone is not there to
11 help them, to give them suggestions, to
12 maybe even interpret their behavior, or
13 some of them can speak, some of them
14 can't speak, some of them do sign
15 language or tactile sign, and you have to
16 be able to read these things. If you
17 don't have someone there to do that, then
18 they go by the wayside. And basically if
19 we are our brothers' keepers, then we
20 ought to be our brothers' keepers and do
21 the job that we're supposed to do.

22 Parents do it every day. They
23 don't get paid for it. People who adopt,
24 people who just maybe take care of
25 somebody in the neighborhood, they do it.

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2 Yes, we get paid to do this. This is our
3 job. This is what we like to do. There
4 are not too many individuals who will do
5 it, but we like to do it.

6 So I urge you and I thank you
7 for listening to us this day, and I hope
8 that we can change the legislators' mind
9 and the Governor's mind. So whatever we
10 can do to help, we're going to do, but we
11 need your help also.

12 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Well, we
13 thank you. It looks like we're going to
14 have to change the Governor and the
15 Secretary's mind. The Legislature has
16 already done the dirty work. But we
17 thank you for testifying. We thank you
18 for providing the services to our
19 citizens who are in need of care. And
20 don't apologize for getting paid, because
21 it's what this world is all about. You
22 get paid for services you provide. But
23 what I like about it is that you serve
24 with compassion and that you care, and
25 that's what our clients, your clients

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2 need, is someone who cares, someone who
3 is compassionate. And I don't think they
4 mind that you get a paycheck every week
5 when you get paid, and we don't either.

6 So thank you very much for your
7 compassion and your service.

8 We have another panel that we
9 have to have come forth now.

10 (Applause.)

11 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you
12 all very, very much. I am so sorry for
13 this panel. Next time we'll kind of like
14 let you know what time to come, because
15 these hearings are very intense and can
16 be -- everybody wants to testify. So we
17 thank you for your patience and being
18 here.

19 We'd like to call on Ms. Yvette
20 Nunez from Congreso, Dr. Cheryl Pope from
21 APM, Shelley Yanoff, Christie Balka and
22 Rose Malinowski Weingartner.

23 (Witnesses approached witness
24 table.)

25 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you

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2 all so much. I hope you've enjoyed the
3 testimony of the other panelists, and
4 certainly we all learned something from
5 each group, and we thank you for your
6 patience and we'll let you go ahead and
7 proceed. I'll be here all day.

8 Who is first? Ms. Congreso?

9 MS. NUNEZ: Thank you, Madam
10 Chairwoman. My name is Yvette Nunez.
11 I'm a Vice President with Congreso, and
12 the testimony that I'm presenting this
13 afternoon is on behalf of our President
14 and CEO, Cynthia Figueroa.

15 Congreso de Latinos Unidos is a
16 community-based, non-profit organization
17 in Eastern North Philadelphia which was
18 founded 35 years ago. Our mission is to
19 strengthen Latino communities through
20 social, economic, education and health
21 services, leadership development and
22 advocacy. Congreso's goal is to
23 alleviate poverty and promote economic
24 self-sufficiency to ensure that our most
25 vulnerable populations have the

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2 educational credentials and workforce
3 skills to compete in a global economy.
4 This means ensuring youth graduate from
5 high school and enter college, adults get
6 jobs that provide family-sustaining
7 wages, and our clients receive the health
8 and social services they need to remove
9 barriers and become self-sufficient.

10 Last year, our staff served
11 over 15,000 unique individuals, many of
12 them receiving multiple services through
13 more than 50 different programs, programs
14 that are needed in our community now more
15 than ever. Congreso serves a diverse
16 community of primarily low-income
17 individuals and families, of which 60
18 percent are Latino. Latinos now make up
19 12 percent of the total population in
20 Philadelphia and they are the fastest
21 growing demographic in the City and the
22 Commonwealth. Recent census data
23 suggests that Philadelphia's decades-long
24 population decline has reversed in part
25 due to the double-digit growth of the

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2 Latino community.

3 While the community we serve is
4 vibrant in its culture and rich in its
5 heritage, our service area has the
6 highest percentage of residents living in
7 poverty in the City of Philadelphia at
8 over 56 percent. It has one of the
9 largest concentrations of Temporary
10 Assistance to Needy Families recipients
11 in Pennsylvania and it has the highest
12 rate of food hardship in the state, with
13 over 31 percent, ranked fourth highest
14 nationwide by the Food Research and
15 Action Center.

16 For the clients for whom we
17 have data, we know that 85 percent of the
18 people we serve live at 150 percent below
19 the poverty line and more than 60 percent
20 receive some form of public benefit such
21 as food stamps. Our clients represent
22 some of the most vulnerable populations
23 in the City - children and youth, those
24 that are homeless or are facing housing
25 difficulties, those in need of mental

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2 health services, victims of domestic
3 violence, and countless of other
4 individuals that, with thoughtful and
5 effective programs and services, have the
6 potential to be productive, contributing
7 members to society.

8 Governor Corbett's recent
9 budget proposal would call for cuts that
10 have the power to undermine our efforts
11 to help members of Eastern North
12 Philadelphia realize their full
13 potential. Announced recently, the
14 Governor's plan has combined six line
15 items that relate directly to human
16 services into one line item and then
17 decrease the total funding to this new
18 line item by 20 percent. It has been
19 estimated that the City of Philadelphia
20 would lose approximately 40 million in
21 funding that directly affects its
22 behavioral health, human services, public
23 health and housing departments. Even
24 more devastating, the majority of the
25 funding cuts would affect programs that

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2 relate directly to children, the
3 homeless, individuals struggling with
4 drug and alcohol addiction, and other
5 serious medical needs.

6 The Governor's proposal would
7 also call for cuts to state welfare and
8 public benefits, including medical care
9 and food stamps, benefits that determine
10 if someone gets to live or eat and that
11 more and more people have come to rely on
12 during these difficult economic times.

13 Almost immediately these cuts
14 would impact over 20,000 people. On the
15 behavioral health side, 11,000 people
16 would lose access to mental health
17 assessments, 400 community residential
18 beds would be eliminated, 400 case
19 management services to individuals with
20 chronic severe mental health illness and
21 substance abuse issues would be
22 eliminated, and mobile emergency services
23 would be reduced across the City.

24 On the human services side,
25 family services would be reduced as well

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2 as legal services and supportive services
3 for domestic violence victims. An
4 estimated 16 percent of reduction in case
5 management services for emergency and
6 transitional housing would mean that
7 individuals trying to prevent
8 homelessness would stay in shelters
9 longer or, worse, the need will be too
10 great and families will be turned away.

11 On the health side, we can
12 expect reductions to HIV/AIDS services,
13 including hospice beds for AIDS patients
14 and reductions to HIV testing and case
15 management. This is of particular
16 concern to Congreso given that the work
17 we do has found an increase in the number
18 of positive testing results in our
19 community.

20 Maternal and child health
21 services would also be reduced, including
22 prenatal care for the uninsured and
23 services to families who have children
24 with special needs. The proposal also
25 includes cuts to education, putting an

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2 additional strain onto an already
3 cash-strapped School District. This
4 again is of grave concern to us due to
5 the significant number of high school
6 dropouts at 48 percent and higher amongst
7 African American and Latino males.

8 Since the beginning of the
9 economic recession a few years ago, the
10 City has had to do more with less each
11 year. As times have gotten worse, we
12 have had to find more ways to help the
13 growing numbers of those in need with
14 fewer and fewer resources. Deputy Mayor
15 Schwarz has said that he expects that
16 these cuts to services, housing and
17 supports would mean that we will have
18 more people who are homeless, an increase
19 in street population, more people with
20 untreated mental illnesses and substance
21 abuse, an increase in our jail population
22 and an increase in institutionalization.
23 These cuts would not only affect our
24 ability to provide a wide variety of
25 essential services, they would also

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2 undermine the quality of whatever
3 services remain. From intake assessment,
4 treatment to management and then
5 follow-up care, the process of delivering
6 essential services in a thorough and
7 effective manner would be greatly
8 disrupted.

9 Philadelphia has spent many
10 years working diligently to develop a
11 safety net for members of our community
12 that are most in need. Philadelphia is
13 the state's economic driver, and the
14 Latino community is the largest growing
15 segment of that population. Now is the
16 time to invest in our future and not
17 further harm or reduce and eliminate
18 necessary services that are greatly
19 needed in communities like Eastern North
20 Philadelphia. We must do our best to
21 support the most vulnerable, and we urge
22 City leaders to make their voices heard
23 in the name of the most needy.
24 Philadelphia and the entire state will
25 pay the price when schools fail, crime

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2 rates sore and people lose hope in the
3 systems that are ultimately designed to
4 help them. These cuts will take decades
5 to recoup from if all continues as
6 Governor Corbett plans.

7 Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

8 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Thank you
9 very much for your testimony. Very
10 thoughtful, very informative.

11 Next. Who is next? Well,
12 Dr. Pope.

13 DR. POPE: Thank you, Madam
14 Chair.

15 Regarding the impact of
16 Governor Corbett's proposed state budget
17 cuts for health and human services,
18 Fiscal Year 2012-2013 --

19 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Could you
20 summarize that if you are going to repeat
21 the same information.

22 DR. POPE: In the interest of
23 time and to avoid redundancy, yes, I'm
24 going to summarize the full impact.

25 I am Dr. Cheryl V. Pope, Ph.D.,

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2 APM, Deputy Vice President of Health and
3 Human Services appearing on behalf of APM
4 President and CEO, Nilda Ruiz.

5 As many of you know, APM is a
6 Latino-based health and human services
7 and community development agency building
8 better futures for Philadelphia area
9 families. We have an array of programs
10 and services, including education for
11 children, mental health support, drug and
12 alcohol treatment, health promotion,
13 designing and constructing affordable
14 housing, and teaching financial literacy.
15 APM serves clients throughout the Greater
16 Philadelphia area. A complete listing of
17 our services appears at the end of this
18 testimony.

19 Housing support networks, many
20 also will be overwhelmed by these budget
21 cuts. Of further significance to the
22 population we serve at APM, all of the
23 above-mentioned problems that have been
24 highlighted by my colleagues will be
25 heightened because many of our clients

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2 don't speak English or are unfamiliar
3 with the inner workings of the system and
4 rely on APM to help them navigate, become
5 educated and eventually self-sustaining
6 citizens who no longer need assistance.

7 As threatening as the above
8 eventualities are, the snowball effect
9 will not stop there. It is projected
10 that there will be a loss of 500 to 600
11 residential mental health beds in the
12 City of Philadelphia. So these people
13 will be discharged to shelters. When
14 their unmonitored illnesses and
15 disabilities manifest or worsen, the
16 admissions process and length of stays
17 will take longer in many inpatient stay
18 opportunity. Additionally, as often
19 happens, when the behaviors are
20 undertreated and undiagnosed, some people
21 end up in jail with charges stemming from
22 behaviors that otherwise could have been
23 controlled with treatment, and that
24 causes more financial burdens on all
25 those attendant systems.

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2 We have a number of problems to
3 watch out for. For example, the mental
4 health outpatient clinics could easily
5 end up having to address behavioral
6 health issues for which they are not
7 designed nor prepared; i.e., patients
8 with violent psychotic episodes,
9 schizophrenia, et cetera. APM and many
10 outpatient clinics designed to handle
11 moderate case severities would be in a
12 dangerous position as the ripple effect
13 takes hold and more and more patients
14 with serious psychosis go wherever they
15 are familiar, ending up on the doorsteps
16 of community organizations where they
17 know their language and the reputation
18 for caring.

19 The alarming impact does not
20 stop there, experts say. Thirty-five
21 thousand people in Philadelphia will be
22 affected by the cuts to General
23 Assistance. In addition, it's also
24 projected that over 4,000 uninsured
25 individuals will lose their ability to

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2 seek medical health outpatient services;
3 437 beds will be lost for drug and
4 alcohol clients; and over 1,500 uninsured
5 individuals will not be able to receive
6 any form of drug and alcohol treatment.

7 The Department of Human
8 Services will lose housing support for
9 more than 575 families. There will be a
10 further increase in homelessness of older
11 aging youth, those between 16 to 21 years
12 old; delayed family reunifications, which
13 would impact directly on APM's foster
14 care program.

15 When they have the reality of
16 how all these proposed cuts will affect
17 working individuals and families, when
18 you remove quality child care, there was
19 the real chance people will start losing
20 their jobs. The ability to trust one's
21 children with responsible educational
22 care is crucial to two-home families.
23 The overburdening of existing staff at
24 organizations like APM is also a very
25 ill-advised, unprofessional practice. We

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2 give high-quality, intensive human
3 service.

4 The previous budget cuts
5 already added more work with less staff.
6 To further stress, the current staff will
7 have an eventually -- will have an
8 extremely negative effect on patient
9 needs and services and will also impact
10 morale with new negative lows. These
11 cascading effects are the most easily
12 predicted results of the proposed budget
13 cuts by Governor Corbett.

14 As with life in general, there
15 are also those negative developments
16 which cannot be predicted. What we are
17 talking about here is cutting the safety
18 net for people in need, plus entire
19 families. They are the most vulnerable.
20 Governor Corbett is cutting the net,
21 leaving them dangling with very real dire
22 consequences for all of Philadelphia.
23 More than ever, we are all connected in
24 our society. When those around us are in
25 trouble, the pressure is felt everywhere.

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2 No one is stating that
3 sensible, well-thought changes might be
4 in order. However, to do this at the
5 expense of the most vulnerable members of
6 our society is cruel, unnecessary and
7 extremely shortsighted. Wholesale cuts
8 destroying the social fabric will have a
9 long-lasting, highly damaging effect on
10 our culture, our children and
11 grandchildren.

12 How many pairs of Imelda
13 Marcos' shoes must we pay for before we
14 can get our own people the help they
15 need? The Cheney-Bush Administration
16 admitted losing plane loads of cash bound
17 for Iraq to the tune of \$9 billion.
18 There is a lot of money for corporate
19 bailouts, corporate welfare and tax
20 breaks of every kind, including the banks
21 that seeded the 2008 crisis in the first
22 place. If there is money for them, then
23 surely there is money for the highly
24 successful, life-saving programs APM has
25 launched. Our success stories have been

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2 widely reported throughout the major
3 media, and those success stories are
4 about strong, healthy, wonderful people.
5 Their journey from poverty to prosperity
6 benefits everyone in the City and state.
7 We build better futures, and every time
8 we strengthen our fellow citizens, we
9 create members of society who contribute
10 to their communities and the tax base.

11 The national defense budgets
12 are often cited as so crucial that no one
13 can even investigate them objectively,
14 let alone make the kinds of devastating
15 cuts the Governor wants made here. We
16 understand the defense budget strengthens
17 us by protecting us from exterior
18 negative forces. Our services, social
19 agencies and government programs
20 strengthen and stabilize the interior of
21 our country, and they are every bit as
22 important. APM and organizations like us
23 form the interior defense systems that
24 keep this country strong, safe and
25 progressing in a universally beneficial

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2 way.

3 Thank you, Madam Chair.

4 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Thank you

5 very much.

6 Next, Miss, you're testifying

7 for PCCY?

8 MS. BALKKA: Yes.

9 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Would you
10 state your name, please.

11 MS. BALKKA: Yes. My name is
12 Christie Balka and I'm Director of
13 Advocacy for Public Citizens for Children
14 and Youth. As many of you know, PCCY
15 works to improve the lives and life
16 chances of children in Philadelphia and
17 the surrounding counties. And I want to
18 state for the record that the
19 organization does not solicit or accept
20 public funds.

21 We are grateful to you and your
22 co-sponsor of this hearing today for the
23 opportunity to testify on the impact of
24 the proposed state budget on health and
25 human services funding. If the

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2 Governor's proposed budget is enacted, it
3 would be a disaster for Philadelphia's
4 children, families and the City itself.
5 But this is not inevitable, and all of us
6 here have an important role to play in
7 preventing it.

8 Although the ostensible purpose
9 of the Human Services Block Grant is to
10 provide counties with more flexibility,
11 the only thing it really accomplishes is
12 that it gives counties the freedom to
13 decide which services to cut next. This
14 proposal is like passing the buck without
15 passing the bucks.

16 The proposed 20 percent
17 reduction to the seven line items that
18 are folded into the Human Services Block
19 Grant would cut 33 million from the
20 City's Department of Behavioral Health
21 and Intellectual Disabilities Services.
22 As you've heard, that money currently
23 pays for mental health services to more
24 than 4,000 people and substance abuse
25 treatment to more than 2,000 people.

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2 Elsewhere, Deputy Mayor Don Schwarz has
3 estimated that Philadelphia will see a 50
4 to 75 percent increase in street
5 homelessness and incarceration as a
6 result of losing these funds. Gutting
7 the City's community mental health system
8 will have an enormous ripple effect on
9 children and youth, as more children
10 would enter the child welfare system and
11 additional families would experience
12 separation at greater cost to both
13 children, to the City and to taxpayers.

14 You've already heard that the
15 Human Services Block Grant would reduce
16 services to families who are caring with
17 children with intellectual disabilities.
18 Cuts to the Office of Supportive Housing
19 would reduce the City's capacity to
20 provide housing supports to youth who are
21 aging out of the child welfare system.
22 Cuts to after-school programs provided by
23 the Department of Parks and Recreation
24 would result in more children
25 unsupervised between the critical hours

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2 of 3:00 and 9:00 p.m., and this would be
3 occurring at precisely the same time that
4 the School District's summer programs and
5 child care subsidy for after-school
6 programs are also being reduced in our
7 city.

8 These are all consequences of
9 the Human Services Block Grant, but the
10 budget also proposes a six and a half
11 million dollar cut to the Health
12 Department that would reduce prenatal
13 care and lead poisoning prevention. It
14 proposes a cut to the Free Library of
15 Philadelphia and also a cut to Community
16 College of Philadelphia.

17 And in addition to reducing
18 money that goes directly to these City
19 agencies, the Corbett budget proposes two
20 significant cuts in direct payments to
21 Philadelphia residents. General
22 Assistance -- and you've already heard
23 about the impact of General Assistance --
24 would come at a cost of about \$86 million
25 to Philadelphians. Cuts to child care

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2 subsidy would come at a cost of more than
3 \$8 million to this county alone.

4 The loss of General Assistance
5 would again compound the increase in
6 homelessness and most likely result in an
7 additional increase of children entering
8 foster care. And the cuts to child care
9 subsidy would make it more difficult for
10 parents to retain jobs without placing
11 their children in potentially unsafe
12 conditions while they work.

13 Earlier Councilwoman
14 Quinones-Sanchez asked about the
15 cost-benefit analysis or the economic
16 impact of these cuts. If you want to
17 talk about economic impact, we spend
18 about \$2,450 per year providing General
19 Assistance to the caregiver of a foster
20 child. It costs us more than \$21,000 a
21 year for foster care for one child. So
22 there you have it. These cuts don't make
23 economic sense, as much as they don't
24 make policy sense and human sense.

25 We know that child care subsidy

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2 has a multiplier effect of \$2.17 for
3 every dollar spent. That is the result
4 of increased wages, consumer spending and
5 taxes paid by Philadelphia residents.

6 Children have needs that cross
7 agency boundaries, and I would be remiss
8 if I didn't mention here proposed cuts to
9 the School District of Philadelphia. In
10 addition to providing an education, the
11 School District provides many children
12 with preventative healthcare, behavioral
13 health and family support services. With
14 our School District still reeling from
15 the impact of last year's budget cuts,
16 the Governor's budget this year would
17 result in a \$21 million cut at the same
18 time that the District is being asked to
19 meet a long-deferred increased pension
20 obligation with no additional financial
21 support.

22 Now, Councilman O'Brien
23 mentioned stock and franchise tax, and I
24 just want to echo the point that that
25 will save the state \$250 million. We

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2 could make the cuts that I've just
3 mentioned whole by delaying the scheduled
4 reduction of the Capital Stock and
5 Franchise Tax. We could close the
6 Delaware loophole. That would save us
7 another \$150 million. And attached to my
8 testimony are some additional ways that
9 the state can save money and encourage
10 growth over the long term.

11 I'm afraid we can't do this by
12 talking about stopping cuts alone, and we
13 also have to talk about the revenue
14 increasing side of this. Philadelphia is
15 the largest city in the Commonwealth and
16 has much to lose if this budget is
17 adopted. More families will be homeless.
18 More children would be left by themselves
19 or in unsafe conditions during the day.
20 More would attend schools that are unable
21 to meet their needs.

22 I said earlier that these cuts
23 are not inevitable, but preventing them
24 will require heavy lifting from all of
25 us. It will require new alliances across

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2 geographic and political boundaries, as
3 was discussed earlier, and I urge you to
4 do everything in your power to build
5 those alliances and prevent this budget
6 from going through.

7 Thank you.

8 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you
9 very much.

10 Could we allow the lady to come
11 to the table so she can testify.

12 MS. WEINGARTNER: Good
13 afternoon. My name is Rose Malinowski
14 Weingartner. I'm a researcher with
15 Public Health Management Corporation and
16 their Community Health Database, and I'm
17 presenting information today from our
18 2010 Southeastern Pennsylvania Household
19 Health Survey and other sources to show
20 the many threats to health and well-being
21 faced by children in Philadelphia and
22 adults in special populations, including
23 adults with mental health conditions,
24 adults in recovery, and adults with
25 physical and intellectual disabilities.

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2 I'd like to thank you for taking the time
3 to allow us to speak today.

4 The Community Health Database's
5 2010 Household Health Survey was a
6 telephone survey conducted of 10,000
7 adults and 3,000 children in the
8 five-county area. All of the respondents
9 are non-institutionalized adults. So
10 when I'm talking about numbers of adults
11 in particular situations, I'm only
12 scratching the surface. I'm talking
13 about adults who are able to be reached
14 at home, on their land line or their cell
15 phone. So there's an obvious population
16 we're missing here. So the data I'm
17 presenting here today are from the 4,399
18 interviews conducted within Philadelphia.

19 Approximately 175,400 adults in
20 Philadelphia have been diagnosed with a
21 mental health condition. More than
22 100,000 of those adults are receiving
23 treatment for their mental health
24 conditions. Four in ten Philadelphia
25 adults with mental health conditions

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2 would describe their overall health
3 status as fair or poor, and this
4 represents about 70,800 adults in the
5 City.

6 About one in seven Philadelphia
7 adults with a mental health condition has
8 no public or private health insurance,
9 leaving about 21,800 adults vulnerable.

10 More than one in five adults in
11 the City with a mental health condition,
12 which is about 40,000 adults, has been
13 sick and needed care in the past year,
14 but has not received that care because of
15 the cost.

16 Three in ten adults with mental
17 health conditions in our city have been
18 prescribed medications, but have not been
19 able to afford to pick up those
20 medications during the past year. So
21 that's about 53,500 adults who may not be
22 getting the care that they need.

23 Our research also shows that a
24 third of adults with mental health
25 conditions are living in poverty in

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2 Philadelphia. This is 58,000 adults.

3 More than a quarter of adults
4 with mental health conditions in the City
5 have had to cut the size of their meals
6 or skip meals because of the cost. This
7 means that about 49,000 adults with
8 mental health conditions in Philadelphia
9 may be food insecure.

10 Nearly two-thirds of
11 Philadelphia adults with mental health
12 conditions find it very difficult or
13 somewhat difficult to afford their
14 housing, meaning that there may be
15 108,000 adults with mental health
16 conditions who do not have secure housing
17 in our city.

18 Additionally, our data show
19 that about 128,300 adults in Philadelphia
20 are in recovery from alcohol or other
21 drugs. More than a third of adults in
22 recovery in our city, about 46,000,
23 describe their health as fair or poor.
24 One in five of these adults have no
25 public or private health insurance.

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2 More than one in five adults in
3 the City in recovery, nearly 30,000
4 adults, has been sick and needed care in
5 the past year, but has not gotten that
6 care because of the cost. A quarter of
7 adults in recovery in the City have been
8 prescribed medications they could not
9 receive because of the cost.

10 Our Community Health Database
11 research also shows that more than a
12 third of adults in recovery, 47,200
13 adults in the City, in recovery live
14 below the federal poverty line. About
15 two-thirds of adults in recovery in our
16 city say it's difficult or somewhat
17 difficult to afford their housing, and
18 that's 80,300 adults in recovery with
19 unstable housing.

20 More than a quarter of adults
21 in recovery in our city have had to cut
22 the size of their meals or skip meals
23 because of the cost during the past year,
24 and that's nearly 35,000 adults in the
25 City in recovery who may be food

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2 insecure. So what we're seeing is that
3 there are multiple risks based by these
4 populations.

5 We also collected information
6 on adults with physical and intellectual
7 disabilities in Philadelphia, and about
8 199,000 adults, about 18.4 percent of all
9 adults in the City, said they have a
10 physical, mental or emotional disability.
11 And, again, this is non-institutionalized
12 adults, adults who can be reached at
13 home.

14 Among adults with disabilities,
15 about 22,000 still have no public or
16 private health insurance. More than one
17 in five adults with disabilities in our
18 city, about 45,000, have been sick and
19 needed care in the past year, but have
20 not gotten that care because of the cost.

21 Nearly four in ten adults with
22 disabilities in the City have needed
23 dental care in the past year, but have
24 not gotten it because of cost. That's
25 78,900 adults.

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2 About three in ten adults with
3 disabilities in the City, 60,000 adults,
4 have been prescribed medication that have
5 not been able to receive it because of
6 cost. So they're not getting the
7 treatment that they need.

8 Community Health Database
9 research also shows that four in ten,
10 about 81,000 adults, with physical or
11 mental disability lives below the federal
12 poverty line in the City.

13 In Philadelphia, about three in
14 ten adults with disabilities have had to
15 cut the size of their meals or skip meals
16 because of cost, which is 60,000 adults
17 who may be food insecure.

18 So overall there are hundreds
19 of thousands of adults in these special
20 risk groups, these special populations,
21 who are facing additional financial need
22 who may be subject to additional risk
23 because of these cuts.

24 I appreciate you giving me the
25 time.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Good job.

3 Thank you for that information. It's
4 very helpful to have. We have it in our
5 packet, right?

6 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Yes.

7 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you
8 very much.

9 Thank you all very much for
10 your testimony and taking time to come
11 out and for your patience and the
12 information. Thank you.

13 Our final panel, I believe, we
14 have Paula Cullinan, Jeff Wilush,
15 Kathleen Brown McHale, Dyann Roth, Tony
16 Valdes and Jonathan Ramos.

17 MR. FROEHLICH: Councilwoman,
18 should we combine with them?

19 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: You're
20 Michael Froehlich?

21 MR. FROEHLICH: Yes.

22 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Okay.
23 Come on up. And you have Mr. Fleming
24 with you?

25 MR. FROEHLICH: Yes.

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2 (Witnesses approached witness
3 table.)

4 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: All right.

5 I'm going to ask Mr. Ramos to
6 speak first. He has to go to a meeting,
7 and all of you have to go to meetings,
8 but he has one in a few minutes.

9 Thank you very much. Would you
10 state your name for the record and please
11 present your testimony.

12 MR. RAMOS: Good afternoon,
13 Madam Chair. My name is Jonathan Ramos.
14 I'm a retired police officer, past
15 President of the Spanish American Law
16 Enforcement Association, the largest
17 Spanish-speaking law enforcement
18 association in the State of Pennsylvania.
19 I truly appreciate the opportunity to
20 speak before this body.

21 I would like to share with you
22 my concerns over the current food stamp
23 asset test imposed on our senior citizens
24 residing within the Commonwealth.

25 My current State Representative

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2 stated in a newspaper article that he was
3 okay with the asset test for seniors
4 approved by the Governor. This is one of
5 the reasons why I'm running for State
6 Representative. Four thousand five
7 hundred dollars is not enough money for
8 someone to pay for a respectable funeral.
9 The cost of living continues to go up and
10 for the first time in three years, our
11 elderly received a cost of living
12 increase.

13 The food stamp program is paid
14 for by the federal government. It is
15 more expensive to monitor the asset test
16 than the amount of fraud and abuse that
17 is currently taking place. The reduction
18 of people receiving food stamps will
19 impact the economy and the ability for
20 families and our seniors to buy quality
21 food. These are the people that are
22 basically the most vulnerable ones in our
23 community, our seniors and our young
24 kids.

25 Another example is the proposed

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2 cuts to cash assistance that people
3 receive while under recovery. These
4 specific benefits are 90 percent
5 reimbursable by the federal government.
6 In Philadelphia, these benefits offer a
7 safety net to people who truly need
8 assistance to continue fighting for their
9 lives as they struggle against their
10 demons.

11 The 180th District has a huge
12 population that is living under those
13 conditions. Some of them are living
14 under the railroad tracks near Gurney
15 Street.

16 Last, but not least, the Latino
17 community is a driving state of -- is the
18 driving -- is driving the State of
19 Pennsylvania and the City of Philadelphia
20 realized population growth.
21 Pennsylvania's agricultural economy
22 depends on the Latino community and the
23 immigrant population. Pennsylvania needs
24 to develop strategies to lure Hispanics
25 that will support and sustain the

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2 agricultural economy. The Commonwealth
3 of Pennsylvania must grow revenue through
4 stronger economy and workforce prepared
5 to do the job, and that will definitely
6 include my Hispanic brothers and sisters.

7 I thank you for the opportunity
8 to speak and pray that we can develop
9 strategies to provide a safety net for
10 those families and elders that need it
11 the most.

12 Thank you.

13 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you
14 very much for your testimony. We say
15 thank you for taking the time to come
16 down to give us this perspective.

17 Any questions?

18 (No response.)

19 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you
20 very much.

21 MR. RAMOS: Thank you.

22 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: If you get
23 to Harrisburg, we want you to be a strong
24 voice against this kind of stuff.

25 MR. RAMOS: Madam Chair, I

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2 intend to do that.

3 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Don't vote
4 for Act 22 and 23 and 66 and whatever
5 else comes down the pike. Thank you.

6 MR. RAMOS: Thank you.

7 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you
8 very much.

9 Sorry about the time, but your
10 information is just as important to the
11 record. Everything goes into the record.
12 When we go back to review comments,
13 testimony, we read the entire record.
14 And I always tell folk when they want to
15 challenge us on issues, have you read the
16 notes of testimony? Because they are
17 very, very important.

18 So thank you for your patience.
19 Proceed.

20 MS. CULLINAN: Thank you. Good
21 afternoon. I very much appreciate the
22 opportunity to speak with you today. My
23 name is Paula Cullinan. I am the Chief
24 Operating Officer of the Center for
25 Autism and President of the Philadelphia

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2 Alliance.

3 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Excuse me.

4 Let me just make this statement also.

5 Because you don't see the Councilmembers
6 here, we have televisions in our office
7 and we watch it on television. I watch
8 hearings all the time, and you can do the
9 computer and still hear the testimony,
10 which is the most important thing, that
11 they hear what you say.

12 And so I will definitely say
13 that a number of them are listening and
14 watching you on television. Thank you.
15 And this is televised on cable, our cable
16 network, during the hearing, as well as
17 it will be repeated.

18 MS. CULLINAN: Okay.

19 The Center is a non-profit
20 clinic that has been serving individuals
21 with autism and their families since
22 1955. The Philadelphia Alliance is an
23 organization of 54 specialized agencies
24 that serve individuals with mental health
25 conditions, intellectual disability and

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2 chemical dependency. Alliance agencies
3 employ well over 20,000 people and serve
4 more than 100,000 vulnerable
5 Philadelphians with significant needs.
6 We are proud to be part of a vibrant and
7 healthy social safety net which leads the
8 nation in efficacy and positive outcomes.

9 The Alliance also understands
10 the difficulties of the current economic
11 climate, and we agree that the state's
12 fiscal reality must be addressed.
13 However, we also believe there has not
14 been sufficient thought to or planning
15 for the longer-term effects of some of
16 the cuts currently proposed by Governor
17 Corbett. We are particularly concerned
18 with the economic impact on Philadelphia
19 and with the negative effect on quality
20 of community life in the City.

21 The cuts to the social service
22 system proposed by the Governor have the
23 potential of costing hundreds of jobs
24 across the Philadelphia region. These
25 job losses will reduce planned income tax

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2 revenue for the City and reduce consumer
3 spending.

4 The steep cuts contained in the
5 HSDF Block Grant proposal and the
6 elimination of the General Assistance
7 program will cause the human service
8 providers, who encompass a large portion
9 of the City's business community, to cut
10 their workforces. Dyann Roth's testimony
11 today will provide additional details
12 about those cuts.

13 As many of you know, providers
14 are stretched thin. Several of our
15 member agencies have already enacted
16 significant layoffs and consolidated
17 programs. The safety net has already
18 been cut to the bone. This budget
19 proposes cuts so severe that many
20 providers will be finally forced to close
21 programs. Philadelphia cannot afford to
22 lose its human service workforce.

23 Many people with intellectual
24 and behavioral disabilities receive
25 services that enable them to positively

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2 contribute to society. As programs
3 shrink and these individuals lose access
4 to necessary community services, there is
5 nowhere for them to go except to the
6 streets, prisons and state-run
7 institutions. The loss of critical
8 services to people with disabilities will
9 be devastating.

10 In addition to severe funding
11 reductions, the state has asked providers
12 to operate under excessive and burdensome
13 regulations. As you will hear from Jeff
14 Wilush and Kathy Brown McHale, the
15 regulations proposed by DPW greatly
16 exacerbate the micromanagement of private
17 providers' businesses and force providers
18 to operate below cost. This is not
19 sustainable for long and will force
20 programs to close their doors.

21 Even Governor Corbett agrees
22 that caring for people with disabilities
23 is a core responsibility of government.
24 When vital human services are not funded
25 by government, jobs are lost and people

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2 are harmed. Without the availability of
3 community-based services, these
4 individuals will tax other more costly
5 community resources. This doesn't help
6 Philadelphia or our citizens. People
7 need help, and the help they get from
8 Philadelphia's human resource providers
9 not only improves quality of life for the
10 individual, it improves the quality of
11 life in the City's communities and
12 supports the economic health of the
13 region.

14 I urge you to continue to work
15 with us to oppose the proposed cuts in
16 the Governor's budget.

17 Thank you.

18 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you.

19 Next.

20 MR. WILUSH: Thank you, Madam
21 Chairwoman, for this opportunity. My
22 name is Jeff Wilush and I have the
23 privilege of being the President and
24 Chief Executive Officer of Horizon House,
25 an organization founded in Philadelphia

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2 in 1952. And I was not one of the
3 founders.

4 I will truncate my testimony to
5 really be three major points that I've
6 outlined in my written testimony. And
7 the first is that the individuals that we
8 serve, their families and the people that
9 we employ and our organizations are
10 integral parts of the Philadelphia
11 community, and as such, to propose budget
12 cuts and the regulatory reforms that are
13 contained within the Governor's proposal
14 will have a significant and detrimental
15 impact on our community.

16 The organizations and
17 businesses like Horizon House are
18 employee driven, but 75 percent of our
19 funding going directly to employee wages
20 and salaries. In order to survive the
21 cuts of this magnitude, organizations
22 will need to eliminate jobs simply to
23 survive.

24 The cuts proposed by the
25 Governor will lead to significant job

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2 losses across the City. And without
3 these dedicated employees, people in need
4 of our services will go unserved, and
5 communities will be negatively impacted.

6 To put it simply, this funding
7 pays citizens of Philadelphia to provide
8 services to citizens of Philadelphia,
9 both of whom will be negatively impacted
10 by these cuts.

11 And, finally, I'll point out
12 what others have pointed out today, is
13 that numerous studies have proven that an
14 effective network of supports provided in
15 communities, like those provided in the
16 City of Philadelphia, is the most
17 cost-efficient way to provide services to
18 individuals, not to mention the most
19 compassionate and effective way to
20 encourage independence and
21 self-sufficiency. The short-term
22 economic game of these cuts will only
23 lead to a higher long-term cost in
24 dollars as well as the immeasurable cost
25 to the families and communities that are

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2 Philadelphia.

3 Thank you for the opportunity
4 to testify today.

5 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you
6 very much.

7 Does your program provide
8 in-home services to your clients?

9 MR. WILUSH: We provide a lot
10 of case management services to
11 individuals who are living in their own
12 apartments, yes, ma'am.

13 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: All right.
14 Thank you.

15 Ms. McHale.

16 MS. McHALE: Good afternoon.
17 Thank you, Chairwoman Tasco, for this
18 opportunity. My name is Kathleen Brown
19 McHale. I am the President and CEO of a
20 non-profit Philadelphia-based
21 organization, SPIN. We provide full
22 range services for children and adults
23 with intellectual, developmental and
24 autism spectrum disabilities since 1971.
25 In those years, we have seen significant

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2 strides in the lives of people with
3 serious disabilities. SPIN and other
4 providers have taken people out of
5 institutions and brought them back into
6 community, where they have lived real
7 lives and contributed to society. We
8 have also supported families so that
9 their loved ones did not need to go into
10 institutions.

11 In Philadelphia, about 12,000
12 people with an intellectual disability
13 are registered for services. There are
14 46,000 with an intellectual disability.
15 Of these, 3,000 receive nominal or no
16 direct services at all. The 6 percent
17 funding cut from the state that we
18 received this year reduced those nominal
19 services even further. The 20 percent
20 cuts planned for next year will likely
21 end minimal support for hundreds, and be
22 the end of hope for thousands more who
23 simply wait for services on the waiting
24 list.

25 SPIN provides service to 2,700

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2 children and 850 adults annually. Most
3 of the adults are funded in one of two
4 waivers which provide for community
5 services. Two hundred and fifty of the
6 adults live in SPIN-operated homes and
7 receive 24/7 support to live an everyday
8 life. These are individuals who once
9 lived in back wards, in institutions or
10 whose families are no longer able to
11 provide care at home. They need
12 life-long support, which is a core
13 responsibility of government. Yet, in
14 Fiscal Year '12, DPW gave themselves a 6
15 percent discount from providers' approved
16 cost from two years ago.

17 To deal with the 6 percent cut,
18 which is a \$2.9 million reduction in my
19 organization, we decreased employees
20 through attrition and layoffs. Today,
21 SPIN has 51 fewer employees than it did a
22 year ago. This has been even more
23 difficult because at the same time the
24 state gave themselves a 6 percent
25 discount on services, they increased

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2 program and fiscal regulations to

3 providers such as my organization.

4 Regulatory compliance requires qualified

5 people, training and infrastructure.

6 Because decreasing our workforce was

7 still not sufficient to bring our costs

8 in line, we also reduced health insurance

9 and other benefits to our entire

10 workforce. After all of this, SPIN is

11 still operating in the red this year.

12 That is primarily because we have not yet

13 cut any services to people.

14 The cuts that are coming for

15 Fiscal '13 will send a critical blow to

16 the mission of SPIN and the missions of

17 other human service providers. We will

18 be forced to cut services to people in

19 critical need. We will see more people

20 going back into institutions. We will be

21 repeating mistakes of our past. We will

22 undo the progress that has been made in

23 many of our lifetimes, all at the expense

24 of our most vulnerable citizens. And I

25 urge that we continue to do everything we

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2 can to assure that these cuts don't
3 happen.

4 Thank you for the opportunity.

5 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you.

6 Don't leave. The question I
7 want to ask all of you before Mr. Valdes
8 speaks, what have you done thus far to
9 reach out or communicate with the
10 Secretary of Welfare in Harrisburg and
11 the Governor relative to this issue?

12 MS. McHALE: We've been in
13 Harrisburg.

14 MR. WILUSH: We have been
15 constantly in Harrisburg meeting with
16 Deputy Secretaries --

17 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Come to
18 the table.

19 MR. WILUSH: Not only through
20 the Philadelphia Alliance, but also
21 through the statewide organizations. A
22 number of us have been meeting constantly
23 with the Deputy Secretaries, attempting
24 to meet with the Secretary. We've met
25 with the Lieutenant Governor, have made

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2 various visits to Senators and other
3 legislators' offices just to raise the
4 attention level around the potential
5 impact of these cuts, because our main
6 concern obviously as provider
7 organizations is to minimize the impact
8 of any of this on the people that we're
9 committed to serving. So the education
10 process has been something that we've
11 taken very, very serious in this.

12 MS. McHALE: We have also
13 engaged our workforce, our Board, our
14 employees. We have written letters to
15 the Governor, to Senators, to our
16 Representatives. We've visited them in
17 their home offices, in Harrisburg. So,
18 you know, we have really been working on
19 this really throughout the year, because
20 we felt those cuts already. They've
21 already happened. And now, you know,
22 facing further cuts, we are doing
23 everything that we can, and we will not
24 stop.

25 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you.

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2 I wanted to ask that before any of you
3 left.

4 Ms. Roth.

5 MS. ROTH: Yes. I'm Dyann Roth
6 and I'm representing Resources for Human
7 Development, or RHD. We are a
8 diversified non-profit human services
9 provider with more than 1,400 employees
10 in Philadelphia alone. We serve over
11 about 10,000 individuals with
12 developmental disabilities experiencing
13 homelessness and in recovery from mental
14 health and drug and alcohol abuse in this
15 city. We also operate a network of
16 federally qualified health centers that
17 provide primary dental and behavioral
18 health services to another 19,000
19 Philadelphians.

20 I'm going to try to make mine
21 short, because people have been so
22 eloquent today with all of the points.

23 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: That's
24 what happens when we have these hearings.
25 When you get to be towards the end,

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2 everybody has pretty much said

3 everything, but please feel free.

4 MS. ROTH: As my colleagues and
5 the Alliance have already described,
6 we're very concerned not only about the
7 20 percent cut on the lines going into
8 the Human Services Block Grants, but also
9 the regulations that are being forced
10 through in an expedited fashion without
11 any public process. And those
12 regulations, as I think Tony will also
13 talk about, some of the damage
14 financially on our organizations are not
15 immediately visible, but the regulations
16 themselves will cause even more havoc
17 with the financial stability of many of
18 our organizations. What that really
19 means -- and I'm off my testimony here a
20 little bit -- is that very stable -- you
21 hear the years of longevity of these
22 provider organizations. We will be
23 destabilized financially. Our employees
24 will lose jobs, and the people that we
25 serve -- I believe one of the things that

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2 we haven't said very directly today is
3 not only will people be using the ER
4 more, they will be going into psychiatric
5 institutions more, they will be going
6 into jails more, but they will die.

7 One of the employees of RHD's
8 Woodstock Family Center, which is an
9 emergency housing program for women who
10 are experiencing homelessness and their
11 children, wanted me to share her story
12 today. And her name is Jenell Smith.
13 She was a single mother, unemployed and
14 struggling very seriously with powerful
15 drug addiction. She was able to receive
16 General Assistance, which helped her feed
17 and clothe her four young children while
18 she completed a drug treatment program
19 and obtained a GED. She took part in a
20 work readiness program at that time,
21 which helped her gain the courage and
22 sense of responsibility she needed to get
23 and keep a job. And she sustained her
24 employment for 12 years.

25 She now counsels women in the

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2 same type of life situation she found
3 herself in, offering hope and strength to
4 help them move out of homelessness.
5 Jenell believes that if it were not for
6 the drug treatment program that served
7 her and the supports that General
8 Assistance and the community of services
9 that she was able to take part in, she
10 would be dead today. Instead, she's
11 contributing to so many other families
12 and to our community.

13 This city cannot afford to lose
14 more of our neighbors to drug addictions
15 and mental illnesses, and we need your
16 help to keep people like Jenell healthy,
17 employed and contributing positively to
18 our community.

19 Jenell is just one of thousands
20 of employees who also -- we talked about
21 ripple effects often. The families of
22 our employees, the people that we serve
23 and their families are all going to be
24 tragically affected if these cuts go
25 through.

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2 And, finally, as others have
3 also stated before me, what we need to do
4 is not just talk about stopping the cuts,
5 but also where do we find the resources.
6 And so I do believe that together we need
7 to help push forward some of the revenue
8 proposals on the table in Harrisburg.

9 As an organization and as part
10 of many other organizations, RHD, we like
11 to create rallies at the State Capitol.
12 We like to bring our folks to the
13 legislators, and we will join with any
14 other members who have testified today to
15 do that and make our voices and the
16 voices of the people who are not always
17 heard this time in Harrisburg.

18 Thank you.

19 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Well,
20 thank you very much for your testimony.
21 It's been very enlightening, and thank
22 you for the work you do. I'm familiar
23 with actually all of the organizations
24 who are here today, especially Tony.

25 MR. VALDES: Thank you for

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2 having us all here today. This is a
3 privilege.

4 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: All day.

5 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Next time
6 we'll try to stagger the time.

7 MR. VALDES: No. It's quite
8 all right.

9 I'm going to testify today
10 representing the children and families
11 served in Philadelphia's behavioral
12 health system, many of whom seek
13 services --

14 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: First tell
15 us who you are and who you represent.

16 MR. VALDES: I'm Antonio
17 Valdes, CEO of the Children's Crisis
18 Treatment Center.

19 And many of these children have
20 suffered adverse experiences, physical
21 and sexual abuse, family and community
22 violence and other kinds of traumatic
23 events. At CCTC, we're a private
24 non-profit agency dedicated to assisting
25 children and their families coping with

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2 the impact of these types of issues.

3 Specifically today, as you've
4 already heard, I'm going to speak a
5 little bit about the impact of the
6 planned behavioral health co-pays on the
7 children and families that we serve as an
8 example of the kind of changes that are
9 coming not necessarily through the budget
10 itself.

11 We contend that requiring
12 co-payments will place a significant
13 financial burden on families and force
14 parents and caregivers to choose among
15 other competing priorities when deciding
16 whether or not to have their children
17 participate in medically necessary
18 behavioral health services.

19 Given their limited resources,
20 many families will need to prioritize
21 among other basic needs, such as food,
22 shelter, clothing and transportation.
23 Who among us would want to be in the
24 position to make such choices?

25 We project that in the

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2 best-case scenario, families will be able
3 to afford to have their children
4 participate in treatment only some of the
5 time. In the worst-case scenario,
6 families will decide that treatment
7 services are no longer available to them
8 and they can no longer afford them, and
9 that in those cases, they will stop
10 services altogether. Both scenarios will
11 have potentially drastic results.

12 In the words of a parent who
13 participates in services with her two
14 children who experienced trauma, I just
15 don't know what my family could give up
16 in order to be able to afford another
17 cost associated with treatment. I also
18 don't know what I would do without these
19 services. We often think of these
20 families as the cost is just simply the
21 cost that they experience directly with
22 us, getting to their appointments, the
23 cost of transportation, et cetera. It's
24 already an expensive endeavor for these
25 families to participate actively in

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2 services.

3 Another parent commented, I
4 look at the behavioral health services
5 that my child receives as a medical need,
6 just like if he had a physical health
7 problem. The services are medically
8 necessary. I would worry about his
9 future if I'm not able to afford his
10 treatment.

11 Another parent added, It is a
12 horrible experience not to be able to
13 afford what my child needs. You can't
14 afford to and you can't afford not to.

15 Parents interviewed for this
16 testimony expressed worrying concern
17 about the dire consequences of families
18 not being able to afford their child's
19 treatment. Adding that their worst fear
20 is that their community, the City of
21 Philadelphia, won't be able to step in
22 and help until it is too late. And by
23 too late, they mean -- and in their own
24 words -- that the children will end up in
25 prison.

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2 Again, I greatly appreciate the
3 opportunity to speak today and will end
4 with a quote attributed to Gandhi that we
5 frequently use in our work and speaks to
6 our purpose here today. "The measure of
7 a society is how it treats its most
8 vulnerable members."

9 Thank you.

10 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you.
11 Thank you very much. Councilwoman has a
12 question.

13 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: I think
14 this is an important point and one we
15 were speaking about earlier off the
16 record. What are some of the co-pays
17 that we're talking about? Because I
18 don't want -- I want people to kind of
19 get clear about what you guys are going
20 to be expected now to charge folks.

21 MR. VALDES: Well, some of
22 that -- and some other folks, please jump
23 in. Some of that is yet to be clarified.
24 So like many other things, many of the
25 specifics have not worked out. There are

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2 some different criteria based on income.
3 There's a lot of hidden administrative
4 costs as well because now we're going to
5 have to -- you can just imagine what's
6 going to happen when someone comes in for
7 an appointment where you're going to have
8 to go through a whole process of
9 determining income levels with every
10 person that walks in to determine what
11 co-pay they qualify for. All that stuff
12 is sort of out there still to be worked
13 out. So it's not even just the burden on
14 the family, but there's an administrative
15 burden that now it's going to be placed
16 on each organization that's going to have
17 to check on these.

18 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Okay.
19 Thank you.

20 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Do you get
21 a sense that there has been a
22 well-thought-out discussion on this whole
23 change?

24 MR. VALDES: Well -- and these
25 are all guesses on most of our parts, I

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2 think, as to what's behind these. But I
3 know the insurance industry for a long
4 time has known that the best way to
5 reduce utilization is to add co-pays to
6 the cost for a consumer coming into any
7 kind of appointment that we all pay when
8 we have co-pays with our own doctors.
9 The idea behind that is to reduce
10 utilization, often defined and
11 characterized as they're trying to reduce
12 over-utilization, but we'll leave it to
13 each person's judgment as to what the
14 real motivation is.

15 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: So we have
16 the insurance industry. We have the
17 prisons, increasing prisons, increasing
18 institutions, increasing insurance. So
19 somebody is going to make some money.

20 MR. VALDES: Yeah. Fortunately
21 here in Philadelphia I think in
22 behavioral health, we have CBH as a
23 partner, who clearly views this in the
24 same way I think we do. But it is -- I
25 wonder about the traditional motivation

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2 we've seen as these changes have been
3 made in other places.

4 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you
5 so much for testifying. I appreciate it
6 very, very much, and certainly I
7 appreciate your patience. You are all
8 CEOs and very important to your
9 organizations, but it's important that
10 you came to let us hear your position.
11 And we will try to figure out what the
12 follow-through will be once we finish
13 this. We'll have to talk about what we
14 do next, and we'll be in touch with you.

15 (Thank you.)

16 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: In
17 addition to these two gentlemen, is there
18 anyone else here to testify?

19 (Witnesses approached witness
20 table.)

21 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: All right.
22 Thank you all.

23 MR. YABOR: Good afternoon.

24 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Good
25 afternoon.

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2 MR. YABOR: It's a fine first
3 day of spring.

4 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Wonderful.

5 MR. YABOR: Chair Tasco and
6 Ms. Sanchez, Vice Chair, my name is Paul
7 Yabor. I'm with the Frankford Recovery
8 Coalition, and I'm also with ACT UP
9 Philadelphia, the AIDS Coalition to
10 Unleash Power. And I'm also a
11 collaborator with the University of
12 Pennsylvania doing ethnological field
13 work with intravenous drug users.

14 I'm going to skip who this
15 affects, because we've heard it over and
16 over again, but I'd like to say a couple
17 things about recovery houses.

18 So the grist of the situation
19 is that over the past decade, an
20 unwritten, unauthorized policy of
21 cooperation has existed between private
22 recovery houses and the welfare system.
23 There was a book called How It Works by
24 Professor Robert Fairbanks, which alludes
25 to this or documents it very well. This

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2 unwritten contract of sorts has allowed
3 people addicted to drugs to get medically
4 assessed as temporary disabled in need of
5 drug and alcohol treatment. They are
6 given \$205 in cash and \$200 in food
7 stamps and medical benefits for nine
8 months. The number one funding mechanism
9 for recovery houses is General Assistance
10 by a wide majority. The other funding
11 streams for recovery houses such as the
12 clients on SSI, SSD and those who work is
13 minimal.

14 It should also be pointed out
15 that the management of recovery houses is
16 a real shell game, where you'll have half
17 the people, half the clients, receiving
18 benefits while the other half are waiting
19 to obtain them. There's up to a 30-day
20 wait for cash benefits to kick in.

21 The recovery houses take the
22 cash and food stamp as rent. This varies
23 from house to house as to exactly how
24 much they take. Clients put in a cycle
25 of four months of intensive outpatient

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2 and four months of outpatient. The
3 client is encouraged to integrate back
4 into the workforce and eventually move on
5 in a process called Step in, Step Up,
6 Step Out. This is a system that's
7 flourished to the point where there are
8 easily a few thousand recovery house beds
9 citywide. I don't have exact figures.
10 However, I am confident the system of
11 recovery houses supplies as many, if not
12 more, slots than the shelter system.

13 The recovery house system also
14 provides far more structured support and
15 overall a better quality of life than the
16 shelter system. The recovery house
17 system also acts as a conduit for
18 offenders coming out of jails and even
19 the criminal justice programs such as
20 Forensic Intensive Recovery program,
21 relies on recovery houses to provide
22 daily supervision and General Assistance
23 to provide funding.

24 So what is the impact of the
25 elimination of General Assistance welfare

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2 on recovery? The majority of people in
3 recovery houses would not have a way to
4 pay the rent. The only other option
5 would be the shelter system, which is
6 already overwhelmed and already is also
7 facing additional cuts. So we're talking
8 about -- and I thought it was about a
9 thousand, but after talking to Professor
10 Fairbanks, the number is more like four
11 or five thousand.

12 Many recovery houses would be
13 forced to close down or downsize and most
14 likely foreclosing on mortgages and
15 leaving additional vacant properties,
16 some programs having six or more houses.

17 Many people coming out of jail
18 would not have any other place to turn
19 other than the shelter system, which does
20 not provide monitoring. Criminal justice
21 programs would not have funding for their
22 clients. IOPs and OP treatment programs
23 will have to close or downsize.

24 Now, when I wrote this, I
25 wasn't aware of the medical -- MA being

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2 able to reapply for that. So maybe
3 there's not as much of an impact there,
4 but there'll still be a number of people
5 lost to care.

6 People emerging with addiction
7 issues will have little chance of
8 obtaining treatment, and the incidence of
9 mortality from drug abuse will increase.

10 With less supervision and a
11 greater degree of desperation, offenders
12 will be more likely to go out and commit
13 more crimes.

14 And I had e-mailed this to all
15 Councilmembers.

16 I'd just like to say that our
17 system of recovery houses is the front
18 line against the battle with addiction in
19 the City, and it's perhaps one of the
20 most dynamic components. It's based on
21 grassroots and it's the most fundamental,
22 because at the end of the day when any
23 treatment program is over, it is back to
24 the recovery house that they go and they
25 live. This is their shelter.

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2 The loss of GA is going to
3 devastate this, and I don't believe that
4 the City of Philadelphia can in any way
5 absorb doubling the people in shelters,
6 especially people who are vulnerable to
7 going out and getting involved in
8 addiction and committing more crime.

9 I share Senator Vincent Hughes'
10 hope, but I believe that hope for the
11 best and expect and plan for the worst.
12 And no matter how much advocating we do
13 along the lines of trying to change these
14 cuts, we have to prepare for the
15 inevitability that something is coming
16 down the pike.

17 It's my sincere hope that if we
18 have to, we have to declare a public
19 health emergency and act in that respect.
20 Not only does this reflect on people in
21 addiction, but I'd just like to step into
22 the HIV and AIDS for a moment. Right now
23 we're at a pitch battle with HIV and AIDS
24 where men of color who are -- men who
25 have sex with men, the infection rate is

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2 at or greater than that of Sub-Saharan
3 Africa. We're seeing women of color who
4 their rate of infection is rapidly
5 expanding as well.

6 In retrospect to that, the one
7 sector we have seen reductions is with IV
8 drug use, which we can say is a lot to do
9 with our needle exchange program.
10 However, along those lines, we have the
11 recovery houses which supply the
12 structured environments where the addict
13 cannot only -- where the addict seeking
14 treatment can go, and which is also an
15 element of our needle exchange program.
16 We don't -- in that program of Prevention
17 Point Philadelphia, it doesn't just
18 supply equipment, it also supplies
19 counseling and referrals to our recovery
20 house system.

21 And in addition to that, we're
22 looking at a \$24 million cut in funding
23 for HIV and AIDS, the federal matching
24 funds.

25 And that's about it. We need

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2 to prepare.

3 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you
4 very much. It's a challenge to prepare.
5 I go back to Dr. Schwarz this morning,
6 over 30 years developing a system that
7 seems to be working, to change it
8 drastically and immediately just doesn't
9 make a lot of sense to me. So I'm not
10 sure what the rationale is, but thank you
11 for coming. Councilwoman Sanchez has a
12 question.

13 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: I want
14 to thank you. I too have had an
15 opportunity to spend some time with
16 Mr. Fairbanks, read his book, had him
17 provide orientation to my staff.

18 When I first got elected, I
19 inherited this kind of recovery house
20 situation in my 24, 34 zip code. My
21 office has done extensive work, and we've
22 identified about 300 properties in the
23 Kensington area that provides some sort
24 of recovery house. And while we've had
25 some bad actors that we've tried to take

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2 out of the market, it became very clear
3 to me, outside of taking all the
4 political hits by folks who have
5 challenged me because of my unwillingness
6 to say I'm against recovery and my
7 unwillingness to say that these are not
8 necessary services, my work with
9 Councilwoman Blackwell, it is clear to me
10 that without this system that has been
11 created particularly in those zip codes,
12 34 and 24, we would have many, many
13 people homeless and in the street. And I
14 am extremely concerned. It's a
15 conversation we had with Dr. Schwarz when
16 we did the briefing and I worked very
17 closely with Dr. Evans on, and just
18 yesterday had a discussion with the top
19 brass at the Police Department as we try
20 to combat crime along that corridor where
21 Jose Benitez, who I also work very hard
22 and advocate for, Prevention Point. Not
23 a very popular program either, and that's
24 why we brought it in-house and trying to
25 accommodate him also to do, because his

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2 work has been effective. All of these
3 things are not sexy and it's stuff that
4 nobody in the community wants to deal
5 with. And when I first heard about the
6 state cuts, that was my first thing.
7 General Assistance is crazy for the
8 people in the recovery, the amount of
9 money that flows in the community,
10 because all this money is spent rapidly.
11 So it cycles in and out of the system.

12 I can tell you that as a city,
13 we're not prepared. The Mayor's budget
14 does not even begin to fill the \$44
15 million hole, let alone all of these
16 other cuts that don't go through our
17 budget but are going to impact our budget
18 system. Our Office of Special Needs has
19 told us they can't handle anything else.

20 And so I agree with you, this
21 is definitely a state of emergency and
22 one that we have to be loud and clear
23 about that how it's going to impact
24 cities and particular neighborhoods like
25 Kensington. That's why we're outraged.

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2 The Councilwoman and I really want to
3 bring this to the attention. People need
4 to understand that these cuts are state
5 and, therefore, when we have to carry --
6 we're carrying the burden of this. We've
7 carried Corbett's cuts. This one is one
8 that we can't even begin to fill, because
9 even if we said as a Council that we can
10 try to fill in those 44 million, we can't
11 do the General Assistance. We can't do
12 the Medicaid. We can't do the behavioral
13 health services.

14 So we are in -- and, again,
15 this money is reimbursable at the federal
16 level. There's no reason why Corbett is
17 cutting this, other than the fact that
18 they're mean-spirited and someone through
19 this Act 22, the Secretary of Welfare in
20 this case, has been given way too much
21 power, way too much power to make the
22 numbers work. And we're really in for a
23 devastating effect. I hate to think
24 about what this summer is going to look
25 like when folks get off the rolls as

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2 quickly as the state thinks it could do
3 this.

4 So it's not a question. It's
5 just a level of frustration and fear that
6 I have about what's it going to do to the
7 different systems within the City of
8 Philadelphia, including the Police
9 Department. The police doesn't want to
10 arrest. I mean, part of our challenge in
11 even responding to intersections like
12 Kensington and Somerset is, you don't
13 want to victimize the victim anymore, the
14 users over there. So for neighborhoods
15 like the ones that I represent, it is
16 going to be tremendously impactful, and
17 crime will undoubtedly increase.

18 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you
19 so much for your testimony. We
20 appreciate it very much.

21 Mr. Froehlich.

22 MR. FROEHLICH: Mr. Fleming.

23 MR. FLEMING: Yes. Hi. How
24 are you? Good afternoon. My name is
25 Jake Fleming. I'm a Peer Specialist at

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2 Northeast Treatment Centers, adult
3 behavior services, mainly substance abuse
4 and co-occurring disorders. Thank you
5 for -- it's a pleasure to be here today.

6 First and foremost, I have to
7 tell you, I am a grateful and blessed,
8 truly blessed, recovering alcoholic and
9 drug addict. I've been asked to come
10 here to tell you about my story pretty
11 much and what Medical Assistance and the
12 cash assistance did for me to save my
13 life. So we're going to get a little
14 deep here for a minute, but I'll keep it
15 short and sweet.

16 February 28, 2008, I
17 surrendered to alcoholism and drug
18 addiction. I knew I needed treatment. I
19 knew I needed help, after 30 years of
20 abuse, alcoholism and drug abuse, 30
21 years out there.

22 I wouldn't be alive today if I
23 hadn't got the treatment that I got. I
24 would not be here. I was homeless. I
25 was destitute. I was physically and

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2 mentally sick. When I went to detox, had
3 I not sought help, they told me, the
4 doctors there, said if I had not sought
5 help when I did, I probably wouldn't have
6 lived two more months. That's how sick I
7 was.

8 Receiving the cash assistance
9 and the Medical Assistance helped me get
10 in the recovery house, which I'm glad my
11 man talked about, because that's a real
12 huge part of this, and it helped me get
13 into outpatient treatment.

14 I was able to have a place to
15 live, get in a recovery house, like I
16 said, received the treatment, recover and
17 complete the program. Three weeks ago I
18 celebrated four years of sobriety.

19 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Great.
20 Great.

21 MR. FLEMING: I'm employed
22 today. I'm paying taxes. I'm supporting
23 myself and I'm also supporting my
24 14-year-old daughter, who I neglected for
25 many, many years.

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2 If this budget that Governor
3 Corbett -- if it goes through, the
4 impact, we've been talking about all day,
5 it's going to be devastating to the City
6 as well as to the state. Homelessness
7 obviously will skyrocket. People that
8 are seeking treatment won't be able to
9 get treatment that they're seeking. They
10 won't have the recovery houses to go to
11 because they will shut down. So people
12 will be able on the street.

13 At Northeast Treatment Center,
14 we recently did a survey of our clients
15 and we asked the clients a simple
16 question: What would you do if your cash
17 assistance and Medical Assistance was
18 cut, and 80 percent of those, of our
19 clients, said they would be homeless.
20 Most of those said that they believed
21 they would basically have no choice to
22 resort back to what they know; for
23 instance, burglary, prostitution, drug
24 dealing, death by drug abuse, instead of
25 receiving the help that they could have

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2 received -- that they're receiving now.

3 Where's the shared sacrifice,

4 you know? As I stated, I wouldn't be

5 alive today. I wouldn't be supporting my

6 child. I wouldn't be a productive member

7 of society had I been denied the help

8 that's going to happen if this budget

9 passes. People are going to get denied.

10 This assistance saved my life. I should

11 be laying in a grave. I should be laying

12 in a grave. This assistance saved my

13 life.

14 If it's fast, it's going to be

15 ugly. It's going to be ugly. People

16 will die. I'm living proof of what this

17 assistance can do. Somebody said

18 earlier, one of the Councilmembers said,

19 we need to put a face on it. I'm your

20 face. I represent thousands of people in

21 recovery. Because we do recover. If we

22 choose --

23 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: But the

24 state would not think you were the face.

25 They see another face. They don't see

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2 your face. They don't believe that your
3 face exists.

4 MR. FLEMING: It's real. We do
5 recover, but I couldn't have done it
6 without this help. I just don't know --
7 people will die. I shouldn't be here, as
8 I said.

9 I want to thank you for letting
10 me speak.

11 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: We thank
12 you, and we thank you are here, thank you
13 that you are here, that you took
14 advantage of the resources that were
15 available and that you stayed with it.
16 We continue to encourage you to keep it
17 up and keep going forward and work with
18 your daughter. I think it's a great
19 story.

20 MR. FLEMING: Thank you very
21 much.

22 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: And I
23 appreciate it very much.

24 Mr. Froehlich, you want to add
25 something?

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2 MR. FROEHLICH: Thanks so much.

3 You can stay if you'd like.

4 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: That's a
5 good team right there.

6 MR. FROEHLICH: My name is
7 Michael Froehlich. I'm a staff attorney
8 with Community Legal Services. I've
9 submitted my testimony and so I'll
10 summarize.

11 I wanted to quickly recognize
12 earlier today there were about 150 folks
13 from the One Day At a Time program that
14 were here. They had to leave earlier.
15 There were dozens of people who are
16 associated with the Northeast Treatment
17 Center that had to leave, and Sonya
18 Mendelovich, who is in the gallery here,
19 has been instrumental in working with
20 folks.

21 A number of organizations have
22 come together and organizing around the
23 General Assistance program. We have a
24 website at pacareshforall.org. That's
25 pacareshforall.org where you can find more

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2 information about how to contact your
3 legislators, the Governor, media reports
4 and other information about who is
5 receiving General Assistance and who
6 would be most affected by the
7 elimination.

8 I want to say two things --
9 sorry; three things.

10 Number one, it's really great
11 to hear that General Assistance is being
12 talked about so much today, because it
13 really isn't being talked about in
14 Harrisburg. The human services cuts, the
15 education cuts are all being talked
16 about, but I don't think GA is being
17 talked about enough.

18 If the basic ed cut -- basic ed
19 cuts to Philadelphia are about \$20
20 million. Like Temple University cuts are
21 at \$40 million. The human services cuts,
22 \$42 million. But just the General
23 Assistance cash alone is at like \$86
24 million. It dwarfs the other cuts. All
25 of these programs are important and

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2 critical, but when you talk about the
3 General Assistance program, it dwarfs the
4 other stuff.

5 I'm a legal aide lawyer and I'm
6 an advocate and I'm proud to be a legal
7 aide lawyer and an advocate, but I'm also
8 a taxpayer and I live out in West Philly.
9 And I pay my taxes from my employment,
10 and it offends me as a taxpayer to see
11 the waste that would happen if you
12 eliminated General Assistance. The
13 Governor says cut GA, we'll save \$150
14 million, but it's like 205 bucks a month.
15 And you cut GA, the cost of the shelter
16 system is a thousand dollars a month.
17 God forbid crime increases. Cost for
18 incarceration is \$3,000 a month. So the
19 General Assistance program, aside from
20 being a lifeline for so many people, is
21 also one of the most efficient and cheap
22 programs that we have to deal with this
23 problem.

24 Finally, and worse of all, it
25 doesn't have to be this way. I think

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2 that's the craziest thing about this
3 whole day, is people have come up and
4 talked about all the cuts and what
5 they're going to mean, and it doesn't
6 have to be this way. And we don't have
7 to raise taxes to save all these critical
8 programs. If we just delay the planned
9 tax cuts and we close the corporate tax
10 loopholes, we can save the General
11 Assistance program, we can save the human
12 services programs, and we can save our
13 basic ed and our colleges. And I think
14 that that's a message that certainly
15 people in Harrisburg need to hear and are
16 starting to hear, and we need make sure
17 that they do hear.

18 So thank so much for
19 considering my testimony, and my
20 submitted testimony has more information
21 in it.

22 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you
23 very much. We certainly appreciate your
24 time. We appreciate your testimony. We
25 certainly appreciate your story, and

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2 thank you for the work you're doing in
3 the community. And we will see where we
4 go from here. Councilwoman and I will
5 talk, kind of figure out what is our
6 strategy. We're certainly -- I'm in
7 communication with my State Rep every
8 day. I listen to this every day,
9 because, you know, we talk about what's
10 going on in Harrisburg. And so we'll get
11 together and kind of figure out what we
12 can do to help. Thank you.

13 Anyone else here to testify?
14 (No response.)

15 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: There
16 being no further testimony, this
17 Committee will stand in recess until the
18 call of the Chair.

19 Thank you.

20 (Committee on Public Health and
21 Human Services recessed at 3:00 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 on March 20, 2012, and that
this is a true and correct transcript of same.

MICHELE L. MURPHY
RPR-Notary Public

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