

Committee on Labor and Civil Service
October 14, 2020

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND CIVIL SERVICE

Remote location using Microsoft® Teams
Wednesday, October 14, 2020
1:00 p.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILWOMAN CHERELLE PARKER, CHAIR
COUNCILMAN BRIAN O'NEILL, VICE-CHAIR
COUNCILMAN ALLAN DOMB
COUNCILWOMAN KATHERINE GILMORE RICHARDSON
COUNCILMAN DEREK S. GREEN
COUNCILWOMAN HELEN GYM
COUNCILMAN CURTIS JONES, JR.
COUNCILMAN ISAIAH THOMAS

RESOLUTION: 200098

1 - - -

2 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Good
3 afternoon, everyone. I understand that
4 state law currently requires that the
5 following announcement be made at the
6 beginning of every remote public hearing
7 as follows: Due to the current public
8 health emergency, City Council
9 Committees are currently meeting
10 remotely. We are using Microsoft Teams
11 to make these remote hearings possible.

12 Instructions for how the public
13 may view and offer public testimony at
14 public hearings of Council Committees
15 are included in the public hearing
16 notices that are published in the Daily
17 News, Inquirer and Legal Intelligencer
18 prior to the hearings and can also be
19 found on phlcouncil.com. I now note
20 that the hour has come.

21 Rachel, will you please call
22 the roll to take attendance.

23 Members that are in attendance
24 will please indicate that you are
25 present when your name is called. Also,

1 just say a few brief words when
2 responding so that your image will be
3 displayed on the screen when you speak.

4 THE CLERK: Councilmember Allan
5 Domb.

6 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Good
7 afternoon, Madam Chair, colleagues and
8 the listening public.

9 THE CLERK: Councilmember Derek
10 Green.

11 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Good
12 afternoon, Madam Chair, Council
13 colleagues, general public. Looking
14 forward to today's conversation.

15 THE CLERK: Councilmember Helen
16 Gym.

17 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Good
18 morning. Good morning, colleagues.
19 Good morning to the listening public.

20 THE CLERK: Councilmember
21 Katherine Gilmore Richardson.

22 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE
23 RICHARDSON: Good afternoon. Thank you,
24 Madam Chair and Council colleagues and
25 all who are logged in for this hearing.

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1 Thank you so much.

2 THE CLERK: And, Councilmember
3 Isaiah Thomas.

4 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Good
5 afternoon, Madam Chair. Good afternoon,
6 colleagues. Happy to be here.

7 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: That was
8 it, Rachel?

9 THE CLERK: Yes.
10 Councilmembers Brian O'Neill and Maria
11 Sanchez are not in attendance right now.

12 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Okay.
13 Thank you. A quorum of the Committee is
14 present and this hearing is now called
15 to order. This is the public hearing of
16 the Committee on Labor and Civil Service
17 on Resolution No. 200098.

18 Rachel, will you please read
19 the title of the resolution.

20 THE CLERK: 200098, a
21 Resolution authorizing the Committee on
22 Labor and Civil Service to hold hearings
23 regarding the safety and well-being of
24 workers in the Sanitation Division of
25 the Streets Department.

1 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Before we
2 begin to hear testimony from the
3 witnesses we have for today, everyone
4 who has been invited to the meeting to
5 testify should be aware that this public
6 hearing is being recorded. Because the
7 hearing is public, participants and
8 viewers have no reasonable expectation
9 of privacy. By continuing to be in the
10 meeting, you are consenting to being
11 recorded.

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

22 Before I ask Rachel to call up
23 the first panel for Resolution
24 No. 200098, I have a few opening
25 comments that I would like to make. Let

1 me just note for the record that this
2 Resolution No. 200098, I introduced this
3 on January 30, 2020.

4 For the benefit of the public I
5 want to say that again. I introduced
6 this resolution on January 30, 2020
7 before most of us even knew what the
8 coronavirus was and had no idea what
9 COVID-19 meant. Indeed, if you read the
10 entire text of this resolution, there is
11 not one single mention of COVID-19. But
12 there is a mention of other hazards that
13 sanitation workers face each and every
14 day on the job, and that is important
15 for me to note for the record because I
16 want to note that we were not sort of
17 responding with emotions simply because
18 of the moment and/or because of COVID
19 and a crisis came. This was pre all of
20 that.

21 These hazards range from
22 extreme, such as the use of needles and
23 feces to the more common, such as
24 exhaust fumes and weather. Part of the
25 impetus for this hearing was in October

1 2019 I read an article that was written
2 by WHYY, and it highlighted some of the
3 hazardous conditions faced by many
4 sanitation employees. The article said
5 that the City provides sanitation
6 workers with certain protective gear,
7 but the gear the City provides is viewed
8 as low quality and often ineffective.

9 Another reason for this hearing
10 is that I met with some constituents of
11 mine who are sanitation employees. To
12 them, working on a trash truck was a
13 good job, one with reliable hours, good
14 pay and benefits. And one that I know
15 of on a personal note because before I
16 was born as often stated in my family, I
17 had an Uncle Jimmy and Uncle Lonzo who
18 were both employees of the Sanitation
19 Department, and listening to my
20 grandmother and matriarchs of my family
21 talk with them and their work with the
22 City in this capacity, it was done with
23 great pride and joy because they had the
24 ability to achieve self-sufficiency.

25 When I talk with my

1 constituency, all of my constituents who
2 talked with me about this issue after
3 reading the article, they also talked
4 about the job being able to put them on
5 a path to family-sustaining livelihood.
6 And obviously, since I introduced the
7 resolution, COVID-19 has upended every
8 sense of normal that we once knew. And
9 with that said, the trash still has to
10 be picked up, albeit with some delays,
11 many of which were out of the control of
12 sanitation workers. But suffice it to
13 say, our sanitation employees are still
14 out there working day in and day out,
15 through rain and sleet and snow in
16 100-plus degree days all with the threat
17 of COVID-19 looming over them. And,
18 yes, COVID is certainly a hazard to them
19 right now, maybe even the biggest
20 hazard. But once COVID is gone and we
21 have a vaccine, there will still be
22 other hazards remaining.

23 My hope is that this hearing is
24 what we can use to begin exploring what
25 it may mean for our sanitation workers

1 to get some sort of environmental stress
2 pay or exposure pay for the difficult
3 job that they do. Before we get
4 started, I want to reiterate something
5 that my resolution says.

6 And I want to state this for
7 the record. Mayor Jim Kenney should be
8 commended for remaining committed to
9 keeping our City clean. Street
10 Commissioner Carlton Williams should be
11 acknowledged for advancing the
12 Department in meeting its critical goals
13 with the resources his Department has
14 been given.

15 With that being said, and again
16 I need you all to know this because we
17 want to be a straight shooter, whenever
18 I talk with members in the Department,
19 who work in the Sanitation Department,
20 when I talk to the leadership Salaam
21 and Charles Carrington, I was very clear
22 that I did not want this hearing to turn
23 into any sort of blame game where we're
24 sort of just pointing fingers about who
25 didn't do what, because I will referee

1 if I have to do that.

2 Instead I want this to be a
3 hearing that gives Council the
4 opportunity as well as the public at
5 large to learn more about the job that
6 our sanitation workers do and they do it
7 well, as well as the potential hazards
8 they face each day and how we as a City
9 must come up with a financial tool, a
10 vehicle that will help us provide the
11 environmental stress pay, exposure pay,
12 hazard pay that our workers deserve.

13 With that in mind, I'm going to
14 ask Rachel to please call the first
15 panel.

16 THE CLERK: Carlton Williams,
17 Keith Warren and Christopher Newman.

18 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Good
19 afternoon, Chairperson Parker and
20 members of the Labor and Civil Service
21 Committee. My name is Carlton Williams,
22 Commissioner of the Department of
23 Streets. I'm here to offer the
24 following testimony on Resolution 200098
25 sponsored by Councilmember Parker. I am

1 joined today by Deputy Commissioner for
2 Sanitation Keith Warren and Deputy
3 Commissioner for Administration
4 Christopher Newman.

5 As you all well know and as was
6 pointed out by Councilmember Parker,
7 with the COVID outbreak the Department
8 of Streets has been challenged with
9 delivering its core services, including
10 the collection of curbside trash and
11 recycling. Increased household tonnage
12 from residents staying at home as well
13 as staff attendance issues cause longer
14 than usual delays to our collection
15 cycle in the Sanitation Division.

16 Throughout the course of the
17 pandemic, our sanitation workers have
18 continued to serve the City on the front
19 lines. Their health and safety remain a
20 top priority for the Department. Prior
21 to the pandemic, the Department
22 distributed the following personal
23 protective equipment and safety gear to
24 sanitation employees in the field,
25 including steel toe boots to prevent

1 punctures from sharp objects; reflective
2 vests and clothing to optimize
3 visibility in traffic; hard hats for
4 transfer through transfer stations;
5 gloves, construction and prick-proof;
6 eyewear; face masks, disposable and
7 respiratory, provided per assignment;
8 coveralls; rain suits; hand sanitizers;
9 neoprene suits and N95 masks were given
10 to any worker assigned to special
11 collection, such as removing known
12 hazardous items like furniture infested
13 with bed bugs, or trash piles in opioid
14 encampments.

15 In order to protect the safety
16 of our employees, the Department
17 requires at a minimum the laborers and
18 drivers to wear steel toe boots, gloves,
19 reflective vests, and drivers are
20 required to wear hard hats at dump
21 sites, representing a \$209,000 cost
22 investment for FY20, not including
23 COVID-related additional purchase items
24 which total an additional \$230,000 from
25 April 2020 to present.

1 Our commitment to the
2 protective safety of our employees is
3 reflected in the Department's injury
4 statistics which show that the vast
5 majority of our employee injury claims
6 are not the result of the lack of PPE.
7 Since March 1, 2020, we have purchased
8 and distributed thousands of additional
9 PPE, items including disposable face
10 masks, reusable reinforced cloth masks,
11 face shields, hand sanitizers and other
12 disinfectants such as bleach and
13 germicide to clean trucks and other high
14 touch areas.

15 On the issue of hazardous pay,
16 we sympathize with calls to provide
17 additional pay for frontline workers who
18 continue to put their lives on the line
19 during the COVID-19 pandemic. However,
20 any proposal for hazardous pay for the
21 sanitation team or any City worker would
22 need to be supported with outside
23 funding from state or federal sources.
24 As with many other municipalities,
25 Philadelphia is facing one of the

1 greatest financial downturns the City
2 has ever seen.

3 As a reminder, the City did
4 ensure contract extensions for all four
5 municipal unions during the COVID
6 pandemic despite the financial
7 challenges we face. That one-year
8 extension provided all represented
9 employees with a percentage raise and in
10 most cases, a one-time bonus. For
11 sanitation workers specifically, they
12 received a 2 percent raise and a
13 one-time \$750 bonus.

14 In addition, all frontline
15 workers employed with the City continue
16 to be eligible for overtime per union
17 rules. All City workers have access to
18 COVID testing. There are dozens of
19 testing sites available throughout the
20 City of Philadelphia. That list has
21 been posted publicly on
22 phila.gov/testing throughout the
23 pandemic. The City's health insurance
24 covers the COVID-19 test.

25 For FY21, the City faced an

1 unprecedented budget shortfall of nearly
2 \$750 million. While the majority of the
3 deficit was closed with reductions to
4 departmental budgets not related to
5 staff, unfortunately a minimum number of
6 workers were required to be laid off.
7 There are no further cuts planned at
8 this time. We will continue to work
9 with state and federal officials to
10 bring all relevant resources to the City
11 of Philadelphia as we continue to battle
12 this pandemic.

13 Over the last 15 years, the
14 Department of Sanitation Division has
15 increased 17 percent from 94.6 million
16 in Fiscal Year 2006 to 110.9 million in
17 Fiscal Year 2021. In addition, the
18 Division's Class 100 employee
19 compensation budget has increased by 27
20 percent during the same period from 45.3
21 million to 57.5 million. However, a
22 review of actual expenditures shows that
23 overall real costs have increased
24 considerably beyond initial budgeted
25 amounts.

1 The Division's actual overall
2 expenditures have increased by 25
3 percent from 92 million in Fiscal Year
4 2006 to 114 million in Fiscal Year 2020.
5 Class 100 employee compensation cost has
6 even been more dramatic, with a
7 40-percent increase during that same
8 period, from 44.6 million in Fiscal Year
9 2006 to 62.7 million in Fiscal Year
10 2020. The notable difference generally
11 reflects the volatility experienced
12 throughout the years in overtime
13 expenditures which has risen
14 dramatically, particularly since Fiscal
15 Year 2013.

16 It is important to point out
17 that all salary increases for our
18 union-represented employees have been in
19 line with applicable collective
20 bargaining agreements. In addition, an
21 overall assessment of long-term division
22 budget increases should be reviewed in
23 the context of Sanitation's share of the
24 City's total budgetary resources
25 throughout the years, particularly

1 recent years where we have been
2 fortunate to obtain significant funding
3 increases.

4 For example, the same 15-year
5 period has shown a recent return to
6 sanitation staffing levels we have not
7 experienced since Fiscal Year 2006, from
8 an average staff count of 1,236 that
9 fiscal year to an average staff count of
10 1,255 in Fiscal Year 2020. During the
11 economic downturn of the Great
12 Recession, we experienced a decline in
13 staffing from Fiscal Year 2008 until
14 Fiscal Year 2010, where thereafter we
15 consistently averaged between 1,150 and
16 1,160 sanitation employees, with the
17 only notable exception during Fiscal
18 Year 2015 when we averaged 1,140
19 employees because we did not have enough
20 compactors to staff crews.

21 The recent resurgence of
22 increased sanitation staffing is a
23 significant achievement as it
24 demonstrates the Administration's
25 commitment to sanitation operations,

1 including an effort to return to a more
2 comprehensive street cleaning
3 operations. To date, this Fiscal Year,
4 FY2020, for example, we have 1,265 full-
5 time sanitation employees and 150
6 temporary employees for a total of 1,390
7 employees. The current staffing levels
8 allow us to better meet our goals for
9 on-time collections as we enter the
10 seventh month of this pandemic and
11 collect trash and recycling tonnages
12 averaging 30 percent more than the
13 previous year.

14 To date, budget cuts as a
15 result of the pandemic have not impacted
16 citywide curbside collections. Citywide
17 mechanical sweeping, however, has been
18 eliminated over the next five years.
19 Our commercial corridor cleaning program
20 remains in place. We will continue to
21 utilize our existing resources and
22 partnership strategies with other
23 agencies to improve litter conditions
24 across the City. Thank you for the
25 opportunity to testify and I'll be happy

1 to -- me and my staff will be happy to
2 answer any questions that you may have
3 at this time.

4 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Thank
5 you, Commissioner Williams.

6 And I just for the record want
7 Keith Warren, because we just want to
8 make sure that we can hear them, Keith
9 Warren, Deputy Streets Commissioner of
10 Sanitation, Keith, can you just say
11 something so that we can see you.

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WARREN:
13 Hello (inaudible).

14 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: All
15 right. Hi, Keith.

16 And Christopher Newman, Deputy
17 Streets Commissioner for the
18 Administration, are you on, Christopher?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN:
20 Yes, I am. Good afternoon.

21 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Okay.
22 All right. I just wanted to make sure
23 we can get you all on.

24 I also need to note for the
25 record that Council Majority Whip Curtis

1 Jones is on and is ultra concerned about
2 this issue. So thank you, Councilmember
3 Jones, for joining us here today.

4 Commissioner, I want --

5 COUNCILMAN O'NEILL: It's
6 Councilman Brian O'Neill. I just wanted
7 to let you know I'm on. I had some
8 technical difficulties.

9 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Thank you
10 so much, Councilmember O'Neill. We
11 appreciate you being here. Councilman
12 O'Neill, just for the record, is the
13 Vice-Chair of the Council Committee on
14 Labor and Civil Service. So thank you,
15 Councilman O'Neill.

16 COUNCILMAN O'NEILL: Thank you.

17 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER:
18 Commissioner, I am looking at your
19 testimony and I just want to start here,
20 you say that prior to the pandemic, the
21 Department distributed the following PPE
22 and safety gear to sanitation employees
23 in the field: You talked about the
24 boots, the vest, the clothing, the hard
25 hats, the gloves, the eyewear, the face

1 masks, the coveralls, the rain suits,
2 the hand sanitizers, the neoprene
3 suits -- did I say that right, neoprene
4 suits?

5 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yes.

6 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Neoprene
7 suits, the N95 masks were given to any
8 worker assigned to special collection,
9 such as removing hazardous items like
10 furniture infested with bed bugs or
11 trash piles in opioid encampments. Can
12 you please just clarify for me did you
13 provide all of this protective gear
14 before COVID was in existence?

15 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: That's
16 correct, Councilperson Parker. That was
17 before COVID. That was offered as our
18 standard uniform issuance. Certain
19 items because of the jobs that were
20 mentioned earlier, like the opioid
21 encampments where there is a possibility
22 of even more hazards by picking up
23 needles, or there's an opportunity for
24 the mechanical sweeping program with the
25 increased dust that was generated, we

1 got additional equipment. But the
2 standard gear that you see and have in
3 front of you is what we offered to all
4 of our employees that joined the
5 Department.

6 We also give an allocation each
7 year of \$200,000 to ensure that any of
8 those items that are damaged, replaced
9 or just wear and tear can be replaced at
10 the request of the employees in the
11 Department at any time throughout the
12 year.

13 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Let me
14 ask you, did you also provide all of
15 this gear once COVID-19 hit in March
16 2020? So you just acknowledged that
17 this was the gear you issued pre-COVID
18 and once COVID hit, this was the gear
19 that you issued; is that correct?

20 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: That's
21 correct. So the gear that you have is
22 standard for all employees. When COVID
23 hit, we invested in another 230,000 in
24 additional equipment, and that included
25 the protective face shields, the

1 additional hand sanitizer, the masks,
2 several types of masks. We were limited
3 in being able to get masks in
4 competition with other essential service
5 agencies in terms of N95 masks that we
6 tried to get in. But we tried to get as
7 much of that equipment to our employees
8 as quickly as possible during the
9 pandemic.

10 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: So let me
11 ask you this, I appreciate in your
12 testimony you're empathizing with calls
13 to provide additional pay for our
14 frontline workers who continue to put
15 their lives on the line during this
16 COVID-19 pandemic. With this being said
17 let me ask you, are you aware of any
18 other municipalities in the nation that
19 have provided some sort of hazard pay to
20 sanitation workers, either pre-COVID or
21 post-COVID? What other municipalities
22 provide hazard pay?

23 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Prior
24 to COVID, I do not know and we will have
25 to look into what other municipalities

1 have. Chris Newman, my Deputy
2 Commissioner of Sanitation, does have
3 comparable salary data that shows the
4 equivalent to our employees and will
5 testify that it's on par with other
6 municipalities around the country. I
7 don't know if that includes an
8 additional hazard pay package, so that's
9 something that we would have to look at
10 prior to COVID.

11 During COVID, after or
12 post-COVID when the pandemic or at
13 present COVID situations, there have
14 been municipalities that offered some
15 kind of incentive-based hazardous pay
16 for municipalities in some areas. I
17 know the City of Atlanta looked into it.
18 I know the city of Baltimore also was
19 looking into it as well.

20 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Let me
21 just ask for the record that your
22 office, if you could provide that
23 information to us and if you could do it
24 with comparable municipalities, right,
25 because we literally want to compare

1 apples to apples and if your Department
2 would be able to give us that
3 information so we can distribute that to
4 members of Council, that will be
5 extremely helpful in helping us to
6 inform our future decision-making.

7 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

8 Absolutely.

9 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Let me
10 also ask you to give me some details
11 relative to the layoffs that occurred
12 due to COVID-19 budget cuts, right.
13 Were they Streets Department employees
14 in general or sanitation employees in
15 particular? Were the employees
16 unionized or were they the exempt-nonrep
17 employees and how many sanitation
18 employees in total were laid off?

19 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Sure.
20 I'm going to also bring in Chris Newman
21 for the exact numbers. I can tell you
22 that some of the programs that were near
23 and dear to the City and to sanitation
24 was cut, like Future Track. That was a
25 program that employed at least 40 people

1 throughout the year that gave them a
2 pathway into the Streets Department,
3 whether it was sanitation or whether it
4 was in highway or other transportation
5 opportunities. But most of the jobs
6 actually were external to sanitation and
7 sanitation did not get the number of
8 cuts that the rest of the Department had
9 to endure. So I will allow Chris Newman
10 to give you the details and specifics.

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN:

12 Yes. Thank you, Commissioner. We laid
13 off about 15 Future Trackers. They were
14 the remaining Future Trackers that were
15 in our program at that time, and we did
16 have some interns. They were mostly
17 engineering interns that we also let go.
18 I believe there was about six to nine of
19 them at the time and that was it.

20 So no Civil Service employees,
21 Councilwoman.

22 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Okay.

23 Again, it's important that we get all of
24 this on the record now. And again, when
25 I think about when we -- and I'm being

1 intentional I want you to know, so that
2 folks know this is not sort of
3 post-COVID-piling. We are not
4 Johnny-come-lately to being concerned
5 about hazard pay for sanitation workers.
6 And so, the data that you're providing
7 now, particularly relative to those who
8 were laid off, just acknowledging that
9 they work for interns in the Engineering
10 department, the public didn't know that.
11 I know I didn't know that. When you
12 talked about that being 15 Future
13 Trackers, I didn't know that either. So
14 that informs our thinking as well.

15 The last area -- I'm looking in
16 the chat box for my colleagues to note
17 when they're interested in asking some
18 questions -- I want to just correct your
19 testimony just a little bit here. When
20 you speak to the increase in spending in
21 the Streets Department since 2006, now
22 as my resolution said according to an
23 analysis conducted by the City Council's
24 technical staff, that's our tech staff,
25 and adjusting for inflation, funding for

1 the Streets Department, and specifically
2 it's Sanitation Division, has been in
3 essence effectively flat for at least
4 the past 15 years.

5 Now, it appears, Commissioner,
6 that your testimony did not take into
7 account inflation when reporting the
8 spending figures. So I just want to go
9 through these because I had my office to
10 run some numbers and here is what they
11 found: They used an inflation
12 calculator on usinflationcalculator.com
13 and found \$94.6 million in 2006 would be
14 \$122.14 million in 2020. So if spending
15 in FY21 is 110.9 million, that's
16 actually less than flat-funded as
17 compared to 2006.

18 In addition to that, when we
19 used the \$45.3 million in 2006 spending,
20 that will be \$58.49 million in 2020.
21 That is effectively flat-funded as
22 compared to 2006. And I can go on with
23 all of those numbers that you gave,
24 Commissioner. I guess you see where I'm
25 going. You're reporting them, but we

1 did not adjust for inflation in those
2 numbers.

3 So for my colleagues, even when
4 we look at Class 100 employee
5 compensation cost increase, they haven't
6 actually been that steep, because if we
7 look at this 44.6 million in 2006
8 dollars, that's actually 57.6 million in
9 2020 dollars. If the actual spend was
10 62.7 million in Fiscal Year '20, that is
11 just over an 8 percent increase in
12 salary as compared to Fiscal Year '06,
13 and that's not a 40 percent increase.
14 An 8 percent increase in salary cost
15 over 15 years does not seem to be
16 extreme to me, particularly if we added
17 19 jobs, including cost of living
18 increases.

19 So again, Commissioner, I
20 appreciate your putting that on the
21 record. But depending on if you adjust
22 for inflation, those numbers would move.
23 The next thing, the hazards. Your
24 testimony speaks extensively to hazards
25 of COVID-19, but less to other hazards

1 that sanitation workers face.

2 In my opening comments, when I
3 first met with Charles Carrington and
4 Omar and talked to the leadership at 33,
5 we were talking about the hazards that
6 were there pre-COVID. What would you
7 say are the biggest hazards besides
8 COVID? Besides COVID when -- because
9 that is when I introduced this. So I
10 want to give that some comment because
11 COVID has only further exacerbated that.

12 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Thank
13 you, Councilperson Parker, for your
14 comments.

15 First of all, I want to say for
16 the record you're correct, we did not --
17 our budget is not adjusted according to
18 inflationary numbers and our budget
19 office can answer those questions in
20 reference to how our budget is allocated
21 in respect to other City agencies in
22 entirety, so that's basically how we
23 came up with our numbers. That
24 differentiates to what you stated
25 earlier, so you're absolutely correct in

1 those areas. I just wanted to
2 acknowledge that.

3 Secondly, in terms of the
4 biggest hazards our employees face each
5 day, it's the type of material and the
6 amount of material that they collect on
7 a daily basis. If you get in touch with
8 the City's Risk Management Division,
9 they can give you the number of injuries
10 which we think is an indicator of how
11 our employees are impacted each and
12 every day, and the biggest threat to our
13 workers is the weight and amount of
14 material that they collect on a daily
15 basis.

16 It's not so much the PPE.
17 While that is a critical, important
18 component, the data that we see suggests
19 that the way our employees handle
20 material and the way people set out
21 their trash and the amount of material
22 causes further injuries than injuries
23 related to PPE. So I would say that is
24 a big concern to us, because those
25 injuries are severe. Normally they're

1 back injuries, they're long-term
2 injuries and these injuries are
3 definitely threats to their long-term
4 health and viability. And so, we want
5 to make sure that those things are
6 addressed.

7 I am not minimizing the fact
8 that those other hazards do exist. The
9 needles that are out there that they're
10 constantly picking up, the type of
11 debris and the hazardous material that
12 people place out in trash is also a big
13 issue for our workers. But the biggest
14 impact that we have is injuries to our
15 employees while doing the work out
16 there.

17 I just want to say for the
18 record it is an extremely dangerous job.
19 I was out there again this summer
20 working with our guys, throwing trash.
21 I experienced some of the challenges
22 that they face. And I can tell you that
23 it was very grueling in the hot summer
24 months where they're out there working
25 each and every day. So I appreciate you

1 having this hearing to discuss it and
2 coming up with ways that we can address
3 and keep our employees safe for the
4 benefit of everybody, including our
5 workers.

6 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Thank
7 you, Commissioner.

8 Our next question comes from
9 Councilmember Katherine Gilmore
10 Richardson.

11 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE
12 RICHARDSON: Thank you so much, Madam
13 Chair.

14 And thank you, Commissioner
15 Williams and Deputy Commissioner Warren
16 and all of the sanitation workers who
17 are represented on the call.
18 Carrington, it's so good to see you and
19 Mr. Salaam.

20 I just wanted to ask for the
21 record about the steel toe boots. You
22 mentioned that each year each sanitation
23 worker receives a voucher for steel toe
24 boots?

25 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: That's

1 correct.

2 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

3 RICHARDSON: Okay. And do we have a
4 figure on how much it would be to
5 provide them with a second steel toe
6 boot voucher? I just wanted to get that
7 on the record. I know that I sent that
8 communication to the Administration, but
9 I wanted to get that on the record for
10 the hearing --

11 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: I --

12 COUNCILWOMAN KATHERINE GILMORE

13 RICHARDSON: Commissioner?

14 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: I'm
15 sorry. We were going in and out, a
16 little technical --

17 COUNCILWOMAN KATHERINE GILMORE

18 RICHARDSON: Oh, okay. My apologies. I
19 wanted to make sure you can hear me
20 because I'm in City Hall, so the Wi-Fi.
21 But at any rate, I wanted to get that on
22 the record because I had an opportunity
23 to go out with a sanitation crew over
24 the summer and see the arduous work that
25 they are undertaking, particularly in

1 this moment but even prior to COVID as
2 the Resolution sponsor has stated.

3 And, Madam Majority Leader, I
4 just want to commend you for the
5 timeliness of this resolution that was
6 introduced before COVID and before we
7 knew of the challenges that we would be
8 facing, so thank you for your work.

9 But, Mr. Commissioner, I just
10 wanted to know a figure of how much it
11 would be to provide a second boot
12 voucher for the workers, knowing that a
13 number of them have been working longer
14 hours and more days as a result of
15 what's happening around COVID.

16 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Sure.
17 I'm going to turn that one over to
18 Deputy Commissioner Chris Newman to talk
19 about the cost. They handle our budget
20 for the Department.

21 So, Deputy Commissioner Newman
22 or Warren, feel free to respond to
23 Councilperson Gilmore Richardson.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN:
25 Councilperson Richardson, I would

1 estimate -- and I would have to get you
2 a specific cost -- that it wouldn't be
3 that much of an impact on our budget.
4 Because of the size of our budget, it
5 probably would be somewhere between
6 \$10,000 to \$18,000 total for the year.

7 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

8 RICHARDSON: Okay. Thank you so much,
9 Mr. Newman, for that information. And
10 thank you all for your service.

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN:

12 Thank you.

13 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Thank
14 you, Council Lady.

15 The Chair recognizes
16 Councilwoman Helen Gym. Councilwoman.

17 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
18 very much, Madam Chair.

19 And good afternoon,
20 Commissioner. I also want to share all
21 of our colleagues in saying and
22 expressing gratitude for all the work
23 that you've been doing. This has been
24 incredibly difficult times and I know
25 how important it is to our entire City

1 that your department be at the top of
2 our priority list, so thank you very
3 much.

4 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Thank
5 you.

6 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: One of my
7 questions was about whether the
8 Department requires its workers to wear
9 a mask. I did not see it on the list of
10 required gear like steel-toed boots and
11 things like that.

12 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Prior
13 to the pandemic, it was not a
14 requirement. After the pandemic,
15 obviously that raised a level of
16 concerns about health and safety, not
17 only for our employees but for other
18 members in the Department. So, yes, it
19 was a requirement after COVID-19 hit in
20 March 2020.

21 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And these
22 are masks that the Department provides
23 to all of its workers?

24 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: That's
25 correct. Mainly sanitation workers,

1 those are the masks that we provide.
2 And specifically, the additional mask
3 was after COVID-19.

4 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Do you
5 standardize the type of mask that they
6 wear? Is it a N95 or a certain type?
7 Just because they are one that's very
8 exposed to a lot of things, they are out
9 obviously a lot, so is there a quality
10 to the type of mask that you can
11 guarantee that the Department provides
12 directly to them?

13 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: So
14 that's a good question. The N95 masks
15 that we purchased in the very beginning
16 became very limited in quantity because
17 of the demand, especially around
18 hospitals and other emergency response
19 personnel. So we tried to get an
20 equivalent or something that was at
21 least equal in value or close to it as
22 possible to keep our employees safe.
23 Because it wasn't available, it made it
24 very difficult for us to obtain and
25 achieve, but we did our best through

1 Procurement to procure as many masks as
2 we possibly could that was high in
3 quality.

4 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: I know that
5 that was one of the issues that gets
6 raised in part because -- all of us are
7 wearing masks, right. And I think we
8 all and I am also learning what a
9 difference it is to be able to have a
10 mask that gives you enough space to be
11 able to breathe and do your work and
12 speak articulately and clearly and ones
13 that just kind of cover your face, you
14 know, there's a big difference in terms
15 of the ability, especially when you're
16 doing strenuous work. They're doing
17 heavy lifting and breathing in a lot.

18 So one of the concerns has been
19 that if they have a low-quality mask, it
20 makes it almost impossible to do the
21 work, because you're just -- I've talked
22 to a lot of folks and I know a lot of my
23 colleagues have gone out already and
24 just talked about the physical exertion
25 of it makes the quality of the mask

1 really important. And is that something
2 that you might be presenting to either
3 the Administration or to Council as one
4 of the priority areas for you?

5 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yes.
6 We continuously have to look at all
7 types of masks, even the most
8 high-quality masks like the N95s. Many
9 of our employees complained about the
10 difficulty it was to wear them and to do
11 that work, especially in temperatures
12 that exceeded nearly 100 degrees at
13 times, so it made it very hard for them
14 to breathe just to do their jobs on a
15 daily basis.

16 So I think we need to continue
17 to explore what is the best type of mask
18 to give to a worker in this type of
19 environment. It may work well for
20 medics and doctors, but it may not work
21 well for someone who's out there
22 throwing 15 or 16 tons of trash in
23 100-degree heat every day. It may pose
24 as an additional health problem for
25 people who may have breathing

1 emergencies or heart conditions, where
2 they can't get enough air, it may cause
3 them difficulty breathing. So I think
4 we need to continue to explore the
5 products that are out there that will
6 best suit our employees in this type of
7 environment for the work that they do.

8 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Okay. And
9 how many sanitation workers in your
10 department have tested positive for
11 COVID?

12 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Chris
13 Newman has the details on the numbers
14 since the pandemic began and he can
15 provide that for you.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN:
17 Sure. Thank you. Councilperson, since
18 the pandemic began in March, we've had
19 86 sanitation employees test positive
20 for COVID.

21 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And what
22 percentage of your workers would that
23 be?

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN: So
25 if we did a percentage, that would be

1 about --

2 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Or even if
3 you told me what your total workforce
4 is, that would be clear.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN: It
6 will be less than 1 percent, .06
7 percent.

8 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Okay. And
9 does everyone have access to testing
10 through your department who request it
11 or do they have to kind of be part of
12 this, you know, they have to find their
13 own testing site or do you offer it?

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN: We
15 don't offer testing. They would have to
16 find their own testing site for that.

17 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Okay. All
18 right.

19 Well, thank you very much,
20 Madam Chair. I may have further
21 questions later.

22 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Thank
23 you, Councilmember Gym.

24 And listen, as we proceed with
25 this hearing and I want to again state

1 this for the record, our goal here,
2 Commissioner Williams, and for all
3 workers from the Sanitation Department
4 to the leadership, the Union leadership,
5 to District Council 33's leadership, our
6 goal here was to get the daily
7 challenges that sanitation workers faced
8 on the record so that we could make the
9 case through data, research along with
10 both the quantitative and qualitative
11 analysis to affirm that they are
12 deserving of some form of hazard pay or
13 environmental stress pay and it was
14 pre-COVID. This was not for us to point
15 fingers here.

16 Commissioner Williams, let me
17 say this specifically to you and your
18 team, if there was any City department
19 that caught hell and is catching hell
20 post-COVID, it has been the Streets
21 Department. We know that you have done
22 your best. One minute somebody is
23 posting a picture on Facebook recording
24 what looks like tons and tons of trash
25 that are being short-dumped in

1 neighborhoods across the City. All of
2 the District Councilmembers I know and
3 some At-Large are texting and calling
4 you saying, this has got to be cleaned
5 up, rodents are everywhere. Your team
6 is responding. Our sanitation workers
7 are out there. So we want to say a
8 special thank you to you, your team and
9 all of the workers and we'll hear from
10 them in a second.

11 Are there any other questions
12 for this panel from my colleagues?

13 (No response.)

14 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Seeing
15 none, we're going to ask that you all
16 please stay around, don't leave us.
17 There's just no more questions right
18 now.

19 And with that being said, we're
20 going to ask Rachel to please call the
21 next panel scheduled to testify this
22 afternoon on Resolution 200098.

23 THE CLERK: We have Charles
24 Carrington, Omar Salaam, Shyketa
25 Armstead and Edna Sturgis. And I wanted

1 to ask Mr. Carrington if you would like
2 Mr. Salaam to go first since I know his
3 phone may die.

4 MR. CARRINGTON: Yes, that's
5 fine.

6 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Okay. So
7 listen, before you all begin your
8 testimony, I want to say to you,
9 Charles, and to you, Omar, when I think
10 back to that conversation on that second
11 floor in the back room of that cluttered
12 room with all of those boxes sitting at
13 that table, there weren't any cameras
14 there. We weren't on social media.
15 COVID wasn't around. But we had a
16 chance to have a discussion about the
17 hazards that sanitation workers were
18 facing on a daily basis.

19 I committed to you during that
20 time we would make sure we bring that
21 issue to light for all Councilmembers
22 and the public to be made aware of.
23 Unfortunately, COVID further exacerbated
24 those hazards and that brings us here
25 today. So I want to say a special thank

1 you to you, Charles and Omar, for what
2 you shared during that time and ask you
3 all to proceed with your testimony.

4 Omar, you are scheduled to go
5 first.

6 MR. SALAAM: Good afternoon,
7 everybody. Thank you for having us.
8 Thank you for having this forum. Just
9 to go to what Councilwoman Parker
10 started off, I think you gave a great
11 backstory of what was happening. And we
12 did have this conversation about
13 hazardous situations prior to COVID
14 because the job has always been
15 hazardous. I think two things that
16 COVID showed us was that it brought
17 forth a lot of issues with the
18 Sanitation Department as well as other
19 divisions were having, but it also
20 showed us that we need to work together
21 and for this to be a collective effort.

22 And I will say that even though
23 it might have been some trials and
24 tribulations, some tough times, the City
25 has responded better as far as some of

1 the ways they have addressed some of the
2 issues with COVID. But again to go back
3 to my original statement, this issue
4 goes way beyond COVID. That article
5 that Councilwoman Parker quoted was
6 actually an interview that I did, which
7 we did an interview based off of what
8 was going on down in Kensington as far
9 as what was happening with the opioid
10 crisis.

11 And one of the things we talked
12 about an example of was equipment and
13 how it can be important. Well, the
14 Commissioner and the Administration
15 stated about giving out gloves and
16 providing people gloves. Well, part of
17 the issue was that the City was actually
18 providing what was called slice-proof
19 gloves. What those guys needed at the
20 time is called puncture-proof gloves so
21 it's a slight difference. Because the
22 reality of it is if you're out there
23 picking up a needle, a needle that can
24 potentially be infected with anything
25 from tuberculosis to HIV or whatever it

1 is, that needle isn't going to slice
2 you. It's going to prick you. So we
3 need to actually have something like
4 what's considered to be a prick-proof
5 glove.

6 As far as the boots and as far
7 uniforms go, from my understanding I
8 think the boot trucks come around once,
9 maybe twice a year. Guys are given
10 three coveralls, two undershirts. Then
11 during the entire year during the time
12 they have these uniforms, they're
13 expected to take these dirty
14 contaminated uniforms home in the same
15 washing machine that they wash their
16 kids and their family's clothes with and
17 maintain them and keep them clean.

18 One of the questions or one of
19 the things that was answered or was
20 asked was, what was one of the most --
21 the first type of hazard that employees
22 face. Well, one of the things is the
23 trucks, if you look at the fumes that
24 the trucks breathe off or are sent out.
25 When I started 21 years ago, the trucks

1 were ran off of diesel fuel.

2 Now, they're ran off of what's
3 considered to be a biodiesel fuel, which
4 is better for the environment but it's
5 also more combustibile. Meaning, there's
6 a higher possibility that there can be
7 an explosion based off of the truck.
8 That's why if you look at our new trucks
9 they actually have an idling mechanism
10 whereas though if the truck idles for
11 more than 20 minutes, the truck cuts
12 off, because the longer the truck runs,
13 the more probable it is to combust.
14 That's a hazard.

15 These brakes actually leak off
16 fumes as they're running. We have a new
17 fuel that we put in these trucks, this
18 D4F, this fuel that drivers are required
19 to put in these trucks every two days,
20 which we don't know what the effects of
21 that fuel is. So before our guys even
22 go out and touch the bags, they're
23 already being officially contaminated
24 just by what they do every day with the
25 trucks.

1 And we understand it's the job
2 we took and we understand that there are
3 certain things that come with the job,
4 but we want to know that our guys are
5 safe. Because once they go out in that
6 street, now they're picking up
7 everything from feces -- we have people
8 who have health ailments at home. And
9 the City doesn't require residents to
10 separate their diapers if they have
11 someone in the house who is a cancer
12 patient or have some other types of
13 diseases. That's why a lot of our
14 trucks come up -- what we call or they
15 have radiation issues.

16 But the fact of the matter is
17 the entire time that I've been a City of
18 Philadelphia employee of 21 years, I
19 don't feel like our employees have never
20 had the proper equipment that they need
21 to do the job. Our guys are sent out
22 there regardless of the weather
23 emergency; we got to get out there.
24 We're the only department, we're the
25 only division of the City of

1 Philadelphia that flips from one job to
2 another. Meaning, we go from collecting
3 trash to picking up snow within a matter
4 of hours.

5 But if it goes to the weather
6 conditions -- I know I'm talking,
7 forgive me for talking all over the
8 place. When we go to weather
9 conditions, whether it's 100 degrees or
10 whether it's -5 degrees, we're out there
11 working rain, sleet or snow. And the
12 types of things that guys pick up on a
13 daily basis, we've listed them several
14 times. It's nothing but hazardous
15 materials that are collected in trash.
16 And we understand some part is the job.

17 We also request that the City
18 do a better job of doing what we
19 consider to be literacy, public literacy
20 as far as what they can actually put out
21 in the public, what is actually
22 considered to be trash and refuse and
23 recycling and what other things might
24 possibly need to be put to a dump or
25 sent somewhere else. I think one of the

1 biggest problems that we have is that we
2 don't do a good enough job as far as
3 educating the public as far as what they
4 can put out and what they should put
5 out.

6 We're told that our guys must
7 collect everything. We had a bed-bug
8 crisis whereas though we had guys who
9 were taking bed bugs home. The City
10 didn't pay these guys to have their
11 homes fumigated when they ran into this
12 crisis. It was something that was an
13 expense that they had to do themselves.
14 So at the end of the day, we're just
15 really asking for our employees to
16 actually be treated with some type of
17 respect and the job that they do be put
18 on that level.

19 This job, I think, is the fifth
20 most dangerous job in America behind
21 loggers, fishers and some other types of
22 jobs. Fifth most dangerous, fifth most
23 dangerous job. We have a very, very,
24 very, very low expectancy rate after
25 retirement. If our guys make it to

1 retirement, on average they're dealing
2 with about three years afterwards. I
3 can't help but believe that some of that
4 happens with the guys and with the
5 things that they come into with work.

6 If you look at the amount of
7 our guys who pass away, most of them are
8 based off of some type of cancerous
9 situation. Not all of our guys are
10 smokers. I've told this story all the
11 time. One of the hardest things I had
12 to do was go out there and bury some --
13 or speak at a guy's funeral who I really
14 considered to be a friend, a guy who was
15 a picture of health, worked out every
16 day, played semi-pro football until he
17 was about 45 years old and then out of
18 nowhere he contracts cancer and within a
19 matter of months, he's dead and gone.
20 And something that's really tough to do
21 is to stand over somebody who you love
22 and care about, somebody who you worked
23 with for 10, 15 years and you got to
24 look his family in the eye and tell them
25 it's going to be okay and nobody has the

1 answer as to how we got here.

2 And I think we need to invest
3 in more studies to find out about the
4 things that we're picking up and I just
5 think that it needs to be a more human
6 aspect that we put on of the job that
7 sanitation workers do. And I'm done.
8 That's my speech. Thank you.

9 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Thank
10 you, Omar, for your testimony. And,
11 Omar, we usually hear from the entire
12 panel but I know Rachel mentioned your
13 phone might die. And before your phone
14 dies, I just want to make sure I was
15 clear in what I heard you say.

16 Did you tell me that the trucks
17 are fueled with biodiesel fuel that is
18 more environmentally safe, but the fuel
19 in and of itself is more dangerous? I
20 just want to make sure I'm clear and I
21 want you to explain that on the record.

22 MS. SALAAM: Yes, that's
23 exactly what I'm saying. If you look at
24 the fuel that's put in the trucks, it's
25 more green. It's better for the

1 economy. But if you research like I did
2 on the side effects of biodiesel fuel,
3 the longer it runs or it's agitated, it
4 has a higher probability of becoming
5 combustible. Now, that probability is
6 very low, but it's still a possibility,
7 if that makes sense.

8 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: No, I
9 just needed you to get that on the
10 record. Because I know there is someone
11 sitting at home listening to this
12 testimony saying, wait a minute, the
13 City has moved to an environmentally
14 safer fuel but what we're hearing is
15 that it's potentially more dangerous.
16 And I know just like when I was just
17 listening I said, wait, we need to
18 understand where we were going here.
19 So, no, I appreciate you clarifying that
20 for the record.

21 Charles, are you here?

22 MR. CARRINGTON: I'm here,
23 Madam Chair.

24 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Charles,
25 please state your name for the record

1 and proceed with your testimony.

2 MR. CARRINGTON: Good
3 afternoon, Madam Chair. My name is
4 Charles Carrington, President of Local
5 427. I'm speaking to you from
6 experience when it comes to many things
7 that myself and my membership face on a
8 daily basis. Without downplaying the
9 hard work of any other essential job
10 that the many other City workers
11 perform, I want to tell you about the
12 hard work that the members of Local 427
13 provide.

14 We are constantly exposed to
15 hazardous and waste conditions on a
16 constant basis. Throughout this opioid
17 epidemic, our members not only swept,
18 cleaned, flushed and serviced these
19 so-called hotspots, we had to service
20 them as well by collecting rubbish and
21 recycling in those areas. They had
22 disposed-of needles, feces and all kinds
23 of unwanted materials in it.

24 We have to keep a constant
25 watch of speeding vehicles that try to

1 get around our trucks so that we don't
2 get hit. Our equipment operators have
3 to dump their loads at designated dump
4 sites that have waste from different
5 municipalities and companies. When they
6 exit the vehicles, they are inhaling all
7 kinds of elements and dust in the area
8 from whatever else was dumped out there
9 on the dump site.

10 Many encounters happen when
11 citizens become angry at our members
12 because they set out stuff that we do
13 not collect or they may set out stuff
14 that is excessive. This becomes an
15 issue and many of our members have had
16 weapons or some type of things pulled
17 out on them, you know, while working.
18 We have been asking for hazardous pay
19 prior to this pandemic and we deserve
20 it.

21 Far after the pandemic, we are
22 the only department that serviced every
23 house every week on a daily basis. When
24 the positive cases began to rise in the
25 City of Philadelphia, no one was told

1 that if you're positive don't set out
2 your rubbish or your recycling. We
3 still have to service those houses. So
4 again I ask you, please take into
5 consideration this resolution so that
6 the members of Local 427 can be
7 recognized and possibly compensated for
8 the hard work that they perform on a
9 daily basis. Thank you for your time.

10 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Thank
11 you, Charles.

12 Shyketa Armstead. Shyketa, are
13 you there? And did I say your name
14 right, Shyketa?

15 MS. ARMSTEAD: It's Shyketa.

16 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Hi,
17 Shyketa. Just state your name for the
18 record and please proceed with your
19 testimony.

20 MS. ARMSTEAD: My name is
21 Shyketa Armstead. I'm part of the
22 Sanitation Citywide Division. I've been
23 with the City for 18 months. I have
24 encountered a lot of hazardous
25 materials. As far as I'm working

1 downtown in Center City with the Belly,
2 which is trash cans downtown. Somebody
3 smeared, excuse my language, shit all
4 over the handle. So with that being
5 said, I would have to still service the
6 can because that's my job. But that's
7 hazard to touch the person's poop that's
8 on the handle.

9 Now, I only have one pair of
10 gloves. So after that one pair of
11 gloves, I would have to go back to the
12 yard to get another pair. And with that
13 being said, I like to do overtime so I'm
14 throwing trash in Kensington. We got a
15 rhythm. We're throwing trash, throwing
16 trash, but in Kensington you got to slow
17 down and examine the trash because it's
18 needles sticking out, not just laying in
19 the trash but sticking out. So if you
20 was to throw the bag of trash into the
21 hopper, the needle could go into one of
22 your partners or somebody else on the
23 street.

24 And also being a part of
25 Citywide, we also got to use blowers so

1 you're blowing feces, human feces, on
2 the street. Not only human feces,
3 you're blowing needles on the street.
4 Them needles could go into anybody in
5 the street or anybody that's working or
6 anybody that's near you or any of your
7 coworkers as far as the needles. But
8 when it comes to hazardous, I think our
9 job is hazardous. What we do is
10 hazardous.

11 And a lot of the people that we
12 work for which is the City of
13 Philadelphia, they acknowledge that we
14 have a dangerous job. And when it comes
15 to them, when they say thank you, I
16 appreciate that because we do have a job
17 that has to be done. It's a dirty job
18 but somebody has to do it, and we just
19 want to be appreciated for doing the job
20 that nobody else probably would do.

21 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Thank
22 you, Shyketa. Thank you for your
23 testimony.

24 MS. ARMSTEAD: Thank you.

25 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Edna

1 Sturgis, are you still on with us?

2 THE CLERK: She is not on, no.

3 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Okay.

4 Well, listen, while we still have
5 Charles, Omar and Shyketa here, I want
6 to go back to something that
7 Commissioner Williams noted. He noted
8 that the weight, the weight of the bags
9 that you are picking up, that that in
10 and of itself has become a major hazard
11 for Sanitation Department employees. Do
12 you all concur with that?

13 MS. ARMSTEAD: Yes.

14 MR. CARRINGTON: Absolutely.

15 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Now, I'm
16 going to ask you a question, and this is
17 really from a layman's perspective. As
18 we talked and we're communicating with
19 people all over the City and we see a
20 difference in the amount of trash, that
21 is, trash that's on the ground and you
22 can almost measure it by zip code. So
23 one day I personally drove through some
24 areas. I won't tell you where they
25 were. The only thing I'll say to you is

1 this, and I want you to -- you, because
2 you're on the ground doing it on a daily
3 basis, I want you to tell me whether or
4 not my observation was correct.

5 I noticed that there were
6 smaller amounts of trash on the ground
7 where the residents who lived in those
8 areas when they put their trash out in
9 high quality trash bags. Let me give
10 you an example: Some people in
11 different neighborhoods go to Home Depot
12 and they buy something that is extremely
13 expensive called contractor bags,
14 contractor bags, and there are some
15 people who will only put their trash out
16 in contractor bags. But then you go to
17 another community where you know that
18 person is trying to figure out whether
19 or not they're going to buy eggs, bread,
20 milk and meat and they're saying, well,
21 I don't have any money to go buy any \$30
22 contractor bags. I'm going to go to my
23 dollar store and get some bags. So
24 they're trying to be responsive to a
25 certain degree. They put their trash in

1 a bag, but it's not as strong as the
2 contractor bags.

3 Tell me from your eye-level
4 review, do you think the quality of the
5 bags has any impact on your job and what
6 you do.

7 MR. CARRINGTON: Yes.

8 MS. ARMSTEAD: I think it does.
9 You have the good bags and then you have
10 the ones that's not so good. But the
11 ones that's not so good, you don't have
12 to pack the bag with it being heavy. If
13 you know it's not a good trash bag, pack
14 it light. Me personally, I'd rather
15 have them have six or eight light trash
16 bags out there, and then instead of
17 three bags that's heavy and you know
18 when we pick it up, it may bust.

19 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Okay.
20 No, Shyketa. What you just said just
21 now, you just gave us a solution. That
22 was a solution-based response you just
23 gave. I'm glad that you both
24 acknowledge that what we put on the
25 record is factual. Based on

1 socio-economic status, you can go into
2 neighborhoods and see who has the
3 ability to afford high-quality trash
4 bags versus those who are putting their
5 trash out in less-quality trash bags and
6 it is impacting your job.

7 So you're saying that we would
8 add value if we developed some kind of
9 campaign for the public to say, hey, if
10 you know that your trash bags are not as
11 strong as you would like for them to be,
12 don't load them up or maybe we can give
13 some very practical advice. Do you all
14 think that that is something that would
15 be helpful in an educational campaign or
16 do you not think that would help?

17 MS. ARMSTEAD: I think so. I
18 think that would help.

19 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Charles?
20 Okay. Colleagues --

21 MR. CARRINGTON: Yes.

22 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Charles,
23 do you think that that will be helpful
24 and is that something that we should
25 explore?

1 MR. CARRINGTON: Definitely,
2 Councilwoman. I think that would be
3 greatly helpful and we should definitely
4 explore that, because that's a problem
5 that we run into on a constant basis.
6 People buy these dollar-store bags and
7 they put so much in them and then they
8 put them out. And when our guys go to
9 grab them, they bust and we clean up as
10 much as we can. You know, we clean up
11 as much as we can, but we do have a time
12 limit on everything and we have a weight
13 requirement.

14 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Got it.
15 Colleagues -- Councilwoman Gym. Okay,
16 that looks like that's from the first
17 round.

18 Any of our colleagues have any
19 other questions for this panel?

20 (No response.)

21 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Again, I
22 want to state for the record to Charles,
23 Omar, Shyketa and Edna, thank you all so
24 very much for what you do.

25 Also, I have to say to Pete

1 Matthews, thank you, Pete, for your work
2 and thank you for constantly working to
3 advocate for the interest of the
4 membership.

5 Charles and Omar, Shyketa and
6 Edna, we got it. Let me finally ask you
7 all for the record, Charles, Omar and
8 Shyketa, if we, for example we're in the
9 middle of COVID now so we're doing
10 everything through Zoom and Teams and
11 all of these virtual platforms, but when
12 we get back and maybe we can start doing
13 it now while we're on Teams and Zoom.

14 Councilwoman, I'm looking at
15 you, Gilmore Richardson, you're
16 constantly at community meetings and
17 town hall meetings, I'm there.

18 Have you, Omar, Shyketa or
19 Charles, have the actual rank-and-file
20 sanitation workers ever been asked to
21 come to any of our community meetings,
22 sort of like -- I know I see CLIP.

23 Who else do we see,
24 Councilwoman Gilmore Richardson? It's
25 another crew that we see. They come

1 write the tickets. Brain freeze. What
2 is it, SWEEP?

3 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

4 RICHARDSON: SWEEP.

5 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: SWEEP, we
6 see the SWEEP officers. But a light
7 bulb just went off. I said, well, wait
8 a minute, maybe people will feel
9 differently if they saw the folks who
10 are actually on the ground picking up
11 the trash in the uniform talking to
12 them. And if we talk about an
13 educational campaign, why shouldn't it
14 be those of you who are on the ground
15 doing the work, actually promoting the
16 educational campaign.

17 I'm a visual learner. So,
18 Charles and Shyketa, imagine this is a
19 bag that is not very strong and you
20 filled it up to the top and when we pick
21 it up, all the trash comes out, right.
22 This is a contractor bag. This is
23 obviously stronger so you can fit more
24 in here. I'm just talking about being
25 very practical. Would that be something

1 that you think members of Local 427
2 would be interested in doing and coming
3 out and talking to members of the
4 community?

5 MS. ARMSTEAD: Yes.

6 MR. CARRINGTON: Yes.

7 Education is the key.

8 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Got it.

9 Thank you all so very much for your
10 testimony.

11 Rachel --

12 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

13 RICHARDSON: Madam Chair?

14 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Yes.

15 Councilwoman Gilmore Richardson, a
16 comment.

17 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

18 RICHARDSON: Yes, I had a quick comment.

19 I just wanted to thank Mr. Carrington,
20 Mr. Salaam, Shyketa, all the members of
21 Local 427 of D.C. 33 for their hard
22 work. I had the opportunity to be out
23 with three of your members in
24 Kensington, specifically around the
25 issues that you noted, Shyketa, and it

1 is an arduous job to do. And we stayed
2 out for three days in the summer in the
3 heat. And I just want to let you know
4 that we appreciate the work that you all
5 do and we look forward to continuing to
6 work with you and advocate on your
7 behalf. So I just wanted to say thank
8 you.

9 Thank you, Madam Chair.

10 MS. ARMSTEAD: Thank you.

11 MR. CARRINGTON: Thank you.

12 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Thank
13 you, Councilwoman.

14 And for the record before this
15 panel leaves, I wanted to note for the
16 record that we have received some
17 written testimony and we have written
18 testimony from Nellie Brown, who is the
19 Director of Workplace Health and Safety
20 Program at the Worker Institute at
21 Cornell University School of Industrial
22 and Labor Relations.

23 And it's important that I get
24 this on the record now while you all are
25 still here because I just have two more

1 questions that I'll ask you as a result
2 of her testimony. She writes, When
3 cleaning or emptying garbage cans,
4 street sanitation workers may suffer
5 from cut injuries, skin irritations and
6 infections. Because they mostly work
7 outdoors, they are exposed to cold wind
8 or heat. The work setting would be
9 expected to include exposure to
10 environmental/traffic pollution as well
11 as natural UV exposure. When sweeping
12 with a push broom or using a leaf
13 blower, there would be the potential for
14 bioaerosol exposure. Used needles are
15 found in the course of tasks performed
16 by workers in public sector departments
17 of public works, streets/repairs, sewer
18 collections/maintenance, wastewater
19 treatment facilities and parks
20 departments. Needle stick injuries may
21 also occur when extricating needles from
22 the broom bristles or in engaging in the
23 retrieval for disposal of
24 improperly-disposed needles.

25 So let me just ask you all

1 before we go, in Professor Brown's
2 testimony she speaks extensively to the
3 hazard of needles and syringes, and you
4 all talked about the weight. Do you
5 consider these right now pre- and
6 post-COVID to be some of the biggest
7 threats that you're facing?

8 MR. CARRINGTON: Madam Chair,
9 let me chime in, please.

10 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Yes.

11 MR. CARRINGTON: I've been a
12 victim of a needle stick and I had to go
13 through the necessary precautions and
14 all that stuff. It is very difficult,
15 it's very difficult for me to come to
16 the (inaudible) --

17 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER:
18 Mr. Carrington, your sound is going out.
19 Can you move your speaker closer or
20 something? You're fading in and out.

21 MR. CARRINGTON: Can you hear
22 me better now?

23 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Yes. I
24 can hear you better now, yes.

25 MR. CARRINGTON: (Inaudible)

1 After I was stuck by a needle and I had
2 to go home and tell my wife of 15 years
3 that we have to use protective sex for
4 the next six months to a year while I go
5 through the necessary precautions to
6 make sure that I don't have anything.
7 This was pre-COVID and we (inaudible).

8 Madam Chair, can I ask one
9 thing, that we acknowledge my Vice-
10 president Mr. Henry Nieves. He's been
11 on the call all day as well.

12 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Okay.
13 Henry, say hello. I think -- Henry, is
14 that you? Do you have on a Yankees hat,
15 Henry?

16 MR. NIEVES: Yes, ma'am. Good
17 afternoon, everyone.

18 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: All
19 right. Thank you for being here. And
20 I'll talk to you later. We're going to
21 get that New York Yankees hat straight.
22 We're going to work on that later on.
23 But thank you so much for being here.
24 We appreciate you.

25 Mr. Carrington, I also want to

1 get this on the record, Charles, because
2 we mentioned this during our meeting,
3 that some people use the term hazard
4 pay. But I want to just note for the
5 record I like the term environmental
6 stress pay or exposure pay. Some people
7 like just hazard pay. But if you're
8 looking at how you describe it,
9 especially when I think about Professor
10 Brown's testimony, that's like
11 environmental stress because it's not
12 just a hazard in one way and/or exposure
13 pay. And so, in thinking about a pay
14 system, who would get environmental
15 stress pay and do you know what other
16 sanitation workers get across the
17 country?

18 MR. CARRINGTON: No, I don't
19 know who gets environmental stress pay.
20 But we were attempting to change the
21 wording for a long time as opposed to
22 keeping hazardous pay because that sends
23 out an alarm to a lot of people. We
24 were going with the word exposure,
25 exposure pay because when you say

1 hazard, it scares a lot of people. And
2 I know the City, once they, you know,
3 confirm that our job is a hazard, they
4 feel like they're opening up the door to
5 lawsuits and stuff like that. But they
6 do recognize that we are exposed to all
7 kinds of things on a daily basis.

8 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Got it.
9 Colleagues before we round up this final
10 panel, do any of you have any other
11 questions?

12 (No response.)

13 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: We want
14 to thank each and every one of you on
15 this panel for your testimony. We
16 appreciate your presence. Again, as I
17 stated for the record we do have written
18 testimony from Professor Nellie Brown,
19 the Director of the Workplace Health and
20 Safety Program at the Worker Institute
21 at Cornell University School of Industry
22 and Labor Relations, and we will make
23 sure that we present that to the
24 stenographer.

25 We just found out that there

1 are no more questions or comments from
2 the members of the Committee.

3 Is there anyone else here to
4 testify on the resolution whose name has
5 not yet been called?

6 (No response.)

7 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Okay.
8 There being no one else here to testify
9 on this resolution, this concludes the
10 business of the Labor and Civil Service
11 Committee today. I want to say a
12 special thank you to all of my
13 colleagues for attending and all of
14 those who testified. This public
15 hearing on Resolution No. 200098 is
16 recessed to the call of the Chair.

17 Thank you all very much. Let
18 me just say this to you, 427, Pete,
19 Administration, not pointing fingers, we
20 all are going to find a way to work
21 through this. And I'm committed that
22 when we put our heads together with all
23 of our members of Council, you all who
24 are on the front line and our
25 Administration, we can come up with a

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1 solution and we will. Thank you all so
2 very much.

3 MS. ARMSTEAD: You're welcome.

4 MR. CARRINGTON: You're
5 welcome.

6 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

7 RICHARDSON: Thank you, Madam Chair.

8 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Thank
9 you.

10 (Committee on Labor and Civil
11 Service concluded at 2:20 p.m.)

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

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

TANEHA C. CARROLL
Court Reporter - Notary Public

(The foregoing certification of
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