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COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

3

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

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Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Wednesday, March 29, 2006
3:20 p.m.

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PRESENT:

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANNA C. VERNA

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COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE BLACKWELL

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COUNCILMAN DARRELL L. CLARKE

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COUNCILMAN JAMES F. KENNEY

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COUNCILWOMAN DONNA REED MILLER

15

COUNCILMAN FRANK RIZZO

16

COUNCILWOMAN MARIAN B. TASCIO

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BILLS 060001, 060002, 060003, 060004, 060006,
060007, 060008, 060014, 060089 and 060090

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RESOLUTIONS 060019, 060099, 060100 and 060119

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good afternoon, everyone. This is the continued public hearing of the Committee of the Whole.

I would ask Mr. McPherson to please call our first witnesses.

MR. MCPHERSON: Stan Shapiro, One Philadelphia.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Stan, do you have a panel?

MR. SHAPIRO: Yes. There should be one other witness, Jonathan --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: We're going to announce what the ruling will be. If there's a panel, each panel member will be given three minutes. Okay?

MR. SHAPIRO: Okay. We should have one other member joining us, Jonathan Stein from Community Legal Services. He had to leave because of the problem we had and should be on his way back.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Okay.

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2 He may be here before you're completed.

3 Thank you.

4 MR. SHAPIRO: I hope so.

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: All
6 right, Stan. Are you going to testify
7 first?

8 MR. SHAPIRO: Yes. Good
9 morning, Council President Verna and
10 members of City Council. My name is Stan
11 Shapiro, and I will be speaking on behalf
12 of One Philadelphia.

13 One Philadelphia is a coalition
14 of community groups, labor organizations
15 and individuals committed to facilitating
16 economic growth with fairness for all
17 Philadelphians.

18 I will be speaking today in
19 opposition to all of the changes in tax
20 rates that have been introduced in
21 Council for the next fiscal year.

22 The last few years have seen a
23 steady stream of proposals to drastically
24 cut or eliminate the business privilege
25 tax. We have testified in each of these

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2 years against these proposals. We have
3 argued first that cutting the BPT is, at
4 best, a highly speculative way to promote
5 growth. Secondly, we have argued that
6 the City simply can't afford to give huge
7 sums of tax revenue away to both big and
8 small businesses alike in the current
9 economic environment.

10 The business privilege tax cuts
11 on the table this year are smaller than
12 in previous years. We remain opposed to
13 them.

14 Much has been said about
15 projected surpluses in City revenues.
16 But as PICA pointed out in a letter to
17 you, Madam President, only three weeks
18 ago, those surpluses are based, to a
19 great extent, on questionable premises.
20 Here is a list of just a few of the risky
21 assumptions on which the Five-Year Plan
22 is built, according to PICA: That state
23 reimbursements for services provided by
24 the Department of Human Services will be
25 \$132 million more over five years than

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2 the amount that is required by law; that
3 PGW will be able to repay the City's \$45
4 million loan in Fiscal Year '09; that
5 future fee increases and future
6 government efficiencies will combine to
7 generate \$60 million over the life of the
8 plan; that the state will provide funding
9 to completely eliminate the City's costs
10 for the Convention Center beginning in
11 '09, Fiscal Year '09; that the City will
12 receive more than \$18 million annually
13 from the Philadelphia Parking Authority;
14 that the Administration will reduce
15 health insurance costs by \$46 million
16 over the last four years of the Plan by
17 implementing reforms, so-called reforms.

18 According to PICA, quote, "The
19 combined value of the speculative items
20 included in the Plan is \$386.5 million.
21 If all of the speculative items were
22 removed from the Plan, it would have a
23 negative fund balance in Fiscal Year '08
24 and each succeeding year through Fiscal
25 Year '11."

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2 Yet, PICA says there are still
3 additional risks to the Plan, about which
4 it states, "While any long-term spending
5 plan will contain some unknowns, the
6 substantial amount of speculative
7 revenues in the '07 to '11 Plan greatly
8 increases the threat posed by these
9 additional risks."

10 Among these risky assumptions
11 are the following: That the
12 Administration will be successful in
13 appealing the health and medical
14 insurance award provided to the FOP; that
15 the City will be able to stop the
16 increase in the prison census and not see
17 any increases in the costs of its prison
18 health contracts; that the City will
19 receive \$25 million annually in gaming
20 revenues beginning in FY09 from the state
21 tax imposed on gaming institutions; that
22 the number of shelter beds will stop
23 growing; that there will be no increases
24 in employee salaries after FY08.

25 Furthermore, PICA states, "The

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2 City's unfunded pension liability is too
3 large and is growing."

4 City Council must be sure that
5 it can meet the needs of its citizens,
6 particularly those who can't help
7 themselves, and its workers before it
8 embarks on risky tax cuts. And as we've
9 said before, such cuts, if affordable,
10 should be targeted to help those in need,
11 not big corporations such as Wal-Mart,
12 Comcast and Sunoco.

13 Finally, let me say that we
14 also do not support repeal of the
15 targeted tax cut for low-wage workers
16 scheduled to take effect in 2010.
17 Jonathan Stein will go into detail about
18 the reasons why that would be a
19 particularly poor way to raise revenue.
20 If revenue is needed, which it may well
21 be, all City tax rates should be on the
22 table. Tax preferences for the working
23 poor, however, should hardly be put at
24 the head of that list.

25 Thank you for this opportunity

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2 to testify. I'll ask Tom Cronin to talk
3 more about the risks to the Plan
4 involving City workers, and then Jonathan
5 will talk about the targeted tax cuts.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
7 you very much.

8 Good afternoon. Welcome.
9 Please identify yourself for the record.

10 MR. CRONIN: Good afternoon,
11 Council President. My name is Thomas P.
12 Cronin. I'm the President of AFSCME
13 District Council 47, City of
14 Philadelphia.

15 I will certainly abbreviate my
16 testimony today, as per your request, and
17 just say that I just -- let me just
18 single out the issue of healthcare, which
19 is really the main point that I want to
20 make.

21 As of the beginning of this
22 year, we needed, meaning District Council
23 47, needed \$869 per member per month to
24 maintain our current level of benefits.
25 Right now we get \$750 per member per

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2 month. So in order to maintain our
3 benefits right now, we need immediately a
4 16 percent increase in our healthcare.

5 Currently, the City of
6 Philadelphia gives us totally, I guess,
7 about \$40.5 million for our healthcare,
8 and as of '06, just talking about one
9 year now, we're going to need
10 approximately \$47 million. So about a
11 \$6.5 million increase just to stay the
12 same. I'm not talking about two years in
13 a row, because if you talk two years in a
14 row and assume anywhere from a 16 to
15 20-some percent increase, you're really
16 starting to climb and very, very high.
17 And, of course, what this does is, any
18 wage gains that we did make, which were
19 modest in the contract agreement that we
20 have with the City of Philadelphia, will
21 be greatly eroded, to say the least.

22 We receive about the same as
23 District Council 33, but with respect to
24 all of the municipal unions and the
25 exempt employees, many of the folks that

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2 are sitting here, we receive the least.
3 Everyone probably in this building now,
4 including the firefighters that just ran
5 into the building, get a lot more than
6 District Council 33 and 47. In fact, I
7 think, Councilwoman, you guys get
8 approximately \$782.14 per member per
9 month.

10 We've been asking the City of
11 Philadelphia to -- we didn't expect the
12 gap between uniformed and non-uniformed
13 to evaporate overnight. In our
14 discussions with the Mayor, we said that
15 we wanted to see the City make a
16 good-faith effort, though, to close that
17 gap.

18 Now, the current projections of
19 the City, the current statements of the
20 City about cutting back on healthcare, to
21 me in my mind are just ridiculous,
22 considering the reality that we all face,
23 whether we're members of a union or not
24 members of a union or members certainly
25 like yourself, your family, your staff

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2 and so on.

3 So I'm saying that this surplus
4 that we hear a lot about -- and I'm not
5 even getting into the unfunded liability
6 on the pensions and the other issues that
7 come up with the departments that we
8 staff, because we'll be around. We're
9 trying to make appointments now to see
10 various Councilmembers to do some
11 lobbying on this issue.

12 But it's much like, when I hear
13 people say, Oh, there's this great
14 surplus, it would be like me saying,
15 Well, you know, I just got a paycheck for
16 \$1,500 and I have this great surplus.
17 Well, maybe I do, but if I start to pay
18 my mortgage, my electric bill, my gas
19 bill, the kids' tuition, et cetera, et
20 cetera, it quickly evaporates.

21 So my point here is that I
22 don't think this great surplus really
23 exists when you take a look at the
24 obligations that the City of Philadelphia
25 needs to pay off, and I would

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2 respectfully ask yourself and other City
3 Councilmembers to remember this during
4 the budget deliberations.

5 Thank you, ma'am.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
7 you.

8 Welcome, Mr. Stein. Please
9 identify yourself for the record and
10 proceed with your testimony.

11 MR. STEIN: Thank you, Council
12 President and other members of City
13 Council here. I'm Jonathan Stein,
14 General Counsel at Community Legal
15 Services, and I will be quite brief
16 because I know this is an issue that
17 you're well versed in.

18 We're here to ask you to say no
19 to the repeal of the ordinance that would
20 provide a working tax credit on the wage
21 tax, an ordinance this Council passed
22 with a very substantial majority vote in
23 the recent past and which the Mayor now
24 has, unfortunately, put before you for
25 repeal.

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2 We think that there's
3 absolutely no need to address this
4 ordinance now, because it only takes
5 effect in Fiscal Year 2010. So it
6 doesn't affect next year's budget. And
7 when you look at the estimated costs of
8 those outer years of 2010, 2011, one
9 sees, on the basis of the Mayor's own
10 estimates in his Five-Year Plan of what
11 his expected surplus will be, that
12 there's absolutely no fiscal imperative
13 to repeal the ordinance even for those
14 outer years, because the cost of the
15 ordinance in those first two years would
16 still leave the City with a surplus based
17 on the Mayor's own numbers.

18 This is an ordinance that had
19 widespread support not only in City
20 Council and an ordinance that this
21 Council should be very proud of, because
22 it is in fact one of the most progressive
23 measures this City Council has ever
24 enacted in the whole history of the wage
25 tax and City taxes, but beyond the

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2 support in this Council and this
3 Councilmanic body, this ordinance had
4 widespread support in the City. Labor
5 unions supported it. Social service
6 groups, like Project HOME and People's
7 Emergency Center in West Philadelphia,
8 supported it and saw this as a way of
9 injecting some small measure of tax
10 equity into our local City tax system.

11 The tax credit is a sliding
12 scale credit. It affects not only the
13 working poor, but also working-class
14 people and low/middle income people, up
15 to incomes of about \$30,000 or \$32,000 a
16 year, similar to the tax back that the
17 state income tax system establishes.

18 We know it's a fair way of
19 assisting working families. We know
20 those families will spend that credit not
21 on vacations in Cancun or on other
22 disbursements, but will spend it for
23 immediate needs within the City of
24 Philadelphia, on immediate needs with
25 stores in the City, perhaps on PGW or

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2 Water Department bills that are overdue.

3 So the City will see some benefits of

4 seeing this money returned to either City

5 government or to local businesses

6 directly from this tax credit.

7 So we do urge Council to set

8 this request aside. It's just not needed

9 for this budget. And we ask Council to

10 take pride in this accomplishment and not

11 undo something that is a great

12 achievement of this body.

13 Thank you.

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank

15 you all very much.

16 Are there any questions from

17 members of the Committee?

18 (No response.)

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:

20 Seeing none, I thank you. Thank you very

21 much.

22 MR. SHAPIRO: Thank you.

23 MR. McPHERSON: Our next

24 witnesses are Jim Helman and Michael

25 McCrea.

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2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good
3 afternoon, gentlemen. You will each be
4 given three minutes to testify.

5 MR. MCCREA: Thank you.

6 Members of City Council, my name is Mike
7 McCrea. I'm President of Philadelphia
8 Recreation Advisory Council.

9 Philadelphia Recreation
10 Advisory Council is comprised of over 200
11 local volunteer organizations, each of
12 whom serves different local community all
13 across the City of Philadelphia, and one
14 of my tasks as President has been to
15 bring you every year a street-level
16 message about the state of public
17 recreation and specifically its effects
18 on the City's children. Well, to be
19 blunt, according to the Administration
20 and Safe and Sound's own admission, the
21 state of our children in Philadelphia is
22 mixed with inconsistent progress, and
23 that, quite frankly, really sucks.

24 We can and must do better if we
25 want to have any hope of providing a

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2 positive future for our youngest and most
3 vulnerable. Therefore, sadly, this
4 message is not that much different than
5 previous several years.

6 Do any of you remember that 12
7 years ago the Mayor at the time created
8 Children and Families Cabinet, headed by
9 the former Recreation Commissioner, who
10 brought together an unprecedented
11 coalition of local, state and federal
12 departments to produce and enact a plan
13 to curb the rising stem of violence at
14 that time directed at youth of
15 Philadelphia? This coalition included
16 Recreation, Police, Health, DHS,
17 Probation, Courts, State Attorney, U.S.
18 Attorney, FBI, ATF and doctors from
19 Children's Hospital. As partners, we
20 worked together as a part of this
21 coalition, and out of it came what we
22 referred to as Youth Violence Reduction
23 Partnership, as well as identifying
24 specific programs with specific funding
25 and targeted goals.

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2 During the four-year period
3 from 1996 to '99, major success was
4 achieved in almost every measured
5 category concerning youth violence. Most
6 importantly, youth homicides from 7 to 17
7 were reduced by 57 percent and from ages
8 18 to 24 were reduced by 24 percent.

9 Over the same period of time,
10 the City Administration allocated over \$6
11 million of dedicated funding for
12 prevention activities, including
13 after-school programs, summer camps, swim
14 camps, youth access centers, youth
15 employment and other related activities.

16 While this may not have been
17 the panacea, it was clear to us involved
18 in this process that these strategies
19 were extremely effective and they were
20 making a difference in every community
21 across the City. We really seemed to
22 have at least a basic handle on the
23 current cause and effect of youth
24 violence at that time. Now looking ahead
25 at our current situation and statistics,

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2 the question is begging to be asked, What
3 happened?

4 In 1999, we had an outgoing
5 Administration that was not afraid to
6 think out of the box, listen to anybody
7 and all ideas to work through serious
8 issues, and had a seat at the table for
9 anyone interested and willing to put out
10 the effort. This was replaced by an
11 incoming Administration that reduced the
12 size of the table, would not even listen
13 to anyone that did not support 100
14 percent of their agenda and, after
15 sealing it with heavy duct tape, hasn't
16 been seen outside the box in over six
17 years.

18 The coalition was disbanded due
19 to lack of support, and most of the
20 initiatives developed during that time
21 suffered the same fate soon after. That
22 \$6 million in dedicated funding
23 disappeared, along with cuts of an
24 additional 2 million. This was also
25 replaced with Safe and Sound and

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2 Children's Investment Strategy, which
3 now, almost \$300 million and six years
4 later, currently elevated statistics in
5 almost every major category concerning
6 youth violence, some reaching near record
7 levels last year. That's what happened.

8 It would have been hard to
9 imagine that as a city we could sink to
10 these depths in such a short period of
11 time, and even Mayor Street last year
12 admitted that he had no answers to the
13 latest rise in violence and blood shed.
14 It seems ironic that he turned to the
15 Governor, our former Mayor, who had the
16 vision to initiate the creation of the
17 coalition, which is nothing more than a
18 distant memory to most people.

19 Mayor Street had the
20 opportunity to build on what it had
21 accomplished in that coalition, raising
22 the standards of every child to an
23 all-time high. However, he chose to
24 de-value everything we did and completely
25 reinvent the wheel, costing the taxpayers

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2 almost \$300 million so far and costing
3 way too many lives.

4 Note to Mayor Street: We were
5 here long before your Administration took
6 office with over a \$300 million surplus,
7 and we'll be here to clean up this mess
8 long after you're gone. However much you
9 try to diminish our efforts,
10 effectiveness and de-value our efforts,
11 as volunteers we have done and will
12 continue to do what we do every day,
13 serving every child and making positive
14 changes the best we can in every
15 community across the City.

16 Sadly, one of the positives we
17 can take from all of this is, our
18 children have seen the firsthand
19 consequences of bad choices.

20 Thank you.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
22 you.

23 Mr. Helman, welcome.

24 MR. HELMAN: Thank you. Good
25 afternoon, President Verna and members of

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2 City Council. My name is Jim Helman. I
3 live in Grays Ferry and I'm very active
4 in my community. I serve as
5 Secretary/Treasurer of Vane Recreation
6 Center at 26th and Morris Streets, and I
7 am here to testify for public recreation.

8 There's a darkly humorous joke
9 making the rounds of public recreation
10 volunteers. The first volunteer says,
11 What are the three certainties in life?
12 The second volunteer answers, That's
13 easy. The three certainties in life are
14 death, taxes and public recreation budget
15 cuts from the Street Administration.

16 We have seen the Department of
17 Recreation's budget cut in five of the
18 last six years. We have seen public
19 recreation centers and programs made
20 ineligible for funding that private
21 organizations can apply for. We have
22 weathered a scheme to close some 40
23 public recreation facilities and some 25
24 swimming pools. We have seen a hiring
25 freeze that caused serious public

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2 recreation staff shortages. We have seen
3 a cut in the number of department
4 districts, hampering the department's
5 ability to interact with our communities.
6 We have seen a lot, and the record of the
7 Street Administration is not a good one.

8 The record is not good mostly
9 because of the Administration's penchant
10 for dictating policy from the top down
11 instead of from the people up.

12 The most recent example of this
13 is when four City officials met privately
14 and came up with something called
15 "revenue generation." Now, it's great to
16 generate revenue, but it's not so great
17 to generate it at the expense of our
18 communities and local recreation
19 facilities.

20 Revenue generation involves
21 centralizing the permission to use public
22 recreation fields and outdoor facilities.
23 Under the scheme, the outdoor facilities
24 at Vare Rec Center, for example, would be
25 permitted by Fairmount Park. The public

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2 would be charged a set fee, which would
3 be paid into some Fairmount Park fund.

4 This would remove our local
5 community's voice on who gets to use our
6 fields and for what purpose. Right now,
7 when our facility allows a permitted use,
8 we ask for a donation. Not only do we
9 have a voice on the use, but the donation
10 stays with the local facility and helps
11 to fund programs and activities. That
12 would be lost under the so-called
13 "revenue generation" scheme. You can bet
14 that the revenue generated would never
15 find its way back to Vare.

16 Of course, nobody at the local
17 level was consulted about this. It's a
18 scheme that we're all just supposed to
19 accept and live with. That's a shame.
20 It's a shame because an important voice
21 is lost, the voice of our local
22 communities.

23 To be honest, give me a dozen
24 parents in a room for a couple of hours
25 and I will tell you what our community

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2 needs far more effectively than all the
3 fancy statisticians and boneheaded bean
4 counters that the Street Administration
5 has managed to accumulate in the last six
6 years.

7 Despite the Administration's
8 awful record, public recreation remains
9 on the front lines. Public recreation
10 doesn't hide behind locked school doors
11 or the school police or security
12 personnel. Public recreation doesn't put
13 up obstacles to involvement like lengthy
14 and prying enrollment forms that require
15 Social Security numbers and family
16 income.

17 With public recreation, if you
18 want to play and you're willing to behave
19 properly, then you can play. If you want
20 to learn and you're willing to attend and
21 apply yourself, then you can learn. If
22 you want to socialize and you're willing
23 to follow the rules, then you can
24 socialize.

25 It's that simple. And in its

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2 simplicity, it works. In my judgment, it
3 works better and more economically than
4 any other City service that I am aware
5 of.

6 A friend came to City Council
7 today. My friend's name is David
8 Starling. David is 18 years old now and
9 lives in Point Breeze.

10 David and his younger brother
11 have been coming to Vare for years. They
12 have joined our sports leagues and
13 participated in other center activities.
14 They have come by for a swim on a hot
15 summer day or to run some ball in their
16 spare time or to just hang out with their
17 friends.

18 Last November, the real tragedy
19 of Philadelphia's "Safe" and "Safer
20 Streets" visited the Starling family in
21 an unthinkable way.

22 On November 7, 2005, David's
23 younger brother Daniel was shot and
24 killed in broad daylight in the vicinity
25 of 20th Street and Snyder Avenue. Daniel

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2 was on his way home from South Philly
3 High School where he was a "B" student
4 and a member of the football team.
5 Daniel was the innocent victim of gun
6 shots intended for another. He was 16
7 years old.

8 President Verna, with your
9 permission, David would like to say a few
10 words.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: We'd
12 be very happy to hear from him.

13 Welcome, David.

14 MR. STARLING: Hi. My name is
15 David Starling. I'm here because we need
16 more public recreation, not less. We
17 need more places like Vare Rec Center,
18 not less. We need more people like
19 Mr. Jerry and Mr. Jim here, who will
20 focus their attention on young people in
21 our community and create more activities
22 that will give us alternatives on where
23 to go and what to do.

24 We need help staying off the
25 streets and creating a safe environment

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2 as we have at Vare.

3 We need more activities that
4 people my age will want to get involved
5 with, activities like sports leagues,
6 trips, chess clubs, dances and swim
7 teams. I'm happy to know that Vare is
8 going to have a 17 to 20 basketball
9 league. That's in addition to the Vare
10 summer program basketball league. It
11 shows that public recreation is willing
12 to help all ages.

13 Growing up, my brother Daniel,
14 who we also called Diesel, and me would
15 go to Vare Rec to be with friends or join
16 different programs. We liked it there
17 and would often volunteer to help clean
18 and set up for some of the activities.
19 It helped to keep us out of trouble.

20 I used to spend a lot of time
21 with my brother. I miss how me and my
22 brother and friends would spend our days
23 at Vare. It will never be the same
24 without him.

25 I wish Diesel could be here

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2 with me today. I know if he could, he
3 will say that we need more public
4 recreation, not less, and I hope that all
5 of you today will help us get that.

6 Thank you.

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Thank
8 you, David.

9 (Applause.)

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: We
11 certainly welcome you.

12 Are there any questions or
13 comments from members of the Committee?

14 MR. HELMAN: I'm not quite
15 finished.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Oh,
17 I'm so sorry.

18 MR. HELMAN: Almost, but not
19 quite.

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: How
21 could I overlook you?

22 MR. HELMAN: I'll close by
23 thanking City Council for your support
24 for public recreation over the years. We
25 know that without the support of the

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2 people's representatives, the last six
3 years would have been dismal instead of
4 difficult.

5 We ask you to continue to stand
6 with us, stand with us and help us
7 celebrate our many successes and
8 achievements, and be there when we mourn
9 our losses.

10 We see a light at the end of
11 the long, dark tunnel of the last six
12 years. There's got to be better days
13 ahead.

14 Thank you.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
16 you. Mr. Helman, let me say that we
17 couldn't do it without people like you.
18 Thank you very much.

19 MR. MCPHERSON: Our next panel
20 is representatives from the Philadelphia
21 Art Museum, Juliet Childs, Nate Mitchell,
22 Josh Lopez, Katherine Seed, Chiquita
23 Paschal, Andrew Wineman and Aquil
24 Benjamin.

25 Please identify yourself for

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2 the record and proceed.

3 MS. CHILDS: I'm Juliet Childs.

4 Hello, Council President Verna and
5 members of City Council. My name is
6 Juliet Childs, and I'm delighted to be
7 here today with Nate Mitchell, Josh
8 Lopez, Aquil Benjamin, Chiquita Paschal,
9 Katherine Seed and Andrew Wineman. We
10 have come forward to express our deep
11 thanks as we ask you, City Council, to
12 continue to work with the Mayor to
13 support the arts in Philadelphia and the
14 Philadelphia Museum of Art on a yearly
15 basis and make the bold and necessary
16 investment that is now needed to upgrade
17 the Museum's great building.

18 I have been a Philadelphia
19 resident all my life. My family has
20 lived in the Mantua section of the City,
21 and my memories of the Art Museum go way
22 back to my grandmother's stories about
23 watching from our neighborhood across the
24 river as the Museums's amazing buildings
25 were being created over the first decades

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2 of this century.

3 I came to the Museum for the
4 first time with my family at the age of
5 about 12, and I remember distinctly the
6 awe-inspiring experience that elevated my
7 spirit. From my point of view as a
8 child, the Museum was very big and very
9 beautiful and it made me feel very
10 important, more than any other building I
11 had known.

12 Soon after that time, I started
13 coming to the Museum with my class, and I
14 remember marveling at the living plants
15 and running water in the Japanese Tea
16 House, which is still there today, and I
17 still see children marveling the same way
18 I did.

19 By the time I was a teenager
20 and a young adult working with General
21 Electric, I knew my way around the
22 Museum's amazing building. This was
23 powerful because I began to know the
24 City's great Art Museum as my museum.

25 As an adult, I came to my

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2 Museum for the first time as a volunteer.
3 Eventually, I started working as a staff
4 member, and now I am the Manager of
5 Visitor Services.

6 A big part of my job is
7 welcoming visitors, and this week my job
8 is very special because as we speak, the
9 Museum is opening its doors to people
10 from far and wide who are coming to see
11 and experience the life's work of one of
12 America's most beloved living artists,
13 one of our great Pennsylvanians, Andrew
14 Wyeth.

15 I have seen Mr. Wyeth, who is
16 88 years old, in the Museum and identify
17 with the way he walks through the Museum
18 looking at great works of art in the
19 beautiful building with a proud smile.
20 For Mr. Wyeth and for me, the countless
21 other Philadelphians and Pennsylvanians,
22 this is our museum, and we share a
23 profound sense of being fortunate that so
24 many great works of art are ours.

25 In the Department of Visitor

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2 Services, I supervise many people, and
3 most of them are young, smart, strong
4 individuals who have been attracted to
5 jobs at the Museum because they love art
6 and love museums. They are happy to be a
7 part of creating a great experience by
8 selling tickets, answering questions at
9 the front desk, solving problems for
10 visitors, checking coats and mostly
11 making sure that everyone who comes in
12 the door has the best experience
13 possible.

14 Next time you're in the Museum,
15 make an extra point to acknowledge the
16 people who give you your ticket or check
17 your coat, because these are the young
18 people who are, more and more, spreading
19 the glow of creativity and youthful
20 energy across the City as they build
21 their lives here.

22 I will close by saying how
23 thrilled I am to be sharing this
24 microphone today with people who are
25 volunteers. Kathy and Andrew are retired

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2 school teachers. Nate, Josh, Aquil and
3 Chiquita are high school students who
4 also volunteer in the Museum and have
5 made the Museum part of their lives as
6 Philadelphians as I have.

7 Each of us is recounting our
8 personal stories about the Museum. While
9 the Museum is important to us, hopes to
10 impress on you, the City Council, that we
11 represent the millions of people across
12 this City who love our Museum and want to
13 see it thrive and grow. We hope the City
14 will continue to support the Museum now
15 and in the future so that generations of
16 Philadelphians can come to know what we
17 know, that art has the power to improve
18 and enhance the quality of life for
19 everyone.

20 Thank you.

21 MR. MCPHERSON: Identify
22 yourself for the record, please.

23 MR. MITCHELL: My name is Nate
24 Mitchell.

25 MR. LOPEZ: My name is Joshua

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2 Lopez.

3 MR. BENJAMIN: My name is Aquil
4 Benjamin.

5 MR. MITCHELL: Hello, President
6 Verna and members of the City Council.
7 My name is Nate Mitchell, and I'm here
8 with Josh Lopez and Aquil Benjamin. We
9 are all students at Mastery Charter High
10 School in Philadelphia and we are all
11 interns at the Philadelphia Museum of
12 Art.

13 For the past five months, we
14 have helped prepare projects for children
15 and families for weekend events in the
16 educational department. In return, we
17 are taking out tourists throughout the
18 Art Museum.

19 In these past weeks, I have
20 seen many new things, such as the
21 cultures and art in the Asian gallery.
22 And the reason why we are here today,
23 because we believe the City should fund
24 the Philadelphia Art Museum.

25 MR. LOPEZ: Hello. My name is

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2 Joshua Lopez, and as an intern, each day
3 is a learning experience to help further
4 our knowledge of the workplace and also
5 in the field of art. We have viewed many
6 intriguing works of art from many
7 renowned artists. My personal favorite
8 was a man named Thomas Eakins. His works
9 were unique due to the rigorous process
10 he went through to produce his art.

11 It is wonderful for me to know
12 that the Museum will always be here, and
13 when I have my own family, I can bring
14 them back to the Museum and share this
15 art with them.

16 Thank you.

17 MR. BENJAMIN: Hello. My name
18 is Aquil Benjamin.

19 For the five months I've been
20 here interning at the Art Museum, I have
21 seen young children, teenagers and adults
22 walk around the galleries and observe and
23 enjoy the arts. In my opinion, my
24 knowledge of art has broadened from what
25 I knew prior to taking this internship.

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2 In my neighborhood, I see a lot
3 of people in the streets, and a lot of
4 people are dying. I took the internship
5 to get off the streets and to get an
6 opportunity that I have found here.

7 I believe that the City should
8 fund the Art Museum so that more people
9 can gain this opportunity.

10 Thank you very much. Thank you
11 for your time.

12 MR. MCPHERSON: Councilwoman
13 Tasco.

14 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Are they
15 finished?

16 MR. MCPHERSON: They have a few
17 more.

18 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Okay. Go
19 ahead. When they're finished.

20 MR. MCPHERSON: Please identify
21 yourself for the record and proceed.

22 MR. WINEMAN: My name is Andrew
23 Wineman.

24 MS. PASCHAL: My name is
25 Chiquita Paschal.

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2 MS. SEED: I'm Katherine Seed.

3 MS. PASCHAL: Good afternoon,
4 President Verna, members of City Council.
5 My name is Chiquita Paschal and I am
6 currently a senior at Masterman High
7 School. I have spent the last four years
8 participating in the Teen Docent Program
9 at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

10 On behalf of all involved, I
11 thank you and the City of Philadelphia
12 for your continued support of this unique
13 and important program, which has given me
14 the opportunity to both learn a lot and
15 also give back to our community.

16 The teen docents -- and there
17 are ten of us this year -- train under
18 the supervision of the Education
19 Department at the Philadelphia Museum of
20 Art, and we present aspects of art and
21 art history to the general public on
22 Sundays. This year we are exploring
23 medieval art, demonstrating such crafts
24 as armor, stained glass, masonry, panel
25 painting for the public.

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2 The beauty of this program is
3 that the benefits are twofold. The
4 teenage docents spent about a month
5 training, learning prior to the program's
6 yearly debut. We receive all sorts of
7 educational books, articles and
8 demonstrations from the professional
9 curators within the Museum. This intense
10 training period is an amazing educational
11 opportunity in itself. However, it also
12 gives us the confidence to teach the
13 general public.

14 This is a program all about
15 exploration. As teen docents, we are
16 encouraged to conduct inquiries, ask
17 questions and solve problems. We work as
18 a group to plan how to best engage the
19 public with our demonstrations. Our
20 staff trainers emphasize public speaking
21 skills.

22 Each Sunday this spring we teen
23 docents interact with about 600 people.
24 The Philadelphia Museum of Art has a "pay
25 what you wish" admission policy on

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2 Sundays, meaning that families from all
3 walks of life can afford to spend time
4 together looking and learning from the
5 Art Museum's galleries.

6 The teen docents realize that
7 it's all too easy for families to stay at
8 home and watch television on a Sunday
9 afternoon when subjects such as art seem
10 aloof and distant, intimidating and even
11 boring. Our job is to get children and
12 their parents engaged in art through
13 hands-on demonstrations that involve
14 everyone.

15 The teen docents act as a
16 liaison to bring art to life. I feel
17 very fulfilled knowing that each Sunday
18 afternoon there's a child somewhere
19 thinking about how medieval panel
20 painters ground up koshneel (ph) beetles
21 for pigment. And if you really want an
22 explanation, I'll tell you about it
23 later.

24 But understanding and
25 appreciating art is an important tool for

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2 making sense of the world, and the Teen
3 Docent Program cultivates knowledge and
4 interest in a memorable and lasting way
5 for everyone involved.

6 So I'd like to thank you again
7 for supporting the Philadelphia Museum of
8 Art and its great educational programs.
9 Few museums make teens feel as welcome as
10 the Art Museum does, and I know I'll
11 always treasure my four years there. As
12 a matter of fact, I'm about to start
13 college in the fall and I intend to major
14 in art history, and it's all because of
15 this program.

16 Thank you.

17 MS. SEED: Good afternoon, City
18 Councilmembers. I'm Katherine Seed.

19 Through its support, City
20 Council has acknowledged the
21 contributions made to the City by the
22 Philadelphia Museum of Art. We are
23 fortunate to have world-class collections
24 and award-winning education programs.
25 Today I speak on behalf of the

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2 experiences available to students and
3 teachers in Philadelphia and the region.

4 Every day students visit the
5 galleries and experience a walk through
6 time and cultures. With guidance from
7 Museum educators, they learn to look at
8 art. Through participation, they learn
9 to respond to it in a personal way.

10 This past year, over 80,000
11 students attended, and 3,000 teachers
12 have participated in a variety of
13 workshops offered throughout the year at
14 the Museum and in their schools.

15 Curriculum-based workshops have
16 a wide appeal. For example, on Saturday,
17 there's a workshop called Mythology As
18 Muse. Mythology is taught from middle
19 grades through high school. The art of
20 mythology in painting, sculptures,
21 tapestries and architecture is a natural
22 enhancement to the literature of
23 mythology.

24 In addition, resource materials
25 are produced by the Museum. Free

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2 teaching kits and packets are given in
3 conjunction with special exhibitions.
4 This year, for the Beauford Delaney and
5 Andrew Wyeth shows. And to enrich
6 classroom instruction using the permanent
7 collections, there are posters and
8 activities focusing on African art,
9 modern art, women and art, Mexican art,
10 just to name a few. The numbers bear
11 repeating: Over 80,000 students and
12 3,000 teachers.

13 On the horizon is an exciting
14 new project, the Wachovia Education
15 Resource Room. The Resource Room will
16 provide area teachers, particularly those
17 in Philadelphia, a space in which to use
18 computers and a full range of reference
19 materials to research PMA collections,
20 artists, art styles. In other words, it
21 will be a modern and comprehensive
22 center. And to maximize their use of
23 this extraordinary resource, teachers
24 will be able to confer with Museum
25 educators.

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2 In the Perelman Building, the
3 Wachovia Education Resource Room will
4 have even broader use. It will be open
5 to high school and college students, and
6 it will be a quiet respite for the
7 general public, a space to access
8 information and read books on the
9 collections left out for their use.

10 Encapsulated, to be sure, but
11 I've described a full range of
12 educational opportunities, gallery
13 explorations, professional development,
14 instructional materials and soon a
15 state-of-the-art research center. It's
16 evidence that enriching and expanding
17 education is a top priority at PMA.

18 Thank you for your demonstrated
19 confidence in the excellence of the
20 Philadelphia Museum of Art. Please
21 continue your valued financial support,
22 knowing that day-to-day programs are
23 enriching the lives for thousands of
24 visitors, from preschoolers through
25 life-long learners.

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2 Thank you.

3 MR. WINEMAN: Good afternoon,
4 ladies and gentlemen. My name is Andrew
5 Wineman. I'm a volunteer weekend guide
6 at the Museum, and I've just become a
7 volunteer in the educational department
8 as well.

9 I am honored to have this
10 opportunity to address you on a subject
11 so dear to me, the Philadelphia Museum of
12 Art. You've already heard from a number
13 of people who see the Museum as an
14 important part of their lives and of our
15 regional community, and you've heard
16 about many of the different programs
17 which City funding helps to sustain.

18 You've also seen that our
19 volunteers are of different ages and come
20 from many walks of life. As the old man
21 of the group and apparently batting
22 clean-up, I'd like to share some final
23 thoughts with you.

24 I came to the Philadelphia
25 Museum of Art after a 33-year teaching

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2 career. I taught English and, for the
3 last 20 years or so, art history. It was
4 in this latter capacity that I discovered
5 the invaluable teaching resources of the
6 PMA collections.

7 After my retirement, the first
8 and only place I thought of working was
9 at the PMA so that I could become part of
10 the ongoing educational outreach of this
11 institution.

12 I began my guide training with
13 about 25 other like-minded people a few
14 years ago. We were winnowed from an
15 initial group of some 200 applicants for
16 the program. Think about that. Two
17 hundred aspirants for 25 places. When
18 that many people are willing to offer
19 themselves for an intensive two-year
20 training commitment, followed by a
21 lifetime commitment to serve the
22 community through art education, there
23 must be something very special going on.

24 PMA volunteer guides are among
25 the most thoroughly trained museum guides

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2 in the country, and our dedication to the
3 institution is truly remarkable. As an
4 example, just to talk about myself for a
5 moment, I've just come here from a Museum
6 tour entitled "Benjamin Franklin's
7 World," and this evening I'll return to
8 the Museum to help host a tour of the
9 Andrew Wyeth show. This sort of
10 commitment is typical of our volunteers,
11 and we do it all for free.

12 It has been my very good
13 fortune to have traveled to many great
14 cities inside and outside the United
15 States. Whenever possible, I visit art
16 museums in those other countries. On
17 each such visit, no matter how
18 prestigious the museum I've seen, I can't
19 help but be reimpresed by the quality of
20 our own collection, the talent of our
21 staffs, both paid and volunteer, and by
22 the stately beauty of our famous home on
23 the Parkway.

24 Soon I hope, through the
25 generosity of this Council, some needed

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2 improvements and ingenious expansions of
3 our gallery space will be made so that
4 even more of our extraordinary collection
5 can be viewed by even more of the public.

6 On my tours in the Museum and
7 in casual conversations with our
8 visitors, whether they are first-timers
9 from elsewhere in America or a foreign
10 country or whether they live around the
11 country and are frequent visitors, I hear
12 the same reaction voiced over and over
13 again. People are in awe of the quality
14 and quantity of artworks on display and
15 by the gracious treatment they have
16 received from the staff. It is
17 particularly gratifying to hear people
18 from other major cities, New York or
19 Washington, D.C., for example, where
20 great art is also on display, say that
21 they were surprised and delighted by what
22 they found at PMA.

23 The current Andrew Wyeth show,
24 which opens to the public today and which
25 I hope all of you will be able to attend,

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2 will further help to reinforce
3 Philadelphia's role as a major player in
4 the American art conversation.

5 Here's an inside I've never
6 forgotten: Many years ago during the
7 series of Apollo missions which has put
8 astronauts on the moon, I was watching a
9 Sunday morning talk show about NASA and
10 how expensive it was to send all those
11 space craft up, and shouldn't we spend
12 our money on something more down to
13 earth. The response from one of the
14 speakers was this: "America is one of
15 the greatest countries on earth, and
16 great countries do great things. Who but
17 us is going to explore space?"

18 I submit that the same formula
19 applies here in the City of Brotherly
20 Love. Philadelphia is one of America's
21 greatest cities. In fact, becoming
22 increasingly known from coast to coast.
23 And great cities own and display great
24 art in great settings, like PMA. Who
25 else can do this?

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2 Let me conclude by thanking
3 you, ladies and gentlemen, for
4 maintaining PMA's level of funding this
5 year and by encouraging you most
6 sincerely to approve Mayor Street's
7 proposed \$30 million contribution to our
8 capital improvement fund so that the
9 Philadelphia Museum of Art, one of this
10 great City's greatest attractions, can
11 engage, entertain, educate and enlighten
12 future generations of visitors.

13 Thank you very much.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
15 you very much.

16 Councilwoman Tasco would like
17 to say something.

18 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Yes. I'd
19 like to certainly thank you for coming in
20 to give your support to the Philadelphia
21 Museum of Art. It is a great asset to
22 this City.

23 I certainly want to say I
24 appreciate the testimony of the young
25 people and I'm glad that they are working

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2 as interns at the Museum. It's a great
3 learning experience and enhances their
4 school curriculum, and you're doing a
5 great job and thank you so much. I
6 appreciate it.

7 MR. WINEMAN: Thank you.

8 MS. PASCHAL: Thank you.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:
10 Certainly we agree, and thank you very
11 much.

12 MR. MCPHERSON: Our next panel
13 is from the Cultural Fund, Peggy
14 Amsterdam and Nancy Goldenberg.

15 MS. AMSTERDAM: Good afternoon,
16 Council President Verna and esteemed
17 members of City Council. My name is
18 Peggy Amsterdam, and as President of the
19 Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance, a
20 membership organization representing over
21 300 arts and culture institutions in the
22 region, I am here today to testify in
23 support of continued public investment in
24 arts and culture in the City's Fiscal
25 Year 2007 Operating Budget and Five-Year

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2 Plan.

3 Four years ago, the Board of
4 the Philadelphia Cultural Fund adopted
5 the financial goal of growing the fund to
6 \$5 million in five years. We supported
7 this simple and achievable plan to
8 increase the fund in annual increments of
9 \$650,000. It was determined at the time
10 that \$5 million would enable the Cultural
11 Fund to make grant awards that account
12 for inflation and that keep pace with the
13 growth of cultural organizations. This
14 plan has had its setbacks, but,
15 nonetheless, it is still our goal. In a
16 year when there is a budget surplus, the
17 time to push the plan is now.

18 Arts and cultural organizations
19 are providing more services and providing
20 their value to the City. Arts and
21 culture is the face of Philadelphia.
22 This is how we are known to the rest of
23 the world. This is what has gotten us
24 recognition as the "next great city," has
25 attracted tourists and new residents and

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2 created a condo boom. I am proud to say
3 that support of arts and culture is an
4 economic strategy that produces notable
5 results.

6 Arts and cultural assets
7 continue to make this a region of choice
8 for young people, families, businesses
9 and tourists. Community-based arts and
10 culture helps eliminate barriers between
11 culturally and economically diverse
12 people. Arts and culture has steadily
13 been transforming declining neighborhoods
14 into thriving communities, and arts and
15 culture contributes to our individual
16 well-being by providing us with
17 activities that renew our spirit as we
18 take on our busy lives.

19 Yet, for some reason, arts and
20 culture has been relegated to be a
21 discretionary element in the total vision
22 of what it means to ensure the highest
23 quality of life for the people of
24 Philadelphia. I can tell you that arts
25 and culture is neither discretionary nor

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2 is it a stand-alone element. Instead, it
3 is a vital component in the economic
4 vitality of our region.

5 I have a few quick examples in
6 my testimony today that will show that
7 arts and culture offers solutions to help
8 with employment issues, housing issues,
9 educational issues, civic participation,
10 as well as aesthetic issues, making arts
11 and culture a key and vital ingredient
12 for positive change in our region.

13 Arts and culture rehabilitates
14 facilities, families and workers. The
15 African Cultural Appliance of North
16 America located in West Philadelphia
17 unites the arts with social services. In
18 addition to their annual arts and culture
19 events, they offer a child protective
20 services program that keeps families
21 together, repairing unfit living spaces
22 and providing job training to workers who
23 are not attractive to mainstream
24 employers.

25 Arts and culture supports

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2 educational opportunities by providing
3 high-quality exhibits and classes for
4 little or no cost. In 2005, the Wagner
5 Free Institute of Science located in
6 North Philadelphia educated 27,000
7 children and adults in subjects of
8 contemporary science, such as genetics
9 and biotechnology. The Wagner's adult
10 classes are taught by faculty of some of
11 the area's most respected institutions,
12 like Penn and Princeton Universities.
13 These adult classes were enjoyed by over
14 2,000 residents with an interest in
15 science, as well as the area's
16 professionals, such as Fairmount Park
17 employees and gardeners at historic
18 Bartram's Garden.

19 Arts and culture engages
20 residents of all ages in the civic
21 activities necessary to help
22 neighborhoods thrive. Visual arts
23 organization COSACOSA at large is using
24 multimedia technology to rekindle
25 community involvement. Last year, they

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2 brought together youth from the
3 Nicetown-Tioga neighborhood to produce a
4 video to show how teenagers can serve as
5 community leaders by engaging young
6 people and inspiring adult community
7 members to participate and make a
8 difference. This project was responsible
9 for COSACOSA representing Philadelphia as
10 one of eight U.S. community-based arts
11 organizations using multimedia technology
12 to engage youth and civic participation.

13 Our cultural organizations are
14 some of the best museums, musical
15 organizations, schools, theatres and
16 historic attractions in the country.
17 Having traveled a bit myself, I can tell
18 you there aren't many other cities with
19 the cultural product that we have right
20 here, and it's our responsibility to
21 preserve our heritage and show the world
22 what Philadelphia is and what we have.
23 We can only do that through the arts.

24 Arts and culture is woven into
25 the quality of life of our region, and

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2 all of my previous examples are taken
3 from organizations that receive a small
4 amount of operating support from the
5 Philadelphia Cultural Fund. Our City's
6 public investment in arts and culture is
7 generating invaluable programming,
8 service and support of all those who live
9 and visit here. The benefits we gain
10 from the small investment the City makes
11 through the Philadelphia Cultural Fund
12 are significant, and yet the Cultural
13 Fund is still only \$2 million.

14 Non-profit arts and cultural
15 organizations run on tight zero-based
16 budgets, which are spent down every year.
17 Unlike private businesses that exist
18 solely to turn a profit from their
19 investment, non-profits put their
20 investment right back into the community.
21 Because of non-profit arts and cultural
22 investments, we have a city that is not
23 only rich in the variety of its cultural
24 assets, but also in services that touch
25 all of our lives.

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2 I urge you to remain committed
3 to providing the operating support that
4 is critical to many of our cultural
5 organizations. I ask that you carefully
6 consider making arts and culture a
7 priority and increase the Cultural Fund.

8 I thank you for the opportunity
9 to appear before you today and hope your
10 completed budget reflects your continued
11 commitment to seeing the Philadelphia
12 Cultural Fund achieve its \$5 million
13 FY2008 goal.

14 Thank you.

15 MS. GOLDENBERG: Good
16 afternoon. My name is Nancy Goldenberg.
17 I have the honor of serving as the
18 President of the Philadelphia Cultural
19 Fund, and joining me at the table today
20 is June O'Neill, the Cultural Fund
21 Manager, as well as Julia Lopez,
22 Executive Director of Flamenco Ole, one
23 of our grantees, who will provide a few
24 brief comments in a minute.

25 Joining in spirit are the other

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2 extraordinary members of our Board, four
3 of whom are your colleagues,
4 Councilmembers Tasco, Kelly, Reynolds
5 Brown and our newest Council
6 representative, Juan Ramos, and nearly 80
7 volunteer peer-review panelists, whose
8 recommendations are used to determine our
9 awards, and the very grateful 234
10 Philadelphia-based arts and cultural
11 organizations who were this year's
12 recipients of grants.

13 The Cultural Fund turned 15
14 years old this year. The non-profit
15 corporation was established by City
16 Council and the Administration in 1991 to
17 help support and enhance the cultural
18 life and vitality of the City and its
19 residents, to promote arts and culture as
20 engines of social and economic
21 development in the region. We carry out
22 our mission through the administration of
23 an inclusive, equitable and informed
24 process of distributing general operating
25 dollars on an annual basis through a

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2 peer-review process.

3 We began in 1991 with half a
4 million dollars. Our funding from the
5 City has increased over the years to a
6 high of \$2.4 million, matching the goal
7 in our Five-Year Plan in FY04.
8 Unfortunately, our funding was reduced in
9 FY05 to \$2 million. This year's
10 appropriation rose slightly to 2.1
11 million, and the proposed budget that you
12 are now deliberating carries over that
13 same amount, which is two and a quarter
14 million dollars less than the 4.350 that
15 we established as a goal in our Five-Year
16 Plan that Peggy referred to a minute ago.

17 We are grateful for the City's
18 continued support of the Cultural Fund,
19 for without it, we would not exist and I
20 suspect neither would many wonderful arts
21 and cultural groups in this City. I
22 realize the Cultural Fund is but one of
23 many important organizations vying for
24 limited dollars, but if I were in your
25 shoes, I'd want to invest in a proven

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2 success, and few can deny the ongoing
3 positive impact of the Cultural Fund.
4 Our success is evident in our numbers.
5 The number of grant applications we
6 received this year was 241, an eight
7 percent increase from the previous year.
8 This big jump is due to outreach to our
9 arts and cultural organizations. We
10 conducted six application workshops this
11 year, and the net result was 18 new
12 groups that received grants.

13 Second, the Cultural Fund
14 revised its guidelines and application
15 this year to ensure a more friendly and
16 easy-to-use format.

17 And, third, we conducted
18 one-on-one technical assistance in
19 filling out the applications, and 51
20 organizations took advantage of this
21 help. We awarded 234 grants this year,
22 the most ever. This is a 58 percent
23 increase in grant giving from our initial
24 136 15 years ago.

25 The Cultural Fund continues to

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2 increase its visibility and serve as a
3 network for arts and cultural groups from
4 around the City. For the second year,
5 grants were given at an annual reception,
6 which many of you attended, and also this
7 year we awarded the first annual
8 Councilman David Cohen Award, which we
9 will continue hopefully as long as we are
10 around. We do all this and more with
11 only one part-time manager and a very
12 lean administrative budget of 4.2
13 percent.

14 As I mentioned, we recognize
15 you have many difficult decisions to make
16 this budget season, but we believe the
17 Cultural Fund has only touched the
18 surface of what is possible to strengthen
19 our arts and cultural community.

20 Let me just introduce Julia
21 Lopez, who has a few words to say about
22 the impact of this grant on her
23 organization, Flamenco Ole.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
25 you. You know we agree to give each

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2 person three minutes. The first speaker
3 took 12, and yours has been about five.
4 So we want to try to stick to the time
5 line so that everybody will get a chance
6 to speak, but thank you very much.

7 Ms. Lopez.

8 MS. LOPEZ: Thank you very
9 much. Good afternoon. My name is Julia
10 Lopez, and I'm going to try to make up
11 for the time. I'm going to be very
12 brief.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
14 you.

15 MS. LOPEZ: I want to let you
16 know how appreciative I am for the money
17 that I got from the City. We get other
18 grants, and some of them are much bigger
19 than this particular one, but I consider
20 this one the most important one, because
21 this is the one that keeps us alive for
22 the whole year. This is the realistic
23 one that we can do whatever we feel is
24 more important for our company. The
25 other ones are made for special projects.

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2 But in reality, if we didn't have this
3 one to start with that keeps us healthy,
4 we won't be able to take advantage of the
5 other ones.

6 So, again, thank you. Thank
7 you very much.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
9 you. And because we mentioned time, that
10 did not in any way mean we don't know of
11 the fine job that you do, Nancy, and all
12 of you and how we feel about the Cultural
13 Fund. You're a wonderful organization.

14 MS. GOLDENBERG: Thank you.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
16 you.

17 Any questions from members of
18 the Committee?

19 Councilwoman Tasco.

20 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: You know I
21 have to say thank you for coming in and
22 thank you for your hard work and thank
23 you to the Executive Director, who works
24 very hard. She's a one-person show. So
25 we appreciate what they do.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:

3 Absolutely. Thank you, Councilwoman.

4 MR. McPHERSON: The next group
5 is the Philadelphia Theatre Company,
6 Sarah Garonzik.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
8 you very much. Welcome. Feel free to
9 identify yourself for the record and
10 begin your testimony.

11 MS. GARONZIK: Good afternoon,
12 Council President Verna, Councilwoman
13 Blackwell and esteemed members of City
14 Council. I'm Sarah Garonzik. I'm
15 Producing Artistic Director at
16 Philadelphia Theatre Company and I'm here
17 to testify in favor of continued City
18 support in arts and culture in the City's
19 Operating Budget and in its Five-Year
20 Plan.

21 I'm so pleased that the Mayor
22 recognizes and publicly acknowledges that
23 we must support the operating and capital
24 programs of Philadelphia's arts and
25 institutions.

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2 Philadelphia Theatre Company is
3 now celebrating its 30th anniversary
4 season and is fortunate to receive funds
5 from the Philadelphia Cultural Fund. We
6 are proud to be known as an innovator, a
7 risk-taker and an educator.

8 Each year 35,000 citizens come
9 through our doors, and since the
10 beginning, we have put the spotlight on
11 established and emerging American
12 playwrights and emphasize the rich
13 tradition, unique perspective and
14 cultural diversity of the American
15 experience. We have introduced well over
16 100 award-winning plays and musicals to
17 Philadelphia audiences and beyond and
18 have helped make Philadelphia an
19 important center for new play development
20 in this country. In fact, this year with
21 the support from the Cultural Fund, we
22 have two world premiers on our stage, the
23 musical comedy "Adrift in Macao," which
24 will open off Broadway next season, and
25 "Some Men" by the world-renowned

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2 playwright Terrence McNally, which opens
3 next month.

4 Funds from the Cultural Fund
5 also support education and outreach
6 programs, because theatre is not just
7 entertainment, not just a night out, it's
8 also a tremendous educational and
9 humanizing experience. Philadelphia
10 Theatre Company offers curriculum-based
11 art enrichment programs to more than
12 5,000 middle and high school students
13 each year. Using a multiple visit
14 format, our teaching artists go into
15 classrooms several times before the
16 students come to the theatre. We pay
17 specific attention to breaking down the
18 perceived barriers that young people
19 might encounter in experiencing live
20 theatre for the first time.

21 A few weeks ago, students from
22 Girard College attended a performance of
23 "After Ashley" after several prep
24 sessions by our teaching artists. The
25 students read the script before coming,

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2 so when they finally experienced the play
3 live, they understood it that much more
4 and felt like they belonged. They
5 enjoyed it so much, they asked their
6 teacher if they could come to see our
7 next presentation, "Intimate Apparel."
8 And these students are now meeting with
9 the teacher after school on their own
10 time, reading the script on their own
11 time, working with their study guide in
12 preparation for coming to an evening
13 performance, all on their own time.

14 This scenario repeats itself
15 each and every week in the 22 public
16 schools and private schools and parochial
17 schools which we work with throughout the
18 year.

19 In October 2007, we will move
20 into our new home, the Suzanne Roberts
21 Theatre, as part of the Symphony House
22 Project on the Avenue of the Arts at
23 Broad and Lombard Street. Our
24 state-of-the-art facility will be
25 physically accessible to all audience

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2 members, as well as to the successful and
3 nationally renowned artists that work
4 back stage with us. The new theatre will
5 serve not only Philadelphia Theatre
6 Company, but our sister arts
7 organizations and dance theatre, film and
8 the surrounding schools and universities.

9 When we're in our new home, we
10 will be able to offer our education
11 program to more than 20,000 students each
12 year. We'll also be able to fully launch
13 our first theatrical summer camp to
14 introduce students to the craft of
15 playwriting, as well as to acting,
16 directing, set and lighting design, and
17 other possible careers in theatre.

18 Others have spoken eloquently
19 today about the impact of the arts on the
20 economics of the City and the importance
21 of the arts in attracting residents to
22 Center City and tourists to the region,
23 and I endorse their comments. It is well
24 documented that for each dollar that the
25 City spends on arts and culture, we

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2 receive many more in return.

3 But more than that, for each
4 dollar that the City spends on arts and
5 culture, students throughout Philadelphia
6 are inspired to action. They experience
7 life from another person's perspective
8 and gain understanding and insight into
9 themselves and the world at large.

10 I thank you for the opportunity
11 to speak to you today about Philadelphia
12 Theatre Company and hope you will
13 continue investing in the arts, which
14 inspire, educate, nourish and illuminate
15 us all each and every day. Thanks again.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
17 you very much.

18 Any questions or comments?

19 (No response.)

20 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
21 you again.

22 MR. McPHERSON: The next
23 witnesses are Nicholas Torres, John
24 Irizarry, Executive Director of Congreso.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good

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2 evening. Thank you for coming. Feel
3 free to identify yourself for the record
4 and begin your testimony.

5 MR. TORRES: Good afternoon.

6 My name is Nicholas Torres and I serve as
7 President of Congreso de Latinos Unidos,
8 the largest Latino health, education,
9 social service and workforce development
10 community-based not-for-profit agency in
11 Pennsylvania. With me here is Johnny
12 Irizarry, who is the Executive Director
13 of The Lighthouse, also serving North
14 Philadelphia, and two community residents
15 who have benefitted from adult literacy
16 classes, who will also be testifying.

17 On behalf of the over 24,000
18 clients we serve at Congreso, 70 percent
19 who are Latino and 23 percent who are
20 African-American, I am honored to be here
21 today to emphasize the critical need for
22 adult literacy classes.

23 One of the most assured means
24 of securing a stable workforce is through
25 educating our populace and preparing them

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2 for higher-skilled jobs in the City. As
3 such, community adult literacy classes
4 are of the utmost importance for the
5 thousands of adults with low literacy
6 skills in Philadelphia. With your
7 support, Congreso and other Latino-based
8 community organizations are seeking a
9 long-term solution to maintain adult
10 literacy classes through the Community
11 College of Philadelphia. Together we
12 need to ensure the continuance of these
13 classes.

14 Pennsylvania state law outlines
15 that community colleges are designed not
16 only for post secondary studies, but also
17 for out of school youth and for adult
18 education programs. Even though this is
19 the case, only about 1.5 percent of the
20 state and city public funding for
21 community colleges, about 20 million, is
22 dedicated to adult literacy classes.
23 This percentage is further reduced to
24 0.003 percent, or about 160,000,
25 dedicated to the Latino community, the

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2 largest demographic shift or increase in
3 the City.

4 This is even more significant
5 considering that this is during a time
6 when the City is experiencing demographic
7 changes through new immigration requiring
8 more ESL classes, continues to have a
9 tremendously high drop-out rate, over 50
10 percent for the Latino community, and
11 continues to struggle with many residents
12 being unemployable given their low
13 literacy rates and a changing job
14 industry.

15 Specifically, the Latino
16 community has seen CCP's investment in
17 adult literacy decrease from
18 approximately 60 sections annually to its
19 current 18 sections. This is a 70
20 percent decrease in less than three
21 years. Again, I'd like to emphasize that
22 this has been done at a time when, as a
23 recent National Research Council study
24 reports, increased immigration means that
25 Latinos are highly overrepresented in

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2 low-wage industries. Low-wage jobs and
3 limited English proficiency lead to lack
4 of self-sufficiency.

5 Latino students are seeking a
6 solution, but Dr. Steven Curtis,
7 President of CCP, seeks to increase the
8 costs shared with students to
9 approximately \$100 per class,
10 representing about a 43 percent of the
11 class cost. This cost of \$100 per course
12 to the student competes with essentials
13 necessary to sustain a family,
14 healthcare, food and housing. On
15 average, annual family incomes for
16 Latinos in eastern North Philadelphia is
17 \$14,000. Making \$100 available for a
18 semester course becomes a luxury for the
19 population most needing adult literacy.

20 As mentioned before, this
21 decrease in funding comes at a time when
22 demand for the classes and, hence, job
23 readiness and workforce development are
24 soaring. Congreso alone saw that only 50
25 percent of its applicants were being able

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2 to be placed. There is currently a wait
3 list of 400 students at Congreso.

4 The decrease in availability of
5 these classes only further reduces any
6 hope of these individuals entering the
7 workforce and becoming self-sufficient.
8 As such, unemployment equates to a larger
9 drain on social service resources as the
10 heads of households have to support their
11 families through alternative means. Keep
12 in mind that as baby boomers in this
13 country reach retirement, the community
14 will be increasingly dependent upon the
15 U.S. workforce, which will be
16 increasingly made up of the younger
17 growing Latino population.

18 In closing, I would like to
19 remind City Council that our future will
20 be in the hands of the next generation.
21 We need to prepare them for their future
22 and for ours. As such, we again implore
23 your assistance for funding on the City
24 level and an increase in the allocation
25 designed for adult literacy classes and

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2 specifically to increase CCP's current
3 allocation of 1.5 percent of their 57
4 million allocated by City and state
5 funding. Thank you.

6 (Applause.)

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
8 you very much. Thank you.

9 Is there any other testimony?

10 MR. IRIZARRY: Yes. Good
11 afternoon. My name is Johnny Irizarry
12 and I am the Executive Director of The
13 Lighthouse, a 112-year-old settlement
14 house/neighborhood center located in
15 North Philadelphia/West Kensington. The
16 Lighthouse serves over 6,600 individuals
17 a year, and similar to community
18 demographics, our program participants
19 are 75 percent Latino and 25 percent
20 African-American.

21 We want to sincerely thank you
22 for this forum and the opportunity to
23 share our concerns regarding the
24 essential and urgent need for your
25 support of comprehensive adult literacy

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2 programs in our community.

3 We strongly agree and support
4 the issues raised in the testimony just
5 provided by our colleague, Nicholas
6 Torres, and would like to share
7 additional information for your further
8 consideration.

9 As Nick stated in his
10 statement, the eastern North Philadelphia
11 community is experiencing an extreme drop
12 in the number of adult literacy classes
13 offered after many years of services
14 provided by Community College of
15 Philadelphia in partnership with a
16 diverse group of predominately Latino
17 community-based organizations in eastern
18 North Philadelphia, such as The
19 Lighthouse and Congreso, that made
20 accessible ABE, ESL and GED classes, both
21 in English and Spanish.

22 Originally there were at least
23 eight sites offering classes in
24 partnership with CCP in North
25 Philadelphia. In a little over five

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2 years, CCP offerings in our community
3 have been dramatically reduced. Just
4 five years ago, an estimated 5,900 adult
5 learners attended about 244 classes per
6 year offered by CCP directly in our
7 community. This last session served only
8 225 students total at three remaining
9 sites, Congreso, Casa del Carmen and The
10 Lighthouse, leaving a total of only nine
11 CCP classes offered in our communities.

12 Although there are other
13 providers of adult literacy education in
14 our community, some of which also provide
15 a very limited number of classes in our
16 organizations, these programs are very
17 small in our area because of limited
18 funding cannot pick up the great void of
19 services caused by CCP unexpected
20 cutbacks, and, unfortunately, these
21 providers do not offer GED classes in
22 Spanish. These and other providers of
23 adult literacy programs have historically
24 not offered many classes in the eastern
25 North Philadelphia communities because

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2 they knew that CCP served the area. But
3 as a result of CCP cutbacks, our
4 community will once again become one of
5 the most underserved in adult literacy
6 programs in the City. This is extremely
7 alarming in light of what has already
8 been highlighted by Mr. Torres in his
9 testimony regarding the high drop-out
10 rates and increasing number of the Latino
11 population and growing immigration to our
12 City.

13 We are respectfully requesting
14 that Philadelphia City Council consider
15 the many complex issues adult learners
16 confront in the Latino community and
17 across the City and, through
18 partnerships, policy and legislation
19 development, institute solutions that
20 will not abandon adults caught in the
21 desperate void caused by not having the
22 required tools for gaining access to the
23 workforce, higher education and/or
24 advanced job training opportunities
25 because of not having a high school

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2 diploma, a GED and/or not knowing the
3 English language well enough to achieve
4 economic stability and economic success
5 at equitable levels with other
6 communities across the City.

7 The 2003 National Assessment of
8 Adult Literacy Report stated that 14
9 percent, or 30 million, of U.S. adults
10 have below literacy skills and that
11 public policy in the U.S. is consistent
12 with research findings about the
13 importance of adult literacy. The report
14 affirms that adults with below basic
15 English literacy skills are more likely
16 to be unemployed than individuals at
17 higher literacy categories and that those
18 adults with adequate literacy skills are
19 better equipped to be parents, workers
20 and citizens. Unfortunately, the report
21 states that Hispanic adults showed a
22 decrease in scores for both prose and
23 document literacy and a higher percentage
24 in the Below Basic category. All other
25 groups improved in all three measures of

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2 literacy as compared to 1992.

3 The report also estimates that
4 there are 11 million adults who are
5 non-literate in English, going on to say
6 that these adults may also be illiterate
7 in the native languages or they may have
8 advanced degrees, but they need to learn
9 to speak, read and write English in order
10 to participate fully in U.S. society.

11 Community-based ESL, ABE and
12 GED classes are a key point of entry
13 towards helping this population gain
14 equitable access to the opportunities to
15 productively continue to U.S. society.

16 We have two students that have
17 very short testimonies, that they would
18 like to add their personal experience.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Okay.
20 We'll try to work with you. Let's try to
21 keep it short.

22 MR. IRIZARRY: They're very
23 short.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
25 you. Thank you.

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2 MS. DiRENZO: Good afternoon,
3 members of City Council.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
5 afternoon.

6 MS. DiRENZO: My name is
7 Marisol DiRenzo. I'm the Adult Education
8 Coordinator at The Lighthouse.

9 In 1991, I opened a small
10 flower shop. In 2001, I closed it to
11 take care of my cancer-stricken husband.
12 I had not worked in an office setting in
13 over a decade. I discovered most places
14 no longer had a personnel office.
15 Everyone had moved online. Everyone had
16 an exam before any employer would even
17 consider an interview.

18 I needed to brush up. I looked
19 into several community organizations.
20 Even though I lived in Roxborough, I
21 enrolled in a GED class at The
22 Lighthouse, where I decided to volunteer
23 with the Adult Education Department. I
24 volunteered for six months. I completed
25 my semester with renewed confidence ready

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2 to face the working world.

3 There were challenges that were
4 presented to me as a Latina woman who was
5 born and raised in North Philadelphia.
6 Imagine for those who do not speak
7 English who desperately want to seek a
8 higher education and employment.

9 There is also a demand for
10 bilingual employment. Without these
11 services, our students face multiple
12 challenges and barriers. Without these
13 programs, such as ESL I and II, English
14 as a second language, you undermined the
15 strength of a whole community. Not just
16 for Latinos, but African-Americans, Asian
17 and low-income whites.

18 I'm here to speak on behalf of
19 the student who takes GED in Spanish and
20 also takes the ESL classes in order to
21 further their education so they can go to
22 a training school or a better-paying job.
23 I speak for the student who has been out
24 of school for many years and wishes to
25 get their GED. I speak for the student

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2 whose mother is tired of the violence in
3 public schools and her son or daughter
4 dropped out and they want their GED,
5 because she can't give up on her
6 children. Or the immigrant who is
7 legally here and pays taxes, but is not
8 entitled to any returns, studies ESL I,
9 ESL II in hopes of preparation for his
10 citizenship class, for all the students
11 who have invested more than one or two
12 semesters at The Lighthouse trying to get
13 their GED and will feel the impact if CCP
14 eliminates their classes and raises their
15 rates to unaffordable levels.

16 As the Adult Education
17 Coordinator at The Lighthouse who
18 registers CCP students, delivers their
19 applications, delivers their money,
20 assesses their students, please tell me
21 what more can I do to enhance, strengthen
22 the commitment that we owe to this
23 community. I can only hope for all of
24 our sake that CCP lives up to just a
25 little of its name, community.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
3 you very much.

4 (Applause.)

5 MR. OQUENDO: Good afternoon,
6 Council. My name is Pablo Oquendo. I am
7 a current student at The Lighthouse and I
8 came here in the United States at the age
9 of 18. I started working. And a few
10 years ago, I got hurt, injured, and I
11 decided that I needed to do something
12 else, since I can't work with my hands no
13 longer. So I started taking my classes
14 of GED, and to this day, it's been
15 working for me. And I'm kind of ashamed
16 that Community College will want to cut
17 out these services for us
18 Hispanic-speaking people to get a second
19 chance in life. We want our second
20 chance, too. And that's all I have to
21 say.

22 Thank you very much.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
24 you very much.

25 (Applause.)

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:

3 Certainly. Everybody is deserving of a
4 second chance. Thank you for your
5 testimony.

6 MR. MCPHERSON: The next group
7 is Victor Bryan Smith, Carla Johnson,
8 Christina Taing.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
10 evening. Welcome. Please introduce
11 yourself for our record and begin your
12 testimony.

13 MR. SMITH: Good afternoon,
14 Madam City Council President.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
16 afternoon.

17 MR. SMITH: My name is Victor
18 Bryan Smith, Sr.

19 MS. TAING: My name is
20 Christina Taing.

21 MS. JOHNSON: My name is Carla
22 Lucille Johnson.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
24 evening.

25 MR. SMITH: Madam City Council

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2 President, members of this esteemed body,
3 visitors, my fellow students, greetings.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:

5 Greetings.

6 MR. SMITH: My name is Victor
7 B. Smith, Sr. and I live in North
8 Philadelphia. I am the Student
9 Government President at Community College
10 of Philadelphia. I am here today to
11 request that the City support the
12 College's request for an additional \$2
13 million for its operating budget.

14 I would like to present to you
15 the following reasons why funding the
16 College is so important.

17 When founded in 1964, Community
18 College of Philadelphia was dedicated to
19 the following: Providing access to
20 higher education for all who may benefit,
21 providing academic skills, training and a
22 coherent foundation for college transfer,
23 employment and life-long learning.

24 The College serves the City of
25 Philadelphia by preparing its students to

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2 be active participants in the cultural,
3 business and political life of the City
4 and the region.

5 The College draws together
6 students from a wide range of ages and
7 backgrounds and seeks to provide the
8 programs and support they need to achieve
9 their goals.

10 Some students, however, have
11 the dream, but lack the funding to
12 realize the dream. It is our
13 responsibility to assist the citizens of
14 this great City to achieve that dream.

15 In this economy, education is
16 being pushed aside. People with
17 educational dreams are finding them
18 crushed by bureaucracy. It begins in the
19 high schools, where in the tristate area
20 the drop-out rate is 11 percent. For
21 those able to get into a four-year
22 institution, the drop-out rate is 27
23 percent for first-year students.

24 Funding, increased student
25 funding, enables people to achieve those

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2 goals, to become the productive voting
3 members of the community, and empowers
4 others to do the same.

5 Over the last four years,
6 Community College has received a budget
7 with no increases or decreases, and we
8 are grateful. But as with everything,
9 prices go up and the cost of living
10 cannot be treated the same as it was four
11 years ago. And we have had tuition
12 increases for the last three years.

13 Although the nation is in a
14 time of "no child left behind," without
15 increased dedicated funding, entire
16 generations will be left behind.

17 The requested additional \$2
18 million would be a great investment and
19 send the message that we do care about
20 our children. In a time of trying to
21 find role models, an educational role
22 model stands above all others.

23 I am living proof of just one
24 financial aid story. I retired in the
25 year 2000 as a State Corrections Officer,

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2 and as I pondered my plans for my future,
3 I decided to return to Community College
4 of Philadelphia after a 23-year absence.
5 Since my return, I have maintained a 3.0
6 GPA. I have been the recipient of many
7 awards for my volunteer work, not only in
8 school but with the Community Builders
9 Tour, which is sponsored by the
10 Timberland Company.

11 I have been honored by being
12 placed on the National Dean's list of
13 Who's Who in America's Junior Colleges
14 for the year 2005 and 2006. And let me
15 add, only one half of one percent of
16 students across the country get that
17 honor.

18 I have been invited to speak on
19 many occasions to high school students,
20 and my message is the same: Never be
21 afraid to let your light shine, for you
22 empower others to do the same.

23 My ten-year-old granddaughter,
24 Brianna, constantly tells me just how
25 proud of her Pop-Pop she is and she wants

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2 to follow in my footsteps. But she wants
3 to be President of the College. I tell
4 her she can accomplish anything she wants
5 to. With a good education and hard work,
6 she will realize her dreams.

7 While this is certainly true,
8 it is not the full story. There is
9 another ingredient that often is critical
10 to success, the ability to afford a
11 quality education. I urge you to
12 increase funding for Community College of
13 Philadelphia so that students like me and
14 future students like my granddaughter
15 will have access to a college education.

16 Thank you for your time in
17 allowing me to speak today.

18 (Applause.)

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
20 you very much.

21 MS. JOHNSON: Madam President,
22 esteemed Councilmembers, visitors and
23 fellow students, my name is Carla Lucille
24 Johnson. I live in Germantown. I am 46
25 years old, divorced and I'm a mother of

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2 two adult daughters, Pamela, who is 20,
3 and Paula, who is 24. Pamela is also a
4 full-time student at Community College.

5 In 1981, I started at Community
6 College, but stopped because of the birth
7 of my first daughter. I was employed for
8 24 years at Eastern Pennsylvania
9 Psychiatric Institute, EPPI for short.
10 It has been my life-long goal to become a
11 social worker working with geriatrics.
12 Although I was the financial provider for
13 two children, I was still able to attend
14 Community College of Philadelphia and
15 take several classes during the years
16 because of the affordable tuition.

17 In June of 2004, the Eastern
18 Pennsylvania Psychiatric Institute closed
19 its doors. Unsure of what I was going to
20 do, I took the chance at becoming a
21 full-time student. To understand why I
22 chose to become a full-time student, I
23 would like to read excerpts from the
24 Mission Statement of Community College of
25 Philadelphia.

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2 The Community College of
3 Philadelphia is an open admission,
4 Associate-degree-granting institution,
5 which provides access to higher education
6 for all who may benefit. Its programs of
7 study in liberal arts and sciences,
8 career technologies and basic academic
9 skills provide a coherent foundation for
10 college transfer, employment and
11 life-long learning.

12 The College serves by preparing
13 its students to be informed citizens,
14 active participants in the cultural life
15 of the City, enabled to meet the changing
16 needs of business, industry and
17 professions. To help address the broad
18 economic, cultural and political concerns
19 in the City and beyond, the College draws
20 together students from a wide range of
21 ages and backgrounds and seeks to provide
22 the programs to support their needs to
23 achieve their goals.

24 The residents of Philadelphia
25 do not realize the benefits Community

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2 College of Philadelphia offers. I am an
3 excellent example of this. Since
4 becoming a full-time student, I have had
5 many accomplishments. I have maintained
6 a 3.1 GPA, and in 2004, 2005 and 2006, I
7 received the honor to being placed on the
8 National Dean's list for American Junior
9 Colleges.

10 I have been very active in
11 different organizations. I am a member
12 of LEADS, which stands for Leadership,
13 plus Education, Achievements, plus
14 Diversity equals Success. I am the
15 Chairperson of the Community Service
16 Subcommittee. We have had select food
17 drives to support families in need.

18 In addition, I am a student
19 ambassador, and as an ambassador, I am
20 able to speak to others about what the
21 college offers, and I have done community
22 service for the school.

23 All of these things are
24 possible because the financial aid covers
25 the cost of my tuition. I would not have

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2 been able to do this if my cost to attend
3 the college was substantially more than
4 the financial aid I receive.

5 I am here today to show you
6 that the money that the City of
7 Philadelphia gives the College is being
8 well spent. And an increase of money to
9 the school ensures the same opportunity
10 for future students to attend this
11 college.

12 Thank you for allowing me to
13 address you today.

14 (Applause.)

15 MS. TAING: Good afternoon,
16 ladies and gentlemen of the Council and
17 guests. I appreciate having the
18 opportunity to address some very
19 pertinent issues that are relative to me
20 and thousands of others. My name is
21 Christina Taing. I am 25 years old, and
22 I have been married for ten years and
23 have two young sons. I have lived in
24 Philadelphia for most of my life and I am
25 proud to say that I am a South

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2 Philadelphian. I am here today on behalf
3 of the students of Community College of
4 Philadelphia.

5 Our college recently celebrated
6 its 40th year as an institution of higher
7 education that prides itself on being
8 financially accessible to thousands of
9 students. This accessibility to
10 non-traditional, minority, immigrant and
11 poor students is in grave danger due to a
12 budget crisis that looms large on our
13 campus. Though the City and state have
14 kept funding for our college level for
15 the past few years, we are all well aware
16 of the rising costs of living. As our
17 funding stays at a stagnant level, the
18 costs for the operation of the College
19 surge, in gas, electric, wages and more.

20 In light of this situation,
21 tuition has been increased every year for
22 the past three years. We are looking at
23 yet another tuition increase this coming
24 year as well. With the higher costs
25 comes cuts in departments, programs and

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2 classes, all at the expense of those
3 students who yearn to learn and succeed,
4 yet are thwarted by the high cost of an
5 education.

6 I personally understand the
7 barriers that can obstruct one in the
8 pursuit of an education. I had dropped
9 out of high school, but managed to
10 complete my diploma on time with my
11 peers. But college had not been for me.
12 As a young mother, I dreaded the costs
13 and the time, but especially the costs.

14 When I decided to enroll in
15 college last year, at the age of 24, I
16 was heartened by the knowledge that
17 community colleges were rather
18 inexpensive and that financial aid could
19 help me considerably. I can now proudly
20 say that I have a 4.5 GPA, am
21 Vice-President of the Student Government
22 Association and an officer of Phi Theta
23 Kappa International Honor Society.

24 When I complete my Associate's
25 degree in May, I will be contemplating

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2 admission into some of the best
3 universities in the City, the University
4 of Pennsylvania, Drexel University and
5 Thomas Jefferson University. With the
6 nurturing environment that CCP affords
7 all of its students, I have gone from
8 being a high school drop-out to a high
9 school graduate, to realizing my hopes of
10 accomplishing a Master's in nursing.

11 My story is not unusual or
12 atypical of the students that attend
13 community colleges. There are thousands
14 like me, which is why I am here today to
15 beseech the City Council to increase the
16 funding allotted to Community College of
17 Philadelphia so that the students of the
18 present and of the future can also have
19 the opportunity to learn and to
20 eventually become vital components to a
21 continually thriving and expanding
22 Philadelphia.

23 Thank you for your time.

24 (Applause.)

25 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank

1 3/29/06 - WHOLE - BILL 060001, ETC.

2 you very much. We certainly wish you
3 well and applaud you for your commitment
4 to making yourself and your family
5 successful.

6 Thank you all.

7 Councilman Kenney.

8 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I know this
9 is public testimony from the general
10 public. Is it appropriate for us to
11 request some information from CCP? I'm
12 just curious. Listening to the testimony
13 of this panel and the last panel, a
14 couple questions arose, and I would like
15 to just make the request to the Chair
16 that if I could find out what the
17 tuition -- and you may know -- what the
18 tuition annually is now for CCP, how many
19 students are enrolled there and what the
20 average financial aid that comes from
21 either the state or federal government
22 is.

23 And, also, I assume that it's
24 heavily weighted as Philadelphia
25 residents, but I'd also be interested in

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2 knowing whether or not there's any
3 component of students that are from
4 outside the boundaries of Philadelphia.

5 Also, as a result of the
6 discussion on the last panel relative to
7 the cuts in ESL programs, I find it
8 somewhat ironic that any federal
9 legislation that's coming relative to
10 immigration is requiring that people
11 learn English and they're providing
12 absolutely no help or funding to maintain
13 that English Second Language program.

14 Recent census data that I've
15 become aware of today is that since the
16 last census, Philadelphia has lost a
17 gross number of 20,000 people and has a
18 net loss of 8,000 people. Five thousand
19 of those people were legal immigrants
20 that made up the loss of the 20,000 gross
21 loss of residents for the City. So even
22 though in some neighborhoods we're doing
23 a lot better and property values are up,
24 we still are experiencing a net loss of
25 people in trying to fill that gap through

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2 legal immigration. But we need to
3 provide some opportunities for people to
4 learn English, like some of our
5 Washington elected officials demand.

6 So that information on the
7 enrollment, tuition and financial aid
8 would be helpful. Thank you. Thank you
9 for your testimony.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
11 you very much. We have noted that and
12 we'll certainly pass that on to make sure
13 we get that.

14 Thank you all.

15 MR. MCPHERSON: The next group,
16 Letty D. Thall, Joanne Fisher from the
17 Maternity Care Coalition.

18 MS. THALL: Hi. I'm Letty
19 Thall, the Public Policy Director, and
20 with me today is Lisa Salberg, our Cribs
21 for Kids Coordinator. We're representing
22 Joanne, who sends her regrets but is in
23 the midst of our annual Mothers' Day
24 Campaign, which is being chaired this
25 year by Carolyn Smith and her son, Will

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2 Smith, Philadelphia native, Hollywood
3 star and, for some of us of a certain
4 age, the Fresh Prince of Bel-Air, who
5 used to shoot hoops at -- or there were
6 clips on TV of him shooting hoops at 17th
7 and Mount Vernon Recreation Center.

8 But we're here today to tell
9 you that we appreciate the opportunity to
10 provide this information to City Council
11 since we work with and across City
12 departments that impact the City's
13 youngest citizens and vulnerable families
14 to meet basic health and social needs,
15 which hopefully will prevent later more
16 expensive and longer term public
17 involvement.

18 With our brightly colored
19 MOMobile vans, we see clients and make
20 sure that appropriate health services are
21 given during pregnancy and after. This
22 work keeps us in touch with health,
23 welfare, nutrition, early care and
24 education, and social services or, in
25 some cases, recognition of the dearth of

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2 these vital services. It also enables us
3 to see emerging trends, such as the need
4 for breastfeeding education, screening
5 and support for perinatal depression, HIV
6 prevention, and education regarding safe
7 sleep and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

8 We certainly appreciate all of
9 the assistance given by many of you here
10 in this room in City Council, the
11 Department of Human Services and the
12 Department of Public Health in helping us
13 meet this newly emerging problem of
14 infant death due to a family's inability
15 to provide separate sleeping space for
16 their new babies. Our Cribs for Kids
17 Program has been able to provide
18 education and cribs through a screening
19 process for eligible families. And as
20 you all know, the demand far exceeds the
21 supply.

22 I've attached a sheet that
23 identifies the multiple public and
24 private funding sources to try to meet
25 this demand, and DHS in the midst of this

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2 fiscal year, as well as the Department of
3 Public Health, have been able to increase
4 their contracts with us to serve their
5 needed clients, and we're very grateful
6 for this additional support, and we also
7 look forward to the additional funding
8 that the Mayor has proposed in the 2007
9 budget year. With this type of support,
10 we can ensure that eligible families
11 receive cribs and intensify our
12 educational efforts.

13 There is still some other
14 problems that need solutions, and I'd
15 just like to identify that heterosexual
16 women of color have the fastest growing
17 rate of HIV infection in our region. We
18 provide services, and hope to be able to
19 provide more.

20 There are also women in prison
21 who are pregnant or mothers of young
22 children. We've been working with the
23 Philadelphia Riverside Correctional
24 Facility and Robert Wood Johnson
25 Foundation. We hope, and knock on wood

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2 we're not jinxing it, that we may be able
3 to bring some private funding into the
4 City to serve this population.

5 And my last paragraph is a
6 description of who we are, because I know
7 that City Council has also been concerned
8 about contractor diversity. So I wanted
9 you to know that we're a non-profit
10 governed by a 27-member Board of
11 Directors composed of four men and 23
12 women. Thirty three percent of our Board
13 members are African-American, 48 percent
14 Caucasian-American, 15 percent are Latino
15 or Latina and four percent are
16 Asian-American. And our staff is also
17 equally diverse.

18 We look forward to all of us
19 joining together to ensure that babies
20 born in Philadelphia can grow into
21 productive, healthy and happy citizens.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
23 you very much.

24 MS. THALL: Thank you very
25 much.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Any
3 questions or comments?

4 (No response.)

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
6 you.

7 MR. McPHERSON: Our next
8 witness is Frank Cervone. I'm sorry,
9 with Jean Bordgerhoff and a panel with
10 the Center City Crime Victims.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Again,
12 we thank the Maternity Care Coalition for
13 the fine job that they continue to do.

14 MS. THALL: Thank you.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
16 you. Welcome. Please identify yourself
17 for the record and begin your testimony.

18 MR. CERVONE: Good evening,
19 Councilwoman Blackwell and members. I
20 I'm Frank Cervone and I serve as Director
21 of the Support Center for Child
22 Advocates. It's good to see you again.
23 I represent tonight the 12 victim service
24 agencies in the City of Philadelphia, and
25 I will briefly summarize the statement of

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2 need, which we've prepared, presented to
3 you this evening, as well as had
4 delivered to your Chambers.

5 The 12 agencies, you may know
6 them. I'm sure you know many. The
7 Action Alliance for Elderly Victim
8 Assistance, Center City Crime Victim
9 Services, East Division Crime Victim
10 Services, the Families of Murder Victims,
11 North Central Victim Services, Northeast
12 Philadelphia Victim/Witness Services,
13 Northwest Victim Services, the Support
14 Center for Child Advocates,
15 Victim/Witness Services of South
16 Philadelphia, West/Southwest, Women
17 Organized Against Rape and Women Against
18 Abuse.

19 This afternoon we ask for your
20 support in the form of \$700,000 in
21 appropriations in Class 200 funds in the
22 District Attorney's budget.

23 Over the last three years, our
24 agencies have experienced an 18 percent
25 drop in federal Victims of Crime Act

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2 funding. For that drop, we've suffered
3 no reduction in service. We keep
4 squeezing ourselves, finding dollars and
5 finding volunteer time. We recover in
6 excess of \$1.6 million in crime victim
7 compensation. Our volunteers contribute
8 millions of dollars in contributed
9 services to this community.

10 But volunteers need staff
11 support in the neighborhoods and in the
12 courts. Whether the victimization is by
13 rape or domestic violence, child abuse,
14 elder abuse or homicide, we are with the
15 citizens, the victims, your constituents,
16 we're with the people.

17 We all saw what happened a few
18 weeks ago in witness intimidation in the
19 sad case of Faheem Childs when six
20 witnesses failed to testify, refused to
21 come forward, refused to do their part to
22 protect the community. It's hard,
23 though, to criticize such moves, because
24 their fear is well founded. We're living
25 in a violent time.

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2 What we can tell you, though,
3 is that because of our work, our
4 courtroom accompaniment, our field work,
5 our hand-holding, many, many thousands of
6 victims are indeed coming forward. Cases
7 are being heard and successfully
8 prosecuted and their compensation being
9 acquired.

10 In short, victim service
11 workers are a part of the answer. We
12 know you've heard from District Attorney
13 Abraham and from Councilman Kenney about
14 the need for victim relocation dollars.
15 Ours are the agencies that use some of
16 those dollars in a sense by networking
17 with the people who need to move. But,
18 in fact, however you can come down on
19 that difficult controversial decision, we
20 believe that the larger part of the
21 answer lies in supporting our work, in
22 helping the thousands of victims who
23 surely will not relocate, but face the
24 same issues of intimidation and need for
25 accompaniment.

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2 Thank you.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
4 you very much.

5 Do you know what is in the
6 current budget for the DA for this
7 service now?

8 MR. CERVONE: I believe the
9 same number as last year. I believe it's
10 \$630,000.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: So you
12 want an additional \$700,000?

13 MR. CERVONE: No; an additional
14 \$70,000, for a total of 700,000.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
16 you.

17 MR. CERVONE: To fill in, and
18 you'll see in our report some of the
19 economic analysis, the financial
20 analysis, to fill in some of the \$231,000
21 cut in federal funding over the last
22 three years.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Okay.
24 Thank you very much.

25 Are there other questions from

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2 members of the Committee?

3 (No response.)

4 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
5 you very much, Mr. Cervone.

6 MR. CERVONE: Thanks for having
7 us. Good evening.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:
9 Certainly.

10 MR. McPHERSON: Maurice
11 Sampson, with panel, from the Streets
12 Department Recycling.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:
14 Welcome. Good evening. Feel free to
15 identify yourself for our record and
16 begin your testimony. Good evening.

17 MR. SAMPSON: Good afternoon.
18 My name is Maurice Sampson. I'm actually
19 going to speak last. We have five of us
20 speaking. We will recognize the limits.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
22 you.

23 MR. SAMPSON: And we'll start
24 to hear from a resident, Ann Dixon.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank

1 3/29/06 - WHOLE - BILL 060001, ETC.

2 you.

3 MS. DIXON: Hello. I'm a
4 resident of West Philadelphia. Ann
5 Dixon.

6 It should be as easy to recycle
7 as it is to properly dispose of trash,
8 because it should be easy to do something
9 that's going to save the City money
10 without losing jobs. It should be easy
11 to do something that lessens the burden
12 on landfills and saves resources. It
13 should be easy to recycle, because
14 recycling is beneficial for everyone. If
15 made easier, more people will
16 participate.

17 In summers, I leave for work
18 before 7:00 a.m. on Saturdays. This
19 means that if I want to recycle cardboard
20 and plastic, I have to first remember
21 which Saturdays are recycling days for
22 the Cedar Park Neighbors Recycling
23 Project at 50th and Baltimore. I load up
24 my bicycle with cardboard and plastic at
25 6:30 a.m. and drop it off at the

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2 recycling spot in front of a sign which
3 reads "don't drop off recycling before
4 9:00 a.m." Others have already left the
5 recycling. This process does not count
6 as easy recycling.

7 All recyclable items should be
8 picked up curbside weekly the same day as
9 trash. This, City Council members, could
10 be your legacy, a major concrete item to
11 show your constituents.

12 MS. LYNN: Good afternoon. My
13 name is Emily Lynn and I'm a Program
14 Director at Clean Air Council. Clean Air
15 Council is a local environmental
16 non-profit organization based in
17 Philadelphia dedicated to protecting
18 everyone's right to breathe clean air.
19 The Council is also a founding member of
20 the Recycling Alliance of Philadelphia.
21 The Alliance is a coalition of
22 organizations and individuals dedicated
23 to promoting better recycling services in
24 the City. Today I'm here specifically to
25 comment on the City of Philadelphia's

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2 recycling program.

3 One of the most popular
4 questions I get on a weekly or even daily
5 basis is, Why don't Philadelphia
6 residents recycle? This is a fairly
7 simple-sounding question. Being the
8 first city in the nation to pass a
9 mandatory recycling law close to 20 years
10 ago, you'd think we'd have it right by
11 now. But Philadelphia's resident
12 curbside recycling rate continues to
13 hover at or below five percent, ranking
14 the City second to the bottom among
15 cities with populations over 1 million.
16 The fact remains: After 20 years of
17 operating under a mandatory recycling
18 law, it is still much easier and more
19 straightforward for Philadelphia
20 residents to put out the trash than put
21 out their recycling.

22 I would argue that there is
23 actually a very simple answer to this
24 question of why people don't recycle. If
25 the City makes recycling as easy for

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2 residents as throwing out their trash and
3 gives residents the tools they need to
4 participate, then I guarantee you you'll
5 see Philadelphia's recycling rates soar.
6 Invest in our recycling program now and
7 according to the City Controller's 2005
8 audit of the recycling program, the City
9 could soon reap an economic savings to
10 the tune of 17 million a year.

11 There are four steps to
12 improving the City's recycling program
13 that Clean Air Council and the recycling
14 advocacy community as a whole would like
15 to see City Council champion. One,
16 collect recycling curbside on a weekly
17 basis in all neighborhoods of the City;
18 two, allow residents to place all
19 recyclable materials in one bin; three,
20 expand curbside recycling to include
21 plastics and cardboard; and, four, design
22 and implement a targeted recycling
23 educational campaign that gets residents
24 the information they need.

25 Philadelphia has a tremendous

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2 opportunity to make recycling easy and
3 simple for residents. Pilot programs in
4 neighborhoods of Northwest Philadelphia
5 have tested very successful single-stream
6 collection in incentive-based recycling
7 methods that have shown a drastic
8 increase in both recycling participation
9 rates and recycling diversion rates. By
10 adopting a program City-wide which is
11 modeled after the very successful
12 recycling program that has been tested in
13 these pilot neighborhoods, all of City
14 residents can get weekly curbside
15 recycling pick-up, can place all the
16 materials in one bin, can recycle
17 plastics and cardboard, along with their
18 glass, aluminum and paper. And as my
19 colleagues will explain, investing in a
20 single-stream incentive-based recycling
21 program City-wide can only result in
22 savings for the City in the long run, not
23 to mention all of the social and
24 environmental benefits.

25 In conclusion, we have a

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2 tremendous opportunity right now to
3 improve recycling for Philadelphia
4 residents and to design a recycling
5 program that is easy for residents to use
6 and one that encourages rather than
7 discourages their participation. Let's
8 capture the momentum of these successful
9 pilot programs and make Philadelphia a
10 city that is looked at as a model for its
11 successful and innovative recycling
12 programs.

13 Thank you.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
15 you very much. You've done a great job
16 in communicating with us. We've heard
17 from you, Ms. Dixon. Thank you for all
18 that you do. Thank you.

19 MS. KNAPP: My name is
20 Christine Knapp. I'm the Eastern
21 Pennsylvania Outreach Coordinator for
22 Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future, also
23 known as PennFuture. I'm also a Board
24 member of Recycling Alliance of
25 Philadelphia and sit on the Mayor's

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2 Recycling Advisory Committee.

3 PennFuture works to create a
4 just future where nature, the economy and
5 communities thrive. PennFuture also aims
6 to dispel the myth that the environment
7 and the economy are opposing interests,
8 and we work to demonstrate that a cleaner
9 environment and a healthy economy are
10 intrinsically linked.

11 For years, I and other members
12 of the Recycling Alliance have worked to
13 promote recycling in Philadelphia, citing
14 its numerous benefits, including reducing
15 air and water pollution and saving our
16 natural resources. We've also noted that
17 recycling helps reduce litter on the
18 street, which improves our quality of
19 life.

20 However, until recently, there
21 has been little information on how
22 recycling can impact the Philadelphia
23 economy. At budget hearings three years
24 ago, Councilman David Cohen cited data
25 from the recycling office showing that

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2 for the first time in Philadelphia,
3 recycling a ton of trash was slightly
4 cheaper than sending it to a landfill.
5 Subsequently, recycling became
6 significantly cheaper, by as much as \$25
7 a ton. At that time, the Recycling
8 Alliance began to wonder how much money
9 the City could save if it was recycling
10 at its full potential.

11 Last May, the City Controller's
12 office released an audit of the City's
13 recycling program, which answered that
14 question. The report stated, I quote,
15 "Improving recycling diversion rate will
16 not only achieve compliance with the
17 City's recycling ordinance, but it will
18 also result in a significant annual
19 economic benefit for the City."

20 As a way of demonstrating the
21 savings potential, we calculated that for
22 each one percent improvement the City can
23 achieve in the diversion rate,
24 approximately \$540,000 could be saved on
25 an annual basis. As the diversion rate

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2 approaches 35 to 40 percent, the savings
3 could potentially reach \$17 million a
4 year. Seventeen million is how much
5 Philadelphians are literally throwing in
6 the garbage each year. This is money
7 that could be spent keeping libraries
8 open or putting police on the streets.

9 The Controller's report has
10 been out for almost a year, and yet City
11 Council has taken no steps towards
12 enacting the recommended changes that
13 would result in the savings of 17 million
14 a year.

15 There has been, and there will
16 undoubtedly be more, groups here today
17 asking for more money that should be
18 allocated to education or fighting crime,
19 the upkeeps of parks, cultural
20 institutions, other worthy causes. As
21 you hear each of these groups ask for
22 more money, please remember that you have
23 an additional \$17 million that you could
24 be investing in their programs if we just
25 had an effective program for recycling in

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2 Philadelphia.

3 Another economic point to note
4 is that Philadelphia has been fortunate
5 enough to run the first pilot test of
6 RecycleBank, which Emily mentioned.
7 RecycleBank rewards residents who recycle
8 with coupons redeemable at national and
9 local retailers. Two successful pilot
10 programs in Northwest Philadelphia
11 neighborhoods have shown that the program
12 dramatically increases recycling
13 diversion and participation rates.
14 Residents are happy to be rewarded for
15 doing something good. Businesses are
16 happy because they see an increase in
17 foot traffic from customers using their
18 coupons. And the City of Philadelphia
19 should be happy because increased
20 recycling is good for its economy.

21 As I mentioned, increased
22 recycling saves tax dollars, but there's
23 another economic boost as well. Each
24 household participating in RecycleBank
25 can receive up to \$400 in coupons each

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2 year. That is money that's reinvested in
3 the local economy. If you have the
4 entire City participating in RecycleBank,
5 that would be millions of additional
6 dollars that could be put into our local
7 stores.

8 Materials collected through
9 RecycleBank are processed at the Blue
10 Mountain Recycling Facility in the Grays
11 Ferry section of Philadelphia. Blue
12 Mountain is a state-of-the-art facility
13 that has been nationally recognized for
14 its cutting-edge use of technology. They
15 currently employ 80 City residents and
16 continue to expand the growing business.
17 If Philadelphia improved its recycling
18 rate to 35 percent, Blue Mountain would
19 likely have to open another facility in
20 Philadelphia and hire more employees, yet
21 another economic boom to the City.

22 The time is long overdue for
23 the City of Philadelphia to invest in a
24 stronger, more efficient recycling
25 program. While I'm sure everyone on

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2 Council supports the idea of an improved
3 recycling program, you must take action
4 to support it by allocating an
5 appropriate budget to the recycling
6 office. The City of Philadelphia now has
7 a new reason to expand recycling. In
8 fact, it has 17 million new reasons.

9 Thank you.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
11 you very much.

12 Any questions?

13 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Yes, I
14 have a question.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:
16 Councilwoman Tasco.

17 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Are you
18 going to speak, Mr. Sampson?

19 MR. SAMPSON: Yes.

20 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: I want to
21 ask him a question about his testimony.

22 Go ahead and speak.

23 MR. BELSER: My name is Evan
24 Belser. I live in Mt. Airy. I work for
25 Clean Water Action. We're a grassroots

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2 environmental group with about 6,000
3 members in Philadelphia and many more
4 outside of that throughout the country.
5 I'm a member of the Recycling Alliance of
6 Philadelphia. I, as well as Christine,
7 sit on the Mayor's Recycling Advisory
8 Committee, and I sit on the Steering
9 Committee for the Recycle NOW
10 Philadelphia Campaign, which Maurice will
11 go over in a minute.

12 As every year, this year
13 Philadelphia residents are going to drag
14 about 700,000 tons of materials to the
15 curb, and City sanitation employees are
16 going to put this in one of two places, a
17 recycling truck or trash truck. For the
18 material that's tossed into a trash
19 truck, it will be incinerated or dumped
20 into a landfill, both of which are
21 environmentally disgraceful practices.

22 Burning trash pollutes our air.
23 Landfills contaminate groundwater and are
24 a shameful use of open space. Not only
25 does disposal poison our air and water,

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2 but also necessitates the use of virgin
3 materials for the next round of consumer
4 items. The health of our environment is
5 inextricably linked to the health of our
6 people, and thus these practices are
7 unacceptable and entirely unsustainable.

8 On the other hand, the
9 materials that are tossed to a recycling
10 truck will be recycled and reused,
11 helping to lessen the City's
12 environmental impact. If this year is
13 like last year, 95 percent of what's put
14 to the curb will be incinerated or taken
15 to a landfill. This is one of the lowest
16 diversion rates for major cities in the
17 country and a rather sore point of pride
18 for many residents of Philadelphia.

19 The first step toward
20 responsible waste management is to keep
21 reusable materials out of landfills.
22 This principle, of course, was the
23 impetus behind Philadelphia's mandatory
24 recycling ordinance set to law 20 years
25 ago, a law with which the City has never

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2 been in compliance. Sadly, citizens are
3 still expending their energy to push the
4 City to adhere to its own law.

5 I'd like to remind everyone
6 here that what we're asking for, what
7 Philadelphia citizens are pushing for,
8 are mere baby steps toward environmental
9 stewardship. Advanced notions such as
10 manufacturer responsibility, zero waste
11 initiatives, bottle bills,
12 pay-as-you-throw programs, curbside
13 organics recovery, that's not what we're
14 talking about. We need to crawl before
15 we can walk or run.

16 The motivation to recycle
17 doesn't need to be out of concern for the
18 environment or out of respect for the law
19 nowadays. We can do it out of concern
20 for our pocketbooks. Most of what gets
21 trashed nowadays has value in today's
22 market. By continuing to trash 95
23 percent of materials, the City foregoes
24 real income, and this is exactly what
25 former City Controller Saidel explained

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2 in last year's audit. Seventeen million
3 dollars is a large sum of money that we
4 can't afford to pass on.

5 The Streets Department is
6 dragging its feet in negotiations with
7 RecycleBank Company, claiming that there
8 are up-front costs that must be paid
9 before the program can move forward.
10 Perhaps that's true. The objective
11 should be to determine the best way to
12 minimize those costs, not whether to
13 incur them at all. This is a law, after
14 all, we need to be following. This would
15 be a prudent investment and would
16 certainly earn a return. Once these
17 costs are specified, I implore members of
18 Council to allow the spending.

19 People want recycling and are
20 demanding it, and the circumstances are
21 ripe for change. And the debate should
22 not be about whether we should improve
23 the City's recycling program, but simply
24 how to do so.

25 Thank you so much. I

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2 appreciate your time.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
4 you very much.

5 MR. SAMPSON: Good afternoon.
6 My name is Maurice. I live in Mt. Airy
7 as well. Maurice Sampson. I run a
8 company called Niche Recycling, and I am
9 also now the Chair for the Recycle NOW
10 Campaign.

11 It's been 20 years since I was
12 appointed as the City's first Recycling
13 Coordinator, 20 years in which despite a
14 flow of resources and support we are only
15 at five percent recycling rate.
16 Ninety-five percent of our trash goes to
17 landfills. It is a testimony to
18 institutional resistance that we are at
19 five percent, the second lowest among
20 America's largest cities.

21 I am also asked the question
22 why. Why if everyone else across the
23 country is making recycling work, why not
24 in Philadelphia? While it may be true
25 that the Streets Department has blocked

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2 all substantial progress in developing
3 programs over the last 20 years, it is
4 also true that Philadelphians have a
5 tendency to bemoan the lack of a
6 recycling program to each other and not
7 to City Council and to the Mayor. So
8 it's not strange to understand why it's
9 not a priority.

10 Delivering that message is what
11 the Recycle NOW Campaign is about, a
12 public education, information, civic
13 action campaign directed at our citizens
14 in the City so that they can understand
15 just what it is they need to do if they
16 want to see this become a priority, a
17 political resolve to make it happen.

18 Now, there are three recent
19 developments in the City that provide the
20 opportunity to dramatically improve the
21 way we collect waste in Philadelphia.
22 The first -- and it has been mentioned --
23 is the opening of the Blue Mountain
24 recycling facility, one of the most
25 modern material processing centers in the

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2 United States, allowing us to put
3 everything in one container and have it
4 picked up in a standard compactor truck,
5 a truck that has 44 percent more capacity
6 than the compartmentalized recycling
7 vehicles that we run right now.

8 The second was the success of
9 the RecycleBank incentive programs. The
10 most important point to be looked at
11 there is that they were tested in two
12 neighborhoods, affluent Chestnut Hill and
13 working-class West Oak Lane, one with 35
14 percent participation, the other with
15 five percent participation. Both went to
16 90 percent. That kind of single
17 approach, that approach that provides
18 that kind of response over neighborhoods
19 with that diverse is unprecedented.

20 It's also clear that the \$400
21 per year rewarding each household has a
22 lot to do with that success. We also
23 need to understand that City-wide that's
24 \$240 million that can be spent here in
25 the City.

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2 Now, according to the City
3 Controller -- and my third point,
4 according to the City Controller's audit,
5 they see that we can get the 35 to 40
6 percent of the mandated goal without
7 significant new investment. Now, how
8 would you accomplish that? According to
9 the Fleets Department, the City has a
10 compactor fleet of 268 trucks. However,
11 only 166 of those are deployed every day
12 for trash collection. That leaves 102
13 compactors unused and available for
14 recycling.

15 With only 12 compactors, we
16 could replace all 67 of the recycling
17 vehicles that are on the street, each
18 having a longer route for recycling
19 collection. That will leave 19 crews
20 idle that could also be on compactor
21 trucks serving a still larger area with
22 any additional labor costs, while
23 gradually increasing that recycling rate.

24 The Controller's scenario
25 suggests that with creativity and

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2 redeployment of resources and no new
3 expenditures, we can begin to develop a
4 very aggressive recycling program with
5 significant savings to the City. Now,
6 the Streets Department has acknowledged
7 the success of RecycleBank, but it has
8 questioned the logic and the figures and
9 the facts that have been presented by
10 both RecycleBank and the City
11 Controller's office.

12 According to a May 13th letter
13 from the Streets Commissioner, Clarena
14 Tolson, to the City Controller, based on
15 the Streets Department's assessment,
16 meeting the goals would require \$10.4
17 million for 64 new vehicles and a
18 \$780,000 increase in annual labor costs.
19 Similarly, in a presentation to the
20 Recycling Advisory Committee in
21 evaluating RecycleBank's program, they
22 claimed in meeting the RecycleBank's
23 proposal that we would need 33 new
24 trucks, with increased labor costs of \$10
25 to \$18 million a year.

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2 Without question, this whole
3 subject requires closer scrutiny and more
4 discussion than is time for here today,
5 but for respect for the rule of law, the
6 questions of why laws passed by this
7 Council have been ignored need to be
8 addressed. For the financial well-being
9 of this City, the potential for saving
10 somewhere between \$17 and \$21 million a
11 year and providing \$240 million to the
12 local economy, it needs to be fully
13 explored.

14 In this regard, I want to thank
15 you and applaud Councilwoman Blondell
16 Reynolds Brown and sponsors Councilman
17 Frank DiCicco, Councilwoman Donna Reed
18 Miller, Councilman James F. Kenney and
19 the support of this Council for their
20 resolution authorizing the Committee on
21 the Streets and Service to hold hearings
22 so we can all fully explore these
23 findings.

24 I want to suggest you use the
25 Controller's report as a template for

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2 those hearings, and I would ask that in
3 scheduling of those hearings, you provide
4 enough time to the Streets Department and
5 specifically direct them to employ the
6 talents of Joan Hicken, the City's latest
7 Recycling Coordinator, to present a plan
8 or present alternatives in response to
9 the Controller's report that will address
10 both the actions they will take to come
11 into compliance with the law and to meet
12 the mandate to increase our recycling
13 rate from five percent to 35 to 40
14 percent. And let's put that money into
15 the parks and to recreation and to art,
16 any place but the trash can.

17 Thank you.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
19 you very much for your testimony.

20 Any questions or comments?

21 Councilwoman Tasco.

22 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Yes.

23 Since we're going to have hearings in
24 Council, we will probably require some of
25 the information that I want to ask, but

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2 have you ever been given a financial
3 analysis or feasibility study by the City
4 regarding their argument around the
5 reason for not fully implementing the
6 recycling program?

7 MR. SAMPSON: No, but, you
8 know, I had a conversation in 1999 with
9 Clarena asking her about a philosophy
10 that we approach in what recycling is
11 about, and she explained to me that she
12 sees recycling as an add-on to trash
13 services, in that if you understand what
14 that means, it means that really for
15 every truck we have running on the street
16 doing trash, we need to have one for
17 recycling, too. That's a very expensive
18 program. Whereas, instead, the way that
19 it's done in the industry is, if you have
20 100 percent trash, 50 percent is recycle
21 and you have ten trucks, five trucks for
22 recycling, five trucks for trash, and you
23 redeploy your trucks, you redeploy your
24 fleet and you'll get your savings that
25 way, because what goes in the recycling

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2 trucks saves you money. What goes in the
3 trash trucks costs you money.

4 So there is a whole way of
5 thinking about recycling and a whole way
6 we approach it that makes it expensive
7 right from the get-go. It's a question
8 that we really need to put and we need to
9 have Clarena answer that, because as my
10 wife would remind me, I'm not in her
11 mind, I don't know how she's thinking,
12 and we really need to have her tell us
13 exactly how we think about recycling and
14 why we can't do what's been done in so
15 many other cities.

16 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Would
17 there be any labor issues or union issues
18 around the issue of recycling, and what
19 would they be?

20 MR. SAMPSON: The recycling
21 issues that would come up, one of the
22 recommendations in the Controller's
23 report is to look at reducing the number
24 of people on a truck. Now, what's
25 happening in other cities when they do

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2 that is, they do that with the caveat
3 that there will be no layoffs due to
4 recycling, and what they do is, is that
5 they redeploy the fleet. You end up not
6 having to put out new labor, and that
7 they do the cuts by attrition over time.

8 Now, if you look at the
9 decrease in employees, we've been losing
10 employees every year. I would submit --
11 and it's a discussion I actually want to
12 have -- that guaranteeing there would be
13 no layoff due to recycling, there might
14 be fewer people in the Streets Department
15 laid off than have been laid off every
16 year over the last five.

17 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: If you use
18 the analysis that you gave earlier about
19 using five trucks for trash and five
20 trucks for recycling, couldn't you still
21 have the same number of people?

22 MR. SAMPSON: That's right.

23 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: So there
24 would be no need for layoffs, unless
25 there's a reason why those people can't

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2 work on the recycling truck. Is that a
3 different labor issue relative to
4 recycling?

5 MR. SAMPSON: No. The way that
6 it's been represented right now, we could
7 see dramatic increases without any change
8 at all in the way that labor is set up.
9 We have the vehicles there. I'm not
10 quite sure I understand why we need new
11 vehicles when we have 100 vehicles that
12 are parked. Because we don't need new
13 trucks. We don't need anything
14 different. That's something that's just
15 a mystery right now.

16 But, no. You're absolutely
17 right. Right now we could talk about
18 moving forward on this by just
19 redeploying fleet and shifting our
20 workers.

21 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Okay.
22 Thank you very much.

23 MR. SAMPSON: Sure.

24 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Thank you.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: You're

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2 welcome. Thank you.

3 MR. McPHERSON: Our next
4 witness is John Gallery and a panel from
5 the Preservation Alliance for Greater
6 Philadelphia.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
8 you very much. Good evening. Please
9 feel free to identify yourself for our
10 record and begin your testimony. Thank
11 you.

12 MR. GALLERY: Thank you very
13 much. My name is John Gallery. I'm the
14 Executive Director of the Preservation
15 Alliance. I've previously submitted a
16 copy of our testimony to individual
17 members of City Council, and so I only
18 brought a limited number of copies today.
19 For those of you who are present, I'm
20 grateful that you're here.

21 Councilwoman Blackwell, members
22 of City Council, it's a pleasure for me
23 to be here to testify on the budget of
24 the Philadelphia Historical Commission.
25 I'm here on behalf of our organization

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2 and a number of other organizations,
3 whose names I'd just like to read. They
4 include the Chestnut Hill Historical
5 Society, the Society Hill Civic
6 Association, the Philadelphia Historic
7 Northwest Coalition, the National Trust
8 for Historic Preservation, West Mt. Airy
9 Neighbors, Penn Knox Neighborhood
10 Association, Garden Court Community
11 Association and the Parkside Historic
12 Preservation Corporation and the East
13 Falls Historic District Initiative, of
14 which there is a representative here who
15 will also make some very brief remarks.

16 We are here for two reasons.

17 We are here to ask City Council if it
18 will consider increasing the budget for
19 the Philadelphia Historical Commission in
20 two ways. First, to add sufficient funds
21 to hire three additional staff people for
22 the Commission and, secondly, to increase
23 the Class 200 line for outside services
24 to \$100,000 from the \$20,000 in the
25 budget to allow the Historical Commission

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2 to retain some consultants during the
3 next year to help it catch up on work
4 that hasn't been completed and also to
5 look at ways in which the use of
6 contemporary computer-based technology
7 can help the Commission to operate
8 efficiently with a small staff.

9 There are two basic reasons why
10 we're making these requests. First of
11 all, the Historical Commission is
12 significantly underfunded and its staff
13 is overworked. In the longer memo which
14 I submitted, we showed the staffing
15 relationships of other major cities in
16 the United States with historic
17 resources. If we were in Boston, the
18 Historical Commission would have a staff
19 of 12. If we were in Chicago, the
20 Historical Commission would have a staff
21 of 24. If we were in Cleveland even, the
22 Historical Commission would have a staff
23 of 12. But we're in Philadelphia and we
24 have a staff of six.

25 While most of the day-to-day

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2 things are in fact done and done well,
3 there are many things that are not
4 getting done. In the past five years,
5 there have been four nominations for
6 historic districts submitted to the
7 Historical Commission, none of which have
8 been acted on in any way at this time.
9 The Alliance is working with the Parkside
10 community in West Philadelphia. We will
11 be submitting a fifth nomination for
12 historic district in May of this year.
13 The Commission simply hasn't had the
14 staff to deal with this.

15 In addition, they haven't had
16 the staff to deal with other issues of
17 nominations of individual buildings, of
18 providing appropriate levels of
19 information and education to community
20 groups about the impacts of historic
21 preservation, and we feel it's essential
22 for the Commission to be brought up to a
23 level of staffing that it can adequately
24 deal with these issues.

25 The second reason that we're

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2 asking for these requests is that most
3 people do not really recognize that
4 historic preservation is absolutely
5 central to the economic development of
6 Philadelphia. In 1999, the Alliance did
7 a study which demonstrated that there had
8 been up to that point \$1.5 billion of
9 investment in historic properties in the
10 conversion of those properties and the
11 use of those properties for contemporary
12 needs. We haven't had a chance to update
13 that, but I can give you one interesting
14 fact.

15 In the period from 1998 to
16 2005, 76 percent of all of the new
17 residential units that have been
18 constructed in Center City and adjacent
19 neighborhoods where this big residential
20 boom is going on have been created
21 through the conversion of historic
22 buildings or buildings that are in
23 historic districts, 76 percent. That's
24 6,300 units of housing through historic
25 preservation.

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2 Every one of the cultural
3 groups that you heard today is in a
4 historic building, and all of those
5 people need the technical advice and the
6 assistance of the Historical Commission
7 staff to make the conversions that make
8 those buildings part of our economy
9 today.

10 An investment in the Historical
11 Commission is really an investment in
12 economic development, and we believe it's
13 time to bring that up to the level that's
14 really needed in terms of the importance
15 of the historical character of
16 Philadelphia.

17 Thank you very much for the
18 opportunity to be here.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
20 you very much, Mr. Gallery.

21 You will be testifying as well?

22 MR. CUGINI: Yes.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
24 you.

25 MR. CUGINI: Thank you,

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2 Members.

3 John Gallery here of the
4 Preservation Alliance excellently
5 summarized the value of historic
6 preservation and designation in the City.

7 I am here today representing the East
8 Falls Preservation Initiative. Our
9 initiative group was formed over three
10 years ago to -- John Cugini. I'm sorry.

11 The East Falls Initiative group
12 was formed over three years ago to
13 protect the architectural assets of the
14 East Falls community. We toiled for
15 approximately two years in developing a
16 historic designation nomination, which
17 has been submitted to the Historical
18 Commission, and, unfortunately, that
19 nomination has been unprocessed with the
20 Historical Commission and it sits with
21 three other nominations, one for
22 Overbrook Farms, one for Spruce Hill and
23 most recently the fourth, Green Hill now
24 as well.

25 I kindly request members of

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2 City Council to consider the additional
3 funding for the Historical Commission in
4 order to protect the assets, the
5 architectural assets, of Philadelphia,
6 which, frankly, we cannot live without as
7 a historic city.

8 Thank you.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
10 you.

11 I'm sure that you're both aware
12 of the Task Force report?

13 MR. GALLERY: I'm very well
14 aware of the report.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Then
16 you accept that it raises as many
17 questions as it attempts to address.

18 MR. GALLERY: It did raise many
19 questions and it made recommendations.
20 And I actually decided I would look at
21 the Task Force report today. I actually
22 have it in my briefcase, if you want me
23 to address it in detail. And I was able
24 to observe that 50 percent of all the
25 recommendations in the Task Force report

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2 have been acted on, many of them being
3 acted on by the Alliance and some of them
4 being acted on by the Historical
5 Commission. And I'd be happy, separate
6 from now, knowing the time, to give you a
7 report on those, because I think the Task
8 Force report was extremely helpful in
9 pointing out a lot of issues that need to
10 be addressed.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Well,
12 they may have been acted on, but they
13 weren't resolved. Issues, for example,
14 like how people can afford to do
15 preservation, should we have strict
16 preservation on the front part of a
17 property, should sides and back give the
18 appearance of being historically
19 preserved but done with less expensive
20 materials, should we have a one-stop shop
21 that has been our concern from the
22 beginning where one organization decides
23 what you buy, where you buy, how much you
24 buy, what you pay for.

25 I don't have my report here

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2 either, but there are many issues that
3 were raised. And so the question is not
4 simply funding positions. For Spruce
5 Hill and me as the elected official of
6 that area, it's how we define what it is,
7 and those questions have not been
8 resolved. They were, in my opinion,
9 correctly brought up. I did serve on
10 that Task Force, but as we said when
11 Mr. Sklaroff was here, it is not that
12 simple, and we asked him to come back to
13 us before they move forward.

14 I don't want you to judge for
15 me what happens in my district. The
16 people who elect us have a right to come
17 to us first. We held up our bill so that
18 we could have this discussion. And we
19 can always reintroduce a bill, as we said
20 to Mr. Sklaroff, and have it come to
21 Council before you go to the community.
22 But you cannot give us problems by going
23 to a community and saying, Yes, this is
24 what we do, when we are elected to
25 represent everybody.

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2 So you can't tell me that we
3 should fund positions to do what you
4 determine my district needs. The people
5 who live there collectively have to tell
6 me what they want, and then we move.

7 You don't realize that you give
8 us problems when you go in communities
9 and you determine what we should do and
10 what we should think, when it is a
11 collective opinion of those people who
12 live there that determine how we move.

13 So I take issue with you saying
14 we should move and we should move on this
15 issue and it's just a matter of staff to
16 process those. It's not that simple.
17 This historic preservation is much more
18 complex than that, and it's really,
19 really important that we have community
20 inclusion.

21 I say that. I said it to
22 Mr. Sklaroff. I had his commitment that
23 before he moved, that he would contact
24 the Councilpeople in that area. And
25 that's very, very important. Very, very

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2 important that the District Councilpeople
3 are involved in the discussion.

4 I resent people who go into my
5 area and who decide what happens, because
6 we have the problem. And I'm sure I
7 speak for the majority of the District
8 Councilpeople when I say that. You've
9 got to come to us so we don't end up with
10 a fight in our own districts because of
11 an organization who has gone in and made
12 decisions and said this is what should
13 happen and this is what we should do and
14 you make the decisions. We're elected to
15 make those decisions, and certainly we
16 ask that you keep that in mind.

17 MR. GALLERY: I'd like to
18 comment on a couple of things. The
19 request that we're making in terms of
20 increase in staffing is to implement
21 policies that have already been
22 established by City Council by ordinance.

23 Secondly, no one is going into
24 any of these areas from the outside and
25 requiring anyone to do anything. Any of

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2 the district nominations that we've
3 mentioned, any of the individual historic
4 buildings that have been designated
5 recently have been brought to the
6 Commission by the communities themselves.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Mr.
8 Gallery, I can reintroduce my legislation
9 tomorrow.

10 MR. GALLERY: I'm just telling
11 you the facts.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I
13 offered to hold it up, but you can't tell
14 me what my community wanted. You can't
15 do that.

16 MR. GALLERY: I'm not telling
17 you what --

18 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Yes,
19 you are. You sat here and said this is
20 brought up by the community. I represent
21 the community. You can't come as you did
22 with Spruce Hill, give me a debate with
23 my community, Spruce Hill, because you
24 went in and said this is what happens.
25 You don't have a right to do that. I'm

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2 elected. People elect me to do that.

3 Mr. Sklaroff agreed to come to
4 us first and I agreed to hold up my bill.
5 All I have to do is reintroduce it and
6 have a hearing and we can legislate that
7 Councilpeople are included first. If we
8 have a problem with this, I'll just do
9 that. It doesn't matter to me. We
10 extended the courtesy for the last year
11 or two and we held it up. It doesn't
12 matter to me how we do it.

13 But we are elected to represent
14 the majority opinion in our districts,
15 and when you go in and you meet with
16 certain people and make decisions, it
17 gives us a problem. I don't like people
18 getting me in a debate with my district.
19 And when you say that this has already
20 been decided, it hasn't already been
21 decided or I wouldn't be sitting here
22 debating with you.

23 I don't want a fight in my
24 district. You give me fights in my
25 district. I don't like to have a fight

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2 in my district. You cannot tell me that
3 we should give you more money to process
4 stuff that you determine we should do.
5 You can't do that. You can't do that.

6 MR. GALLERY: Again, I'd just
7 like to clarify again, I don't determine
8 anything. The Preservation Alliance is a
9 non-profit advisory organization. We do
10 not determine anything. We give
11 technical advice to people in community
12 organizations, people who own historic
13 properties, but we do not determine
14 anything.

15 We did not prepare any of the
16 information that you referred to about
17 Spruce Hill. We're working with Parkside
18 because they asked us for our technical
19 assistance in looking at historic
20 preservation issues.

21 We do not determine anything.
22 We are trying to address a lot of the
23 issues which you have raised. You may be
24 aware that we are in fact implementing a
25 program to provide grants to low and

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2 moderate-income homeowners of historic
3 properties in Philadelphia. That was one
4 of the issues which came through loud and
5 clear in the Task Force, and I'm very
6 grateful that City Council appropriated
7 funds for that purpose and that we have
8 been selected to implement that program.

9 We're very committed to making
10 preservation work in all the
11 neighborhoods of the City, and we're very
12 aware of the concerns that you have and
13 respectful of those concerns even though
14 on not all of those issues you know that
15 you and we don't agree. But we are very
16 respectful of the issues that you raised
17 and are trying to work with those issues
18 in a constructive manner, but we still --

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
20 you.

21 MR. GALLERY: -- feel that the
22 City-wide needs of historic preservation
23 do justify increases in staff at the
24 Commission, and we hope Council will look
25 at that issue this year.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: We
3 agree with you in my district with
4 Parkside Historic Preservation Coalition.
5 We agree. We don't disagree on
6 everything. I agree when my majority
7 community supports something.

8 MR. GALLERY: I know that.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: But I
10 don't when there are certain communities
11 when you move ahead that give me a
12 problem. We agree with that, and we
13 agree with more grants for people with
14 low income, obviously.

15 So we don't fight all of it,
16 but we're saying that we don't want to
17 afford you the opportunity to choose it,
18 because it gives us problems.

19 MR. GALLERY: Again, remember,
20 I'm not here asking for any funding for
21 ourselves. I'm here to support a City
22 agency who we and these other community
23 organizations feel needs additional
24 resources to do an important job for the
25 City of Philadelphia.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
3 you very much.

4 MR. McPHERSON: Our next
5 witness is Cathy Scott, Local 2187.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
7 evening. It's nice to have you. Nice to
8 see you again. Please identify yourself
9 to our record and begin.

10 MS. SCOTT: Good evening,
11 Councilwoman Blackwell and other members
12 of City Council. My name is Cathy Scott
13 and I am President of AFSCME Local 2187,
14 District Council 47.

15 As in every year, the decisions
16 you make in approving the City budget for
17 Fiscal Year 2008 will have long-range
18 ramifications for the health of the City.
19 This year's proposed budget projects a
20 surplus. Some individuals and groups,
21 including Philadelphia Forward, are
22 pushing for a business privilege tax
23 reduction based on the premise that there
24 is a budget surplus. However, it is
25 important to recognize that \$110 million

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2 of the projected surplus is the result of
3 a change in the formula for calculating
4 pension costs; that is, to calculate the
5 payment based on the minimum payment
6 required. Consequently, the City is
7 deferring its obligations further into
8 the future, resulting in higher interest
9 costs, as opposed to paying the
10 obligation now and avoiding the increased
11 future costs.

12 When viewed from this
13 perspective, any discussion of business
14 privilege tax reduction is akin to a
15 person saying that she has money to buy
16 an expensive car because she refinanced
17 her mortgage from a 15-year mortgage to a
18 30-year mortgage and, therefore, she has
19 more money at the end of the month.

20 It can be done, but the
21 question must be answered, Is it good
22 public policy for the City to operate in
23 this manner? I submit to you that it is
24 not good public policy, and here is why:
25 The public sector is entering into a time

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2 which has not been experienced since
3 before the baby boomer generation.

4 Globally, we are moving from a buyers
5 labor market where there were more good
6 employees than good jobs to a sellers
7 market. Several factors have come
8 together to produce this phenomena:
9 Aging workforce, growing skill shortage,
10 lower birth rates, inverted population
11 pyramid and increased importance of the
12 knowledge worker.

13 We are seeing the first boomers
14 retire now, which has started the exodus
15 of skills and experience. What will this
16 mean for the City? As an employer, it
17 will find it more difficult to recruit
18 and retain employees. The public sector
19 is not well positioned to deal with the
20 labor force shortage to come. Jocelyn
21 Bourgon in her fifth annual report to the
22 Prime Minister of the Public Services of
23 Canada states, "Years of downsizing, pay
24 freezes, criticism and insufficient
25 recruitment and the premature departure

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2 of experienced public servants has made
3 it more difficult to retain, motivate and
4 attract people essential to the work of
5 the public service."

6 The words could have been
7 written about an evaluation of the City
8 of Philadelphia. The recruitment and
9 retention of good, skilled workers needs
10 to be an intricate part of the policy
11 decisions surrounding the budget you are
12 considering. It is critical that the
13 benefits of the City's employees be
14 factored into the Fiscal Year 2008
15 budget, which includes health and
16 retirement benefits.

17 Also, the City must consider
18 the safety of its workers and the public.
19 We must be sure that all public
20 facilities are safe work environments.
21 For example, libraries and recreation
22 centers must have the necessary
23 safeguards, such as surveillance cameras,
24 proper lighting and proper staffing,
25 including municipal guards, to ensure the

1 3/29/06 - WHOLE - BILL 060001, ETC.

2 safety of the public and the staff.

3 Unfortunately, the proposed budget does
4 not include funding for these basic
5 services.

6 Another issue which Council
7 should address is the fact that there is
8 presently no incentive for departments to
9 invest in methods to produce income to
10 cover the costs of services they provide
11 since that revenue generated does not get
12 returned to the department, but instead
13 goes into the General Fund. If
14 departments were able to devote sparse
15 resources to revenue enhancements with
16 assurances that their efforts would be
17 rewarded with the ability to recoup some
18 or all of the revenue raised, the City
19 would be able to make the necessary
20 investment in staff and equipment to make
21 it more efficient. It would develop a
22 highly skilled staff using
23 state-of-the-art equipment, which would
24 deliver a high level of service to the
25 public. That is exactly what the public

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2 wants.

3 So as it is every year for City
4 Council, the public policy decisions you
5 make when you decide the budget will have
6 ramifications for many years to come. Is
7 the proposed budget surplus one that
8 further mortgages the City's future, thus
9 making it less competitive? Does that
10 competitiveness get further compromised
11 by giving the paper surplus away in the
12 form of tax cuts for businesses such as
13 Wal-Mart and Comcast and then hope for
14 the trickle-down revenue associated? Or
15 does the City invest in the public and
16 its employees with safe environments,
17 properly fund its benefits obligations
18 and provide for methods for City
19 departments to invest in equipment and
20 resources to enhance their services to
21 the public? Obviously, I am suggesting
22 that you choose the third option.

23 Thank you for the opportunity
24 to present this testimony today.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank

1 3/29/06 - WHOLE - BILL 060001, ETC.

2 you very much. We thank you for your
3 commitment certainly to our City, to the
4 workers and for the fine job you've done
5 over the years.

6 MS. SCOTT: Thank you.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
8 you.

9 Any questions?

10 (No response.)

11 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
12 you very much.

13 MR. McPHERSON: The next
14 witness is Sue Rosenthal, Community Board
15 Health Center 10.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
17 evening. Welcome. It is very nice to
18 have you here this evening, and we ask
19 you to identify yourself for the record
20 and begin your testimony.

21 MS. JACKSON: Good evening.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
23 evening.

24 MS. JACKSON: I am reading this
25 for Sue Rosenthal, who had a family

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2 emergency. She has chaired the Public
3 Health --

4 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Give your
5 name.

6 MS. JACKSON: I'm sorry. My
7 name is Andrea Jackson.

8 She has chaired the Public
9 Health District 10 in the Northeast for
10 37 years. And my name is Andrea Jackson.
11 I'm also a Board member with the Health
12 District 10.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
14 you.

15 MS. JACKSON: The Chair of the
16 Community Board of our City's eight
17 health districts thank you for this
18 opportunity to speak. They are here
19 together because they all support the
20 testimony we are presenting.

21 Together we represent over
22 100,000 Philadelphians who receive
23 medical services through our Family
24 Healthcare System. A sizable portion of
25 Philadelphians receiving the services of

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2 our healthcare centers have medical
3 insurance. They could seek medical care
4 from a variety of venues. They choose
5 public health services. The City
6 receives medical payments from their
7 insurance companies. They choose us
8 because our health centers offer a highly
9 skilled, talented, competent level of
10 care when we need the necessary
11 resources.

12 Many of our clients are covered
13 by Medicaid. The remaining have neither
14 public nor private coverage. They are
15 hard-working Philadelphians, poorly paid,
16 whose employers offer no health insurance
17 and whose family obligations preclude
18 their ability to buy insurance. Our
19 public health centers are their only
20 source of constant, sustained medical
21 care. That is it. They depend on the
22 City. They depend on you.

23 For two years, there has been a
24 virtual decrease in the City's
25 contribution to the Health Department.

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2 Because of runaway medical costs,
3 especially pharmaceuticals, the effect
4 has been less real dollars necessary to
5 offer often life-sustaining needs to our
6 citizens.

7 In the Northeast Philadelphia
8 Health Center, one pharmacist and two
9 technicians process over 500
10 prescriptions a day, 90,000 a year. This
11 overload is typical of all of our health
12 centers. We need our pharmacists. Our
13 patients often wait at least four days
14 before receiving their medication. Even
15 patients requiring life-saving heart,
16 asthma and diabetes medications and other
17 illnesses, and for which the City may be
18 paid by insurance, have to wait. This is
19 endangering lives. We must have the
20 financial resources to hire more
21 pharmacists.

22 There is a great demand for
23 public healthcare, but getting these
24 services is difficult. If you called a
25 healthcare center today to join its

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2 Family Healthcare Program, you would have
3 to wait up to six months for an initial
4 examination.

5 Because of the effect of
6 inflation and rising medical costs on the
7 Health Department's budget, at the
8 Northeast Health Center, for example, the
9 wait is two months longer than last year
10 and four months longer than the year
11 before.

12 What if you have an emergency?
13 Hours before our center opens, walk-ins,
14 persons without appointments, line up to
15 be admitted on a first-come, hoped to be
16 first-served basis hoping to be seen.
17 The health centers' staff have to cut the
18 number that can be served that day.
19 Others must return the next day, when
20 perhaps they will get lucky and be
21 treated.

22 One very serious reason for
23 turning persons away is staff which has
24 been reduced by unfilled vacancies.
25 There is not enough money to meet the

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2 requirements to fully staff the centers
3 in relation to demand for healthcare
4 needs of Philadelphians. Replacing staff
5 seems to have been purposely slowed by
6 the Personnel Department. If a job is
7 vacant for a year, it is often eliminated
8 by Personnel. This puts an extra burden
9 on shrinking health centers' staff.

10 As a result, there is now a
11 permanent reduction in nurses, physicians
12 and clerks. That is why there is often a
13 six-month wait for new appointments. An
14 underfunded healthcare system with
15 shrunk staffs are trying to serve an
16 increasing number of Philadelphians.

17 The Health Department saves and
18 sustains lives every day, just as our
19 police and firefighters do. Not as
20 dramatically, but just as surely.

21 You, City Council, have the
22 ability and power to cure sickness,
23 prevent serious illness from becoming
24 worse and increase the number of lives
25 saved, before they collapse from

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2 financial starvation and decreasing
3 staffs in the face of burgeoning needs.
4 You must allocate more funding to our
5 public health centers. Then you, too,
6 will save lives.

7 Thank you.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
9 you very much.

10 Good afternoon, neighbor.

11 MS. BORKON: Good afternoon.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Please
13 identify yourself and begin your
14 testimony.

15 MS. BORKON: I'm Pauline
16 Borkon, a West Philadelphia resident,
17 Chair of the Community Advisory Board and
18 a patient at Health Center 3. I
19 represent the over 30,000 patients who
20 received healthcare last year at Health
21 Center 3, which serves the West
22 Philadelphia community, along with Health
23 Center 4.

24 At Health Center 3, we fill
25 over 400 prescriptions a day, see over

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2 300 patients a day, which comes to over
3 30,000 patients a year, through our
4 pediatric, adult, emergency walk-in,
5 dental and specialty services. The
6 healthcare staff, especially the nurses
7 and doctors, are maintaining the patient
8 level despite being less than 50 percent
9 staffed. Each one is doing two to three
10 positions' work. This causes staff
11 burnout, increased retention problems,
12 high turnover rates and, most critically,
13 medical accidents and errors. I'm asking
14 that the 70-plus positions that were
15 taken from the Health Department in
16 November of 2004 be restored. It's
17 especially concerning that at least 20 of
18 these positions were front-line
19 providers; for example, registered nurses
20 and clerks.

21 Ms. Carmen Paris, the interim
22 Health Commissioner, has requested funds
23 to operate the Health Department, and we
24 are here to ask that those funds be
25 doubled and that a special committee be

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2 established to reallocate funds from
3 other City departments in order to
4 accomplish this goal. General Fund
5 monies are being unfairly distributed to
6 the detriment of the Health Department.

7 Healthcare is an essential
8 right for each Philadelphian. The voters
9 of West Philadelphia, all 98,654, as well
10 as the other parts of the City, have
11 affirmed their support of universal
12 healthcare in the election of 2003.

13 There are over 165,000
14 residents in Philadelphia. These voters
15 are employed contributors to the tax base
16 who work in jobs where medical insurance
17 is not provided. The healthcare centers
18 provide care for all Philadelphians who
19 need it, without regard to their ability
20 to pay for that service.

21 I'm asking that the budget for
22 the Health Department be increased to
23 improve the care given to our citizens
24 and to answer the mandate of 2003. I
25 also ask that a set percentage of the

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2 planned casino revenues be set aside to
3 be spent on public health.

4 We thank you for the
5 opportunity to present our thoughts and
6 our hopes to City Council.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
8 you very much. Thank you, Ms. Borkon.

9 MS. HARPER: Good afternoon.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
11 afternoon.

12 MS. HARPER: My name is Shelah
13 Harper. I chair Public Health Center No.
14 9. I have been working in conjunction
15 with concerned citizens for a long time.

16 A couple of concerns. The
17 first thing is again to reiterate what my
18 comrades said, full staff funding.
19 What's going on right now is, once people
20 retire through that DROP program, they
21 are never replaced or the Health
22 Department has to go through a lot of red
23 tape in order to fill that position and
24 justify the position staying in place.
25 So through attrition, it was hoped, I

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2 think, initially with the DROP program
3 that eventually we would cut costs, but
4 what we're doing is, we're cutting the
5 quality of care that was, let's say, five
6 years ago, it has resulted in we have
7 more patients, because of course we have
8 more uninsured, we have a higher
9 percentage of need. We have a lot of
10 healthcare needs that need to be met, and
11 it cannot possibly be met with a
12 shortened staff. Okay? Nurses, clerks,
13 those people who really support the work
14 of the public health center, it's going
15 to put an undue burden on the existing
16 staff.

17 In addition, it ends up
18 being -- five years ago, it cost less to
19 provide the same amount of care that
20 we're talking about. And if we're seeing
21 more people now and the cost of inflation
22 has increased, we need to not freeze
23 those positions and fully fund staff
24 without the red tape that the Health
25 Department currently has to undergo in

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2 order to replace somebody who has
3 retired.

4 Secondly, prevention. And for
5 me, this is extremely personal.
6 Violence. I am the mother of Asia Adams,
7 who was a student at West Chester
8 University, who was brutally murdered as
9 a result of violence, as a result of a
10 combination of mental health problems
11 that are not being addressed from a
12 prevention standpoint, as a result of
13 substance abuse problems that are not
14 being addressed from a prevention
15 standpoint, as a result of child welfare
16 problems and, as you know, the whole
17 social list of stuff that's causing this
18 problem.

19 One of the themes that I'm
20 seeing that just resonates throughout
21 this whole thing was, each young person
22 that came up talked about murder. Do you
23 know what kind of a fear that places in
24 the hearts of children? It makes them
25 act tough so that they won't be,

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2 whatever, pointed out, murdered or
3 whatever the situation is.

4 Prevention. No, it does not
5 provide revenue, but the quality of
6 life -- intervention, yeah, it provides
7 revenue, but you don't deal with mental
8 health problems after they've happened.
9 You support people in their ability to be
10 able to handle and cope with whatever
11 mental health problems. You support
12 people through -- including things like
13 the Centers for Substance Abuse
14 Prevention Program. Prevention. We had
15 one here years ago. It was staffed by
16 one person, and now that person is gone.

17 Money is in treatment. Yes, we
18 need treatment and we need intervention,
19 but no, no, no, no. We have got to get
20 our priorities clear, that monies need to
21 go into prevention.

22 Violence is a public health
23 concern. I'm not talking about secondary
24 stuff, whether Youth Reduction
25 Partnership, AVRPP, and the Operation Safe

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2 Streets. All that stuff is happening
3 after the children are already in
4 trouble. I'm talking about primary
5 prevention.

6 That's personal. It's real
7 personal to me, and I wanted to make sure
8 that you were aware of that.

9 Thirdly, our pharmacies. Our
10 pharmacies is a constant problem. We
11 went through a process where they were
12 going to look at pre-packing medication.
13 That went out of the window because it
14 was a concern that we would lose our
15 license to operate our pharmacies, and we
16 didn't really understand the implications
17 of all of that, so we asked that it be
18 pulled. The Health Department literally
19 had to go in there and fight to retain
20 those dollars so that they can try
21 something new, a centralized pharmacy
22 where they're going to pull people out of
23 the public health centers, pharmacists.
24 We have two at each health center. Well,
25 not really, but almost two, and they were

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2 going to put half of them in a central
3 location and the other half are going to
4 remain at the site. The ones at the
5 central location would do all of -- like
6 an assembly line, preparation and then
7 transportation out to these sites.

8 The idea that they had to
9 actually fight in order to make sure that
10 this money for pre-packed medication or
11 privatization did not happen. But in
12 order to hold that money, in order to try
13 the centralized pharmacy theme, well,
14 what's going to happen next year? Last
15 year, that was the solution. They put
16 aside more money in order to do the
17 pre-packed medication. Now, hold on to
18 the money and we're going to try to --
19 it's like robbing Peter to pay Paul. And
20 these are like life-sustaining
21 medications that people are going without
22 sometimes because they're not filled.
23 There are certain prescriptions that are
24 just not available, and there are waits
25 of a couple of months in some cases. A

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2 person that needs heart medicine, they
3 can't go that long without heart
4 medicine. They can't go that long
5 without diabetes medicine.

6 The whole pharmacy issue
7 combined -- a couple of years ago I
8 remember it gave an additional \$1 million
9 because of the HIV-positive patients that
10 they needed to be able to provide
11 prescriptions for. Well, that was ten
12 years ago, and I'm sure that the number
13 of HIV patients has increased, in
14 addition to pharmacy costs have
15 increased, and as a result, we are asking
16 that Council take a real strong look at
17 the whole pharmacy throughout the entire
18 healthcare system.

19 Secondly -- okay. Also, we
20 have these mandates --

21 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Would
22 you try summarize for us, please.

23 MS. HARPER: I know. I'm
24 sorry. I'm sorry.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank

1 3/29/06 - WHOLE - BILL 060001, ETC.

2 you.

3 MS. HARPER: We have these
4 mandates, HIPAA, Healthy People 2010.
5 Nobody is funding any of it. HIPAA --
6 and, I mean, I don't think anybody really
7 understands it, but what's going to
8 happen is, now this year is the year that
9 the federal government is going to
10 implement compliance and they will cite
11 each occurrence. That means each piece
12 of paper that's laying around in those
13 health centers in places that they should
14 not be, \$100 per paper. And you ask any
15 of the health centers, and they have a
16 lot of paper laying around in places that
17 they should not be, which is against the
18 HIPAA compliance needs.

19 Same thing with Healthy Start.

20 I have my whole context in
21 writing, so you'll be able to get that.
22 So in summary, I am here representing
23 these citizens, representing the
24 children, because when we're all said and
25 done and dead, our children are going to

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2 be here, hopefully. My child is not
3 here. The quality of life and a focus on
4 prevention may have helped her to remain
5 here.

6 So I submit my testimony in
7 writing. I thank you. I really ask that
8 you strongly consider increasing the
9 Health Department's budget and consider
10 health. It's integral to anything that
11 we're going to do. Kids can't do art.
12 Kids can't do nothing. They can't learn.
13 They can't do anything if they're not
14 healthy.

15 So thank you very much.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
17 you very much.

18 Any questions?

19 Thank you.

20 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: I have a
21 question.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:
23 Councilwoman Tasco.

24 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: I don't
25 have a question. I just have a comment.

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2 I want to thank you for coming in to
3 testify, because we were led to believe
4 that everything was hunky-dory in the
5 Northeast, certainly that the waiting
6 time didn't exist and it didn't take a
7 long time to get a prescription filled
8 and all of that. So we certainly
9 appreciate your testimony, and we're
10 going to do some follow-up. Thank you.

11 MS. HARPER: Thank you.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
13 you.

14 MR. MCPHERSON: Our next
15 witness is Amy Dougherty, Friends of the
16 Free Library.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
18 you all very much.

19 Ms. Dougherty, feel free to
20 identify yourself and begin your
21 testimony.

22 MS. MINNITI: Good evening,
23 Councilwoman Blackwell.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
25 evening.

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2 MS. MINNITI: My name is
3 Lucretia Minniti. I'm here on behalf
4 of --

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Would
6 you pull your microphone up. We can't
7 hear you.

8 MS. MINNITI: I'm sorry. Good
9 evening, Councilwoman Blackwell. My name
10 is Lucretia Minniti. I'm here on behalf
11 of Amy Dougherty. She was called away on
12 an emergency.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Would
14 you spell your last name.

15 MS. MINNITI: Yes.

16 M-I-N-N-I-T-I.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: And
18 it's Lucretia, you said?

19 MS. MINNITI: Yes.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
21 you.

22 MS. MINNITI: I will just read
23 some of her testimony for the record.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
25 you very much. We will include it all as

1 3/29/06 - WHOLE - BILL 060001, ETC.

2 if it were read in entirety.

3 MS. MINIITI: Thank you,

4 Councilwoman Blackwell.

5 Good evening, Council President

6 Verna and members of Council. The Free

7 Library of Philadelphia, an independent

8 non-profit organization whose mission is

9 to support the Free Library of

10 Philadelphia. Access to information is a

11 component of an informed democracy.

12 We partner with neighborhood

13 volunteer groups, Branch Friends, to

14 promote cooperation and communication

15 between the community and the Free

16 Library for services for all. Our 40

17 active Friends Groups located throughout

18 the City provide support to the library

19 branches by boosting library use,

20 planning, presenting and funding

21 programs, purchasing books, DVDs,

22 magazines and equipment. On average,

23 Friends Groups raise approximately

24 200,000 per year for branches for their

25 membership and through book and bake

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2 sales and raffles.

3 First and foremost, I want to
4 thank President Verna and members of City
5 Council for last year's 3.5 million
6 increase to the Library's General Fund
7 for more staff. Your decision to
8 increase library funding gained local and
9 national attention, including the
10 Politician of the Year Award for two City
11 Councilmembers, Councilman Frank DiCicco
12 and Councilman Michael Nutter. The
13 citizens of Philadelphia appealed to you
14 and you heard us. We are extremely
15 grateful.

16 Your commitment to library
17 services has a dramatic impact. All
18 branches are open now six days per week
19 and are staffed by two accredited
20 librarians. With the restored evenings
21 and Saturday hours, Friends Groups are
22 able to meet regularly once again. Right
23 now they are busy preparing for a busy
24 spring.

25 Friends Groups are among

1 3/29/06 - WHOLE - BILL 060001, ETC.
2 hundreds of community groups that use
3 branches. The library has three
4 essential missions: Providing access to
5 recorded information in all forms,
6 advancing reading, serving as a central
7 meeting place within the community. It
8 is this coming together of people from
9 diverse backgrounds that adds to the
10 library's value. The library is the only
11 free indoor public space open to all.
12 You have not forgotten the value of this
13 for us.

14 I want to give you a very small
15 snapshot of activities made possible by
16 your vote to increase library funding.
17 No. 1, Bushrod: Friends Group-funded
18 program in which all local teens instruct
19 seniors how to use computers.

20 No. 2, Lawncrest: 30th
21 anniversary of Friends Group that
22 included an essay for children with
23 prizes.

24 No. 3, Santore: Pre-school
25 reading programs, adult book clubs,

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2 cultural programs in partnership with
3 Anderson Recreation Center, Partners for
4 a Healthy Philadelphia Smoking Cessation
5 meetings, Friends Group Saturdays Chess
6 Club for kids.

7 No. 4, C.B. Moore: GED
8 classes.

9 No. 5, Logan and Donatucci:
10 Fairmount Park's Growing Your
11 Neighborhood Program community meetings
12 in which residents took part in deciding
13 60,000 worth of improvements for their
14 neighborhood parks. State Representative
15 W. Curtis Thomas, Councilwoman Donna Reed
16 Miller and Tyree, special assistant to
17 Councilman Rizzo, attended these
18 meetings.

19 Thank you for your support and
20 hard work. In conclusion, I ask that you
21 support the Director of the Library,
22 Elliot Shelkrot's, request for 39.5
23 million for 2007, which will fund 739
24 full-time General Fund positions.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank

1 3/29/06 - WHOLE - BILL 060001, ETC.

2 you very much.

3 Are there any questions?

4 (No response.)

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
6 you.

7 MR. McPHERSON: The next
8 witness is Shelly Yanoff.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
10 evening.

11 MS. YANOFF: Good evening.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Please
13 identify yourself to our record and
14 begin.

15 MS. YANOFF: I will. Thank
16 you.

17 I am Shelly Yanoff. I'm
18 Executive Director of Philadelphia
19 Citizens for Children and Youth. Thank
20 you for the opportunity to speak very
21 briefly about the City's budget. I know
22 it's late, and you have testimony. I
23 will just summarize.

24 One, we want to say we are
25 really pleased about the cribs and we're

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2 pleased about the Adolescent Violence
3 Prevention Reduction Program. It is very
4 important that we all figure out every
5 way we can to decrease the violence in
6 our community. And we are pleased, of
7 course, with the improved economic
8 forecast for the City, but we still are
9 concerned. While the budget restores
10 some positions, there are some others in
11 some departments that are really limping
12 along.

13 I want to underscore the
14 previous panel. The health clinics
15 are -- the waiting lists are large. The
16 staffing is just not adequate.

17 We really want to also talk for
18 a minute about dental care in our health
19 clinics. And, Councilwoman Blackwell,
20 we've talked with you about this before.
21 We have been worried about the reduction
22 in health clinics generally in the center
23 staffing, as well as in dental care, but
24 recently it was really brought home to us
25 when we had -- we were supporting the

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2 School District in helping get kids free
3 dental care. We fielded 1,000 calls in
4 one day from parents desperate to find
5 dental care for their children. And we
6 had -- in some of the health clinics,
7 they had to wait four months, five months
8 for a dental appointment. That's just
9 not acceptable. And what's going to
10 happen now is, it's going to get worse,
11 because even level funding, when you've
12 got more and more companies not providing
13 healthcare for families, it's going to
14 be -- it's increasing.

15 So we urge you to do something
16 about increasing the investment in our
17 health clinics, particularly looking at
18 dental healthcare.

19 Recreation centers are the
20 second piece. The budget includes
21 significant new capital funding for some
22 important infrastructure investment, but
23 it doesn't reach the rec facilities.

24 We have, as well as the
25 Controller, but we have done a survey of

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2 recreation centers and playgrounds, and
3 there's not enough staffing, there's not
4 enough programming. I'm not telling you
5 anything you don't know. And the
6 facilities need improvement. So we urge
7 you to look at that and to invest some
8 money there.

9 Fairmount Park is another one,
10 which you all know, and it definitely
11 needs more support. That is the most
12 commonly used recreation and
13 breath-of-fresh-air place in our
14 community. We have to support it.

15 I want to just talk for a
16 minute about something that's
17 preliminary. I just came here from a
18 hearing on what's happening with kids who
19 are dropping out of school. I encourage
20 you to look at a collaborative investment
21 with the School District, with DHS to
22 really see what we can do to really do
23 something about the thousands of kids
24 that we are losing every year. We don't
25 want to take time up right now to talk

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2 about it with you, but we would love to
3 work on it with you. This is a critical
4 need in our community.

5 We also want to just note the
6 idea that in any future property tax
7 abatements or TIFs, that we hold the
8 schools harmless. We'll talk about that
9 more next week, but the reality is that
10 our property taxes are booming, but we
11 all know that improved public schools
12 will make a real big difference in the
13 economic outlook in our City, and, in
14 fact, the schools have not been able, of
15 course, to profit from the kind of
16 investment that the new property
17 abatements are yielding.

18 In conclusion, there's a lot
19 good in the budget, but we need to do
20 more. So we thank you once again for all
21 you do and for listening. Thank you.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
23 you, Ms. Yanoff. As you know, this
24 Council held hearings in '93 on the
25 school drop-out rate.

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2 MS. YANOFF: Right.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: We
4 thank you for that. And we've really
5 been focusing very hard on the dental
6 issue, especially with regard to
7 children, because this has been a big
8 problem. And so we're always happy to
9 extend that conversation and let you know
10 what we're trying to do in collaboration
11 with HUP and the universities in our
12 district. Thank you.

13 Any questions?

14 (No response.)

15 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
16 you very much.

17 MR. McPHERSON: Our next
18 witness is Margaret Zukoski, Regional
19 Director of PA Council of Children and
20 Youth Services.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
22 evening. Thank you for your patience.

23 Is Cheryl Weiss here from
24 Diversified Community Services?

25 MR. McPHERSON: She left her

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2 testimony.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Cheryl
4 Weiss's testimony will be considered as
5 part of the record.

6 And, Shelly, we will submit
7 your testimony as part of the record in
8 its entirety.

9 Thank you. Welcome again.
10 Thank you for your patience. Identify
11 yourself and begin your testimony. Thank
12 you all.

13 MS. ZUKOSKI: Thank you very
14 much. Good evening. I'm Margaret
15 Zukoski, and this is Rhonda Rhone. We
16 work at the Philadelphia Office of the
17 Pennsylvania Council of Children, Youth
18 and Family Services. I'm joined by Felix
19 Montanez, who is the Director of Children
20 Services at the Asociacion De
21 Peurtorriquenos En Marcha, who is a
22 member agency of the Pennsylvania
23 Council.

24 The Pennsylvania Council is a
25 state-wide membership association

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2 comprised of over 130 private agencies
3 that contract with counties to deliver
4 direct services to abused, neglected,
5 delinquent and dependent children and
6 their families.

7 We are here today to urge
8 members of City Council to approve DHS's
9 funding year 2007 operating budget for
10 \$609 million. Your approval will ensure
11 that funding is available to meet the
12 increasingly complex needs of
13 Philadelphia's most vulnerable children
14 and their families.

15 I'd like to take this
16 opportunity to discuss the critical role
17 the private child welfare providers have
18 in delivering services in Philadelphia.
19 At least 60 percent, or 70 of our
20 members, contract with the Philadelphia
21 Department of Human Services.
22 Eighty-four percent of DHS's funding is
23 designated for payment to private
24 agencies for the delivery of direct
25 services. These figures illustrate DHS's

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2 confidence in and reliance on the private
3 sector in delivering services to
4 Philadelphia's children and families.

5 DHS and its private providers
6 share the same goals and sense of
7 responsibility toward ensuring that our
8 children and families have access to
9 high-quality services. Pennsylvania
10 Council members work closely with DHS
11 Commissioner, Cheryl Ransom-Garner, and
12 meet with her frequently with the purpose
13 of discussing the improvement of services
14 to our children and families.

15 Our Council members provide a
16 broad array of services, ranging from
17 prevention services aimed at diverting
18 children from entering the formal child
19 welfare system, to secured detention
20 facilities for juvenile offenders. For
21 example, private providers who contract
22 with DHS deliver direct services to
23 approximately 14,000 children receiving
24 non-placement services through family
25 preservation and services to children in

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2 their own homes; 7,000 Philadelphia
3 children currently placed in
4 community-based homes, emergency
5 shelters, general foster care, kinship
6 care, treatment foster care, medical
7 foster care and group homes; 1,400
8 children placed in institutional settings
9 such as residential treatment facilities;
10 7,000 children enrolled in after-school
11 and youth development programs. We
12 provide services to 6,000 parents and
13 caregivers participating in parenting
14 education programs, and over 1,000
15 chronically truant youth who are diverted
16 from placement.

17 Additionally, many of our
18 member agencies are licensed to deliver
19 educational services through approved
20 private schools and to provide behavioral
21 health services.

22 In delivering these services,
23 Pennsylvania Council members often
24 subsidize DHS-funded services by using
25 their own private dollars. A

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2 Pennsylvania Council study conducted last
3 year showed that a sample of 39 of our
4 agencies in this region designated
5 approximately \$21 million to fill the gap
6 between the actual cost of services and
7 the contracted service rates offered by
8 DHS. Generating private dollars through
9 foundation grants and private donations
10 is becoming increasingly more difficult,
11 and providers can no longer rely on these
12 private dollars to bridge the gap.

13 On March 8, Commissioner
14 Ransom-Garner provided testimony to City
15 Council on both the changing demographics
16 of the youth we serve and DHS's plans for
17 new programming to address the changing
18 environment. She noted that just a
19 decade ago our foster care system was
20 filled with very young children. Today,
21 over 57 percent of the children entering
22 placement are age 12 years old and older.
23 These older youth enter care with more
24 complex behavioral, emotional and
25 educational needs, and providers have

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2 been making tremendous efforts to ensure
3 that their needs are met, including
4 working simultaneously to achieve
5 permanency for them and to prepare them
6 for independence and long-term stability.

7 Providers continually have to
8 recruit and train foster parents who are
9 willing and able to care for adolescents.
10 Foster parents are truly the heroes in
11 our system.

12 Providers have been invited by
13 DHS to work with them in designing and
14 implementing an older youth initiative
15 which aims to enhance services to youth
16 living in group homes. Everyone
17 recognizes that we must focus more
18 efforts on these children before they age
19 out of the system.

20 DHS also plans to implement an
21 older youth diversion program for youth
22 between ages 13 and 17. This program
23 will provide intensive services to
24 families of older youth who have reached
25 a critical juncture where they want to

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2 voluntarily place their sons or daughters
3 because they can no longer cope with
4 their behavior.

5 Currently, DHS is also
6 currently piloting a Rapid Service
7 Response Initiative with the goal of
8 helping families as soon as DHS
9 investigators identify them as needing
10 help. Pennsylvania Council
11 wholeheartedly supports these new
12 approaches. Ultimately they will reduce
13 the number of youth who enter the formal
14 child welfare system.

15 The Commissioner also commented
16 on the troubling rise in youth violence,
17 noting that 10 percent of the victims of
18 gun violence in Philadelphia are
19 juveniles. This year, DHS implemented
20 the Adolescent Violence Reduction
21 Partnership in response to this trend.
22 In funding year 2007, full implementation
23 of AVRP will occur. Again, providers,
24 private providers, are being called on to
25 deliver this critical service.

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2 In her testimony, the
3 Commissioner also highlighted the
4 significant successes that programs are
5 demonstrating. Over the past several
6 years, DHS and providers have achieved
7 great success in reducing the numbers of
8 dependent children in foster care, from
9 7,800 in funding year '03 to 6,700 at the
10 end of December last year, a reduction of
11 nearly 15 percent. This dramatic
12 decrease in the number of children in
13 placement is due, in large part, to the
14 implementation of performance-based
15 contracting beginning in March 2003.

16 Performance-based contracting
17 in the foster and kinship care system has
18 resulted in an 84 percent increase in the
19 permanency rate and a 50 percent increase
20 in stability of placements. Children are
21 moving far less frequently than they did
22 several years ago in stability and
23 recidivism in placement as compared to
24 2002.

25 Simultaneously, the numbers of

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2 children entering foster care has
3 decreased. This is attributable to the
4 City's commitment to a broad array of
5 community-based prevention services.

6 Regrettably, the positive
7 strides that have been made are now in
8 jeopardy. The provider network on which
9 DHS depends to deliver direct services is
10 struggling, while the cost to do
11 business, including skyrocketing
12 insurance costs, health and general
13 liability, energy, staff, travel and
14 utilities, have not been commensurate
15 with the rates that DHS pays us. Last
16 year, agencies were not able to offer
17 their staff salary increases and required
18 greater contribution to health insurance.
19 Not surprisingly, providers have seen a
20 rise in staff turnover and are
21 experiencing difficulty in attracting
22 qualified staff.

23 The families of children under
24 DHS custody frequently are confronting
25 multiple issues: Poverty, substance

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2 abuse, domestic violence, mental illness
3 and homelessness. Retaining experienced
4 staff to work with these families is
5 critical to achieving positive results
6 for children.

7 So why is this happening? Why
8 are we falling behind? In funding year
9 2005 and 2006, providers did not receive
10 rate increases, even though the state
11 allocated a two percent cost of doing
12 business COLA in both years to DHS. In
13 its funding year '07 budget, DPW again
14 has included a two percent COLA for
15 purchased services. We just learned
16 today from Commissioner Ransom-Garner
17 that she is committed to increasing
18 service rates in 2007. This was very
19 welcomed news. However, without an
20 increase in our rates, providers will not
21 be able to sustain services. If we have
22 to go three years without an increase,
23 many providers face going out of
24 business. While this increase is truly
25 appreciated, providers continue to ask

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2 that DHS review all its rates for
3 providers and make the appropriate
4 adjustments that reflect the cost of
5 living increases.

6 As you work to make the budget
7 numbers balance against the many
8 competing interests and priorities that I
9 heard today, the members of Pennsylvania
10 Council urge you to support DHS's request
11 for funding and thereby ensure that
12 services are available to address the
13 needs of our City's most vulnerable
14 children.

15 Thank you very much.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
17 you very much. We appreciate the work
18 that you do, and your commitment to our
19 children is obvious. We thank you very
20 much.

21 Councilwoman Tasco.

22 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you.

23 In the last portion of your
24 testimony, you talked about in 2005 and
25 2006 that the state had appropriated two

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2 percent cost of living. Was that for
3 each year?

4 MS. ZUKOSKI: Yes.

5 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: And you
6 did not get that?

7 MS. ZUKOSKI: No, we did not.

8 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Do you
9 know if it came to the City?

10 MS. ZUKOSKI: Yes, it did.

11 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Was it
12 received by the City?

13 MS. ZUKOSKI: Yes, it did.

14 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: This year
15 you're getting the two percent?

16 MS. ZUKOSKI: Yes, we are.

17 Well, I spoke to the Commissioner today
18 and she said that she was working with
19 the Mayor toward giving us rate increases
20 and that they will not be across the
21 board, but she will look at the dollars
22 available and see what she can do for
23 providers.

24 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Did you
25 all ask what happened to the 2005 and

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2 2006 dollars?

3 MS. ZUKOSKI: Yes, we did.

4 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: And what
5 was the response?

6 MS. ZUKOSKI: Essentially when
7 DPW allocates the dollars to the City,
8 they frequently do not or ever, I should
9 say, meet the requests that are made by
10 the City in the needs-based plan and
11 budget. Whenever there's a shortfall in
12 the amount the City requested from DPW,
13 providers take the brunt of that
14 shortfall.

15 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: So the
16 state provided two percent for the
17 department, but not specifically for your
18 services?

19 MS. ZUKOSKI: The two percent
20 in the state budget was designated for
21 purchased services. And when DHS
22 receives its allocation for the Office of
23 Children, Youth and Families, as I
24 understand it, the Office of Children,
25 Youth and Families will go over with DHS

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2 where the cuts occurred in their request
3 and where the money that they're
4 providing is available. It is then up to
5 DHS to determine where the money goes.
6 They do not necessarily follow the
7 legislative intent.

8 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
10 you very much. The Chair notes that
11 Representative Mark Cohen is in the room.
12 We certainly welcome him. As all of you
13 know, he is the son, in addition to being
14 the State Rep, he is the son of the late
15 David Cohen, our colleague. He's always
16 welcome. We invite him.

17 If there is something you would
18 like to say, you're always welcome. We
19 note that you are here and we welcome
20 you. Thank you.

21 MR. MCPHERSON: Our next
22 witness is Bonnie Swint.

23 MR. SWINT: It's Bennie Swint
24 and Tanya Bassknight.

25 MR. MCPHERSON: We have the

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2 name wrong. Sorry.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
4 evening. These are folks from West
5 Philly, so we know them and we welcome
6 them, and thank you. Please identify
7 yourself and begin your testimony. Thank
8 you. Sorry, Mr. Swint.

9 MR. SWINT: Madam Councilwoman
10 Jannie Blackwell and other Councilmembers
11 and staff, my name is Bennie,
12 B-E-N-N-I-E, Swint, S-W-I-N-T. I
13 represent Albert Christy Recreation
14 Center located at the 5600 block of
15 Christian Street, West Philly, District
16 6. I'm a Block Captain. I've been a
17 Block Captain for ten years. I'm the
18 Chairman of the Capital Improvement at
19 the Recreation Center and Ms. Tanya
20 Bassknight is the Co-Chairman, in which
21 she will express the grave concern about
22 the condition outside and inside the
23 center, the need for capital improvement,
24 and I'd like for you to prioritize our
25 needs. Thank you very much.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
3 you, Mr. Swint.

4 Hi, Tanya.

5 MS. BASSKNIGHT: Good evening,
6 Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell. Always a
7 pleasure. It's been quite a long time
8 since I've been in City Council hearings.

9 I'm here today to represent the
10 Albert W. Christy Advisory Council. I am
11 the Second Vice-President.

12 Today, our center is requesting
13 services. We are requesting a gymnasium,
14 restroom repairs, supplies, roof
15 overhangs, gate replacements for safety
16 reasons and to secure outside entrances
17 of activities, replacement swings. We
18 have missing swings. The playground area
19 should always have swings for our
20 children. The swing area is utilized by
21 surrounding schools, the Harrity
22 Elementary School, the Huey Elementary
23 School and local daycare centers.

24 Knowing your resources is one
25 of the many keys to success. We ask you,

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2 our Mayor and City Council members as our
3 elected officials, to hear our concerns
4 pertaining to recreation funding
5 resources in this letter. On behalf of
6 the Albert W. Christy Recreation Center
7 Advisory Council, we present to you our
8 concerns for our center and ask that
9 capital improvement funding be included
10 in the budget for funding to our center
11 and recreation centers across the City.

12 It is said there is always
13 something better, a better place to live,
14 a better job to have, a better car to
15 drive. However, we as the Council of the
16 Albert W. Christy Recreation Center, we
17 strive to take care of what we have. We,
18 the Albert W. Christy Recreation Center,
19 in taking care of what we have, we have
20 completed a Building Inventory Needs
21 Assessment, which has been done so well
22 by Mr. Bennie Swint and he has taken
23 pictures and we have presented pictures
24 of the center, of the bathrooms, of the
25 roof overhangs, of the gate replacements.

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2 We have also submitted a picture of a
3 vision of what we would like to see for
4 our gymnasium.

5 My son, Wyatt Benson, he is
6 here today to show to the surrounding
7 area and members that are here today our
8 vision.

9 We also brought with us today
10 pictures of the softball league, the
11 community-inspired softball league, which
12 we're going into our third season, just
13 to show the activities that go on at the
14 center. And we would like to also add
15 that -- and, of course, you know. We
16 have an epidemic in our City. There's an
17 epidemic of killings, and it's pertaining
18 particularly to our youth.

19 Across the City, we've had 380
20 deaths last year, which 80 percent were
21 children under 17. So we have stepped up
22 our efforts in our community to combat
23 this problem. So we as community
24 organizations, we have come together, and
25 we come together at that center, and we

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2 need the center to be state-of-the-art.

3 In order for us to continue to serve, we

4 need for it to be in a better standard.

5 So we ask you to urgently look

6 at this, revise some committees,

7 appropriate funds for us to get this.

8 The gym is in the sum of

9 \$80,000. So we are asking for today

10 80,000 plus in order to get these needs

11 addressed.

12 I thank you today.

13 (Applause.)

14 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank

15 you very much, and we thank all of those

16 who are here with her. We've just been

17 talking about Christy today, just today,

18 and just in fact during this hearing.

19 Our Recreation Commissioner is here. He

20 hears you.

21 You know we love you. You know

22 we're committed to Christy, and we're

23 going to do everything that we can.

24 Thank you very, very much.

25 MS. BASSKNIGHT: Councilwoman,

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2 this package is for you.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
4 you.

5 Councilwoman Tasco.

6 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Good
7 afternoon -- good evening. It's quarter
8 to 7:00.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Yes.

10 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Before you
11 leave the table, I would just like to
12 comment on your testimony in terms of the
13 need for the recreation facilities.

14 Maybe for about the past ten
15 years or more, the Councilmembers have
16 been given a \$1.2 million budget for each
17 district to spend on their recreation
18 facilities in their district, and that
19 way, you can pretty much predict what you
20 want to do, where you want to do it.
21 We've been able to build two centers in
22 the Ninth District because we captured
23 those, knew how much money we were going
24 to have, captured that money, got
25 matching dollars from the state. We

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2 built a state-of-the-art rec center up in
3 Mt. Airy and we expanded the Simons
4 Recreation facility and the Finley
5 Recreation facility.

6 We passed the budget in 2005
7 for the same amount of money. It was
8 voted on by the voters of the City of
9 Philadelphia for us to receive our \$1.2
10 million. The Mayor decided that only the
11 District Councilpeople could spend
12 \$500,000 in their district. The money is
13 sitting in the budget. We are now faced
14 with passing another budget with the cut
15 for the districts. The money for 2005 is
16 there. It is for us to spend, but there
17 for some reason is no -- he does not want
18 us to have that money in our districts.
19 I think it's unfair to those people who
20 live in the community, who went to the
21 polls, voted for the money, and we voted
22 on the issue in City Council that we
23 would get \$1.2 million and we're being
24 asked to only take \$850,000 for our
25 district, which I think is silly and

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2 disgraceful, when the money is sitting
3 there, and it is our money.

4 I am not going to ask my people
5 and explain to my people how I take
6 \$850,000 when there's 1.2 million sitting
7 there. And those are the questions you
8 all should ask of your Councilpeople, why
9 would they take that 850 when 1.2 is
10 there. It's not like it's not there.
11 And it's been appropriated for, and you
12 can use it in your district. And you
13 work with the Recreation Commissioner.
14 He's a good Recreation Commissioner. He
15 finds dollars to help you with your rec
16 center. For some reason, I don't
17 understand why these new shenanigans are
18 going on.

19 Sorry, Madam Chair. I just had
20 to exercise my frustration, because I'm
21 totally frustrated.

22 (Applause.)

23 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
24 you. And we agree that we have an
25 excellent Recreation Commissioner. We're

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2 all committed. We have wonderful people
3 like this who have come down, who have
4 taken time out of their busy schedules to
5 come here and patiently sit and deal with
6 their needs, and certainly we do support
7 them in all that they want to do, and we
8 thank you.

9 MS. BASSKNIGHT: Thank you.

10 MR. SWINT: Thank you so much.

11 MR. McPHERSON: The next
12 witness is the Reverend Paris Bowen.

13 (No response.)

14 MR. McPHERSON: The next
15 witness then would be Percy Rosales.

16 (No response.)

17 MR. McPHERSON: Okay. Phil
18 Johnson, Marsha Wilcliff.

19 (No response.)

20 MR. McPHERSON: Robert Davis.

21 (Applause.)

22 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
23 evening. We do thank you for your
24 patience, and we ask that you identify
25 yourself for the record and begin your

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2 testimony.

3 MR. DAVIS: My name is Bobby
4 Davis. I'm President of Local 696, but
5 the reason why I'm here today is more of
6 concern about public issues that we are
7 facing in the Clerk of Quarter Sessions.
8 So I guess I'll be playing a dual role
9 here. I'll be also supporting them as
10 President of Local 696, District Council
11 33, but also I have concerns as a
12 taxpayer.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I see
14 someone has a sign that says -- what does
15 that say back there? Stress? Cheese and
16 rice. We know a little bit about that up
17 here. But thank you all for coming.
18 Thank you.

19 MR. DAVIS: First of all, I
20 want to give greetings, Madam Chairwoman
21 Jannie Blackwell, greetings to our
22 distinguished City Council members.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
24 you.

25 MR. DAVIS: We thank you for

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2 the opportunity to present our concerns
3 relating to the Office of the Clerk of
4 Quarter Sessions.

5 The Clerk of Quarter Sessions
6 with their necessary clerks, and I
7 emphasize necessary, was established in
8 each of the counties of Pennsylvania by
9 William Penn's Frame of Governing of
10 1682.

11 The powers, functions and
12 duties of the Clerk of Quarter Sessions
13 are prescribed by the state statutes of
14 Pennsylvania and the local ordinances of
15 the Philadelphia City Council. Under
16 current laws, Quarter Sessions serves the
17 criminal courts of Common Pleas and
18 Municipal Court, as well as the Juvenile
19 Division of Family Court. Its clerks
20 record, index and file all the bills of
21 information and transcripts of Municipal
22 Court. They post dockets, take bail
23 imposed by judges, enter judgments upon
24 bail forfeitures, issue bench warrants,
25 collect fines, costs imposed by the

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2 courts, record on bills of information or
3 criminal transcripts the decisions of the
4 courts, issue commitments or discharges
5 for the defendants and, when necessary,
6 answer numerous inquiries from prisoners,
7 attorneys and judges. The Clerk's office
8 also expedites matters such as petitions
9 for writs of habeas corpus, appeals from
10 convictions, issuance of private
11 detective licenses and other
12 miscellaneous matters.

13 In serving the Juvenile
14 Division of Family Court, the Clerk of
15 Quarter Sessions handles all matters
16 relating to the court case files,
17 including sending subpoenas to witnesses
18 and notifying attorneys of court dates
19 and activities.

20 I want to emphasize this
21 paragraph. The clerk's standing,
22 however, is founded not on the threat of
23 contempt, but rather on the duties of his
24 office. Only the clerk of courts, not
25 the common citizen, has had the

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2 responsibility conferred upon him by the
3 Pennsylvania Constitution to maintain
4 court records for public access. And
5 this is listed under the Pennsylvania
6 Constitution Schedule Article 5, Section
7 15.2.

8 The particulars of this
9 constitutional duty are established in
10 the Judicial Code 3. They are also
11 addressed in the Pennsylvania Rules of
12 Criminal Procedure, which directs a clerk
13 of courts to maintain the criminal case
14 files for the Court of Common Pleas and a
15 list of docket entries based on the
16 Pennsylvania Rules of Criminal Procedures
17 113(A) and (B). The duties are conferred
18 on the clerk of courts by our
19 Constitution, by our legislature and by
20 Supreme Court.

21 To be effective, the Direct
22 Court Services Unit need to keep enough
23 properly trained court clerks on its
24 staff who will provide services to the
25 requisite criminal court system in a

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2 competent manner. Additionally, the
3 Direct Court Service Unit must have a
4 quality review process to ensure the
5 qualitative aspects of its objectives.

6 Our concern is for the
7 continuous violation that exists in our
8 courtrooms every day. These violations
9 could ultimately compromise the safety of
10 the citizens of Philadelphia. The
11 powers, duties, the responsibilities of
12 the Office of the Clerk of Quarter
13 Sessions are outlined in the following.

14 Just for the sake of time, you
15 have that list.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Yes,
17 sir, we do.

18 MR. DAVIS: So what we'll do is
19 just note that the list that we're
20 referring to is in the Pennsylvania
21 consolidated statutes, the Pennsylvania
22 Code, the Pennsylvania Constitution.

23 In 1992, the Controller's
24 office did an audit of the Office of the
25 Clerk of Quarter Sessions and found that

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2 it violated many of the above laws. In
3 their brief, the Clerk of Quarter Session
4 through its DCSU does not effectively
5 serve all criminal courts. Many criminal
6 hearings held, particularly those in
7 Common Pleas and the Municipal Court, did
8 not have a court clerk assigned to the
9 courtroom.

10 Assignment practices and
11 violations, legal requirements, this also
12 was noted. To cope with the shortfall of
13 the court clerk coverage, the DCSU
14 management simultaneously assigned one
15 court clerk to more than one criminal
16 hearing in different courtrooms. That
17 has to stop. That has to stop.

18 (Applause.)

19 MR. DAVIS: Such a court
20 practice violates the legal intent of
21 City Council Ordinance 275. The
22 ordinance compels the clerk to be present
23 at all times during criminal trials.
24 That's not when they need somebody there,
25 but to be present at all times to make

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2 sure that they are able to get the
3 information needed for them to be able to
4 perform their job. It states that.

5 The Clerk of Quarter Sessions
6 assigns a court clerk to each court of
7 record who shall be present at all times
8 during the trial. Managers interpret
9 this statement to mean that a criminal
10 hearing cannot technically occur without
11 a presiding judge and a court clerk.

12 (Applause.)

13 MR. DAVIS: Yet, as an agency,
14 Quarter Sessions has made no formal
15 policy of this interpretation and in fact
16 has not even complied with it.

17 During this audit, the Clerk of
18 Quarter Sessions had 79 court clerks.
19 That was in 1992. Since this period, the
20 number of judges has increased, the
21 number of court cases has increased, and
22 yet the number of court clerks decreased
23 to present 63. This is a disaster
24 waiting to happen, and in 1998, it did.
25 Warrington versus the City of

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2 Philadelphia. Warrington should have
3 been our wake-up call. We should not
4 have to find ourselves with a lawsuit
5 against the City of Philadelphia as a
6 result of someone's death created by an
7 oversight due to violations of said laws.

8 In addition to the law
9 violations, we are concerned that the
10 Mayor's Statement of Policy also bears
11 some attention. The Office of Clerk of
12 Quarter Sessions is predominantly
13 females. Not providing them with the
14 necessary means to perform their duties
15 and responsibilities according to the law
16 is a violation of equal opportunity.

17 Philadelphia Home Rule Charter,
18 Section 7-302, a civil service system to
19 be effective requires the cooperation of
20 all officers and employees and their
21 complying with the civil service
22 regulations. This section imposes
23 mandatory general and specific duties of
24 such cooperation and such compliance upon
25 all officers and all employees. No one

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2 is exempt.

3 Civil Service Regulation 24.01,
4 the working conditions: The Director, in
5 cooperation with other City officers,
6 shall be responsible for the development
7 and operation of programs to improve the
8 work effectiveness and the morale of
9 employees in the City, including safety,
10 health, welfare, recreation and labor
11 relations, including grievances and
12 hearings thereof.

13 I say we are going backwards.
14 Any time we start off with 79 clerks and
15 we're down to 63 and only 53 are in the
16 room and yet we got more judges than we
17 can service and yet they're being
18 criticized for the work they do, I think
19 it's unfair, and something should be done
20 about it soon.

21 (Applause.)

22 MR. DAVIS: We must and will
23 hold the City of Philadelphia responsible
24 for 26.01, responsibility for training.
25 The state is getting ready to issue a

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2 system that will become mandatory, and
3 because of the shortness of staff, we
4 won't be able to be adequately trained.
5 According to this regulation, the
6 Director shall foster and develop, in
7 cooperation with appointing authorities
8 in other programs, for the improvement of
9 employee effectiveness.

10 I won't read the rest of it.
11 It's in front of you.

12 In the near future, the Office
13 of the Clerk of Quarter Sessions will be
14 met with the Herculean task of providing
15 training for the Case Management System.
16 Without some additional staffing, it will
17 be impossible to provide the much-needed
18 training. The CMS system will be a state
19 requirement.

20 The court clerks are
21 overwhelmed, overworked, understaffed,
22 stressed. As stated in a letter from the
23 Honorable Vivian T. Miller, the Clerk of
24 Quarter Sessions, dated January 16, 2002,
25 addressed to then Budget Director Robert

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2 Dubow, she clearly states that her
3 concern for the tremendous amount of
4 stress being experienced by the court
5 clerks. In addition, Ms. Miller states
6 that due to the shortage of court clerks,
7 the office is unable to grant vacation
8 time. Therefore, morale is low.

9 (Applause.)

10 MR. DAVIS: Why wouldn't it be?
11 If you are a lot of females and you're
12 sitting in that court and you got to
13 listen to a lot of the things that go on
14 in that court and you can't take a break,
15 at some point you will break down.

16 (Applause.)

17 MR. DAVIS: In 2002, Ms. Miller
18 sent a letter to City Council stating
19 that many assignments now require some
20 courtrooms with two clerks, but due to
21 the budget cuts over the years, only one
22 is now assigned. She also stated it is
23 clearly difficult for court clerks to
24 keep up pace with the speed and volume
25 with the cases handled during the course

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2 of a normal day, requiring them to stay
3 many hours on overtime, but yet they
4 can't have any vacation.

5 (Applause.)

6 MR. DAVIS: The lack of clerks
7 has been the source of some criticism by
8 judges, as well as some defense
9 attorneys. Because of present staffing,
10 the level is not efficient enough to
11 process prisoners in and out of the
12 system in a timely manner, creating
13 additional transportation and housing
14 costs. It is costing you money on both
15 ends. The problem becomes what end do
16 you want to spend it on. The timely
17 discharge of a defendant when appropriate
18 is his or her constitutional right and
19 should have the highest priority.

20 What is even more frightening
21 is statistics reported by Ms. Miller in
22 the same letter. The numbers of
23 misdemeanor/felony cases filed have
24 increased from 43,000 in 1997 to more
25 than 65,000 in 2001, and to date, that

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2 number is now 80,000.

3 (Applause.)

4 MR. DAVIS: The increase in
5 processing criminal cases has had a
6 profound impact on our staff, our ability
7 to perform our duties as court clerks in
8 the criminal justice system. The threat
9 of replacement by at-will employees adds
10 extra pressure to a job that requires
11 focus and concentration. It takes
12 knowledge, skills and ability to do this
13 job. Public safety is an issue. Because
14 of the shortage, it would be difficult
15 for court clerks to get the required
16 proper training.

17 We cannot afford errors,
18 mistakes and employee turnover. These
19 are some of the conditions that come
20 about because of the undue stress related
21 to the job. Employees who are committed
22 to doing their job properly are forced to
23 work under conditions such as no lunch,
24 mandatory overtime, time off being
25 denied, and the increase in the volume of

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2 work all adds to low morale and
3 contribute to employee turnover.
4 Actually, some employees leave before
5 probation is over and others just take a
6 demotion and go elsewhere.

7 (Applause.)

8 MR. DAVIS: Judges have been
9 increased. Court clerks need to surpass
10 the amount of judges to give us the
11 advantage we need in order for us to
12 fully perform the duties that are
13 mandated by law, Ordinance 275. These
14 public safety issues create many dangers.
15 For example, a commit and retain may be
16 required without a court clerk in the
17 room with knowledge that this order is
18 needed. It may allow a defendant to be
19 released on society. Often a separation
20 order may be needed to keep one defendant
21 from causing the death of another. A
22 discharge may be required, and if not
23 written, a defendant may be detained
24 unduly and create a situation like the
25 Warrington lawsuit. Our caseloads have

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2 increased, but not the number of court
3 clerks.

4 To fully service the court
5 system needs, our Quarter Sessions
6 management must assign a court clerk to
7 all criminal proceedings.

8 The DCSU failed to provide
9 needed court clerks at hearings and this,
10 in turn, caused delays in trial
11 proceedings as well as a complete
12 courtroom shutdown.

13 In closing, we would like to
14 express our understanding of the budget
15 issues facing this City. However, we
16 expect everyone to obey and respect the
17 laws that govern each one of us. To
18 continue not to provide the necessary
19 means allowed by law to the Office of the
20 Clerk of Quarter Sessions to perform
21 their duties and responsibilities is
22 negligent.

23 (Applause.)

24 MR. DAVIS: The function of
25 City Council influence a wide range of

1 3/29/06 - WHOLE - BILL 060001, ETC.
2 public affairs in Philadelphia and
3 directly impact the quality of life for
4 its citizens. We are looking to City
5 Council to help restore the confidence
6 and trust to the Office of the Clerk of
7 Quarter Sessions.

8 (Applause.)

9 (Standing ovation.)

10 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
11 you for your testimony. We feel awful
12 about you having to come out here --
13 you're already overworked and tired -- to
14 make sure that we hear your concerns, but
15 we hear you. And your Clerk of Quarter
16 Sessions, Vivian Miller, has said as you
17 have stated here. Year in and year out
18 she comes here crying for help during the
19 budget process, and we have agreed with
20 her. We agreed with her when she's come
21 here, and we have said that we agree that
22 she needs help. And you really, really
23 brought it home to us.

24 So it's one of those issues
25 that we will reiterate -- I'm sure

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2 somebody from the Mayor's office is
3 listening -- that we will reiterate where
4 help is needed. As Councilwoman Tasco
5 says, we can appropriate, but we can't
6 spend. But we will certainly let the
7 Administration know how concerned you are
8 and how concerned we are, because we
9 believe in you. We know that you get it
10 done, and we couldn't survive without
11 you, and we're really, really regretful
12 that it is just awful that you have to
13 work under these conditions.

14 So we say thank you for all
15 you've done, and we're with you and we're
16 going to do our best to try to get some
17 help.

18 (Applause.)

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:

20 Councilwoman Tasco.

21 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you
22 very much.

23 Are all these positions civil
24 service positions?

25 MR. DAVIS: Yes.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Do you all
3 participate in the DROP program?

4 MR. DAVIS: Yes.

5 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Have you
6 lost a number of employees to the DROP
7 program?

8 MR. DAVIS: Yes.

9 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: And those
10 positions are not being filled?

11 MR. DAVIS: No.

12 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Thank you.
13 We appreciate your hard work, and we hear
14 you loudly and clearly.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Very
16 important questions, Councilwoman.

17 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: The
18 question is, we keep hearing the message
19 over and over again, but there's nothing
20 done about it. That's the shame of it
21 all.

22 Thank you.

23 (Applause.)

24 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
25 you again, all of you, for coming and for

1 3/29/06 - WHOLE - BILL 060001, ETC.

2 being here.

3 MR. DAVIS: Councilwoman, I
4 just want to add --

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Yes,
6 sir.

7 MR. DAVIS: -- that many of our
8 employees are facing some serious health
9 conditions. I didn't have that in my
10 presentation, and I just want to make
11 note of that. Because once I met with
12 them today to give them an outline of the
13 presentation, I'm certainly not in a
14 position to talk about people's health
15 issues, so I wanted to be very careful
16 about that, but I was informed that it
17 was okay with most of them to share that
18 with you. And so I want to make sure
19 that -- we're talking about people who
20 normally were in good health and because
21 of the stress now are facing a high blood
22 pressure situation, medication, things
23 that will be needed for them to now have
24 to be on maintenance-type drugs for the
25 rest of their life because of what we're

1 3/29/06 - WHOLE - BILL 060001, ETC.

2 dealing with here.

3 So I just want to make that
4 part of the record, and also thank the
5 Councilpeople for allowing us the
6 opportunity to speak before you today.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
8 you very much. God bless you all. Thank
9 you.

10 MR. DAVIS: Same to you.

11 MR. McPHERSON: The next
12 witness is Donna Morrissey.

13 (No response.)

14 MR. McPHERSON: Donna
15 Morrissey.

16 (No response.)

17 MR. McPHERSON: Lance Haver.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Is
19 there anyone who would like to speak
20 other than Mr. Haver?

21 (No response.)

22 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Okay.
23 Thank you.

24 Mr. Haver.

25 This will be our last witness

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2 for tonight. We thank you all for your
3 patience.

4 Mr. Haver, we thank you for the
5 excellent job you do for us as well.

6 MR. HAVER: Thank you. Thank
7 you very much, Councilwoman, for staying
8 late and listening.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
10 you.

11 MR. HAVER: I'm here testifying
12 as an individual and not in my official
13 capacity. I have testimony --

14 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Excuse
15 me one moment.

16 Could we have a little quiet.
17 Thank you.

18 Thanks, Mr. Haver.

19 MR. HAVER: I have testimony,
20 but the hour being late, I'm just going
21 to excerpt it, if you don't mind.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
23 you. We will submit your testimony in
24 entirety for the record.

25 MR. HAVER: I'm here this

1 3/29/06 - WHOLE - BILL 060001, ETC.

2 evening to urge Council to change the
3 focus of the budget discussion from what
4 taxes can be cut to how do we improve the
5 quality of life in Philadelphia.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Amen.

7 MR. HAVER: If the only thing
8 that mattered to citizens is how much
9 they pay in taxes, then Bismarck, North
10 Dakota, one of the American cities that
11 has extremely low taxes, would be
12 America's most populous city. It is not.
13 New York City, where people pay far more
14 to live than in Philadelphia, is the most
15 populous.

16 It is not just and only about
17 taxes. The truth is, there is not a
18 single academic or scientific study that
19 indicates that taxes are the number one
20 consideration that a person, family or
21 even business uses when deciding where to
22 live or locate. In fact, Philadelphia's
23 recent history shows just the opposite.
24 We have Keystone Opportunity Zones, which
25 are tax-free, where there is no

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2 development, and we have Center City
3 Philadelphia, which surcharges, actually
4 adds additional taxes, to its businesses
5 that has seen the greatest economic
6 expansion in the City.

7 My testimony this evening is an
8 attempt to get Council to begin thinking
9 about newer ideas and to reject the
10 failed policy of focusing solely on
11 taxes. If we all agree that we want to
12 bring new businesses into the City, then
13 we should create a tax code that does
14 just that. We should draw from our past
15 successes. The real estate tax
16 abatement, at least in part, has helped
17 jump start the real estate development in
18 the City. Now in fact we have the
19 opposite problem. Housing prices are
20 climbing so quickly that many families
21 are being priced out of the market.

22 Council should consider cutting
23 back on the real estate tax abatement and
24 creating one for start-up business. Let
25 us give the start-up businesses a

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2 three-year tax abatement and paying for
3 it by cutting the real estate tax
4 abatement by three years.

5 If we want to help small
6 businesses compete with large
7 corporations that send their profits out
8 of the City that have no allegiance to
9 Philadelphia, then we ought to create a
10 tax structure that helps small businesses
11 more than large ones that don't need any
12 help. And we must do that within the
13 constitutional uniformity clause. We
14 should consider a homestead exemption on
15 the first hundred thousand dollars in
16 sales. This will give the greatest
17 savings to the smallest businesses,
18 allowing them breathing room to grow.

19 We can pay for such a tax break
20 by taxing windfall profits that are
21 created when we change the zoning on a
22 parcel of land. For example, if when the
23 zoning is changed on a waterfront
24 property the value goes from 1 million to
25 10 million, that \$9 million windfall

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2 profit is unearned and untaxed. It is
3 also unfair. We should tax such
4 windfalls and pay for the homestead
5 exemption for small businesses.

6 In closing, let me reiterate a
7 discussion that focuses on cutting taxes,
8 not the quality of life, is the wrong
9 discussion. It does not help
10 Philadelphia. When families decide where
11 to live, when businesses decide where to
12 locate, taxes are only one part of many
13 considerations. To make it the only
14 consideration is shortsighted and a
15 disservice.

16 Thank you for staying this
17 evening.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:

19 Mr. Haver, I have always had a lot of
20 respect for you, and I certainly look
21 forward to maybe having a private
22 discussion to further talk about some of
23 the issues you raise. I believe your
24 head and heart are in the right place,
25 and certainly we want to pursue some of

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2 these ideas more in detail, if that would
3 be acceptable.

4 MR. HAVER: Of course. Thank
5 you, Councilwoman, but I didn't want to
6 keep you.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
8 you.

9 Any questions?

10 (No response.)

11 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
12 you very much.

13 Thank you all and good night.
14 Thank you.

15 This Committee will be recessed
16 until Tuesday, April 4th at 10:00 a.m.
17 when we will hear the School District.

18 (Committee of the Whole
19 adjourned at 7:10 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 29, 2006, and that
this is a true and correct transcript of same.

MICHELE L. MURPHY
RPR-Notary Public

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