

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA  
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Room 400, City Hall  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
Monday, June 3, 2013  
10:10 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE BLACKWELL, CHAIR  
COUNCILMAN DAVID OH  
COUNCILMAN BRIAN J. O'NEILL  
COUNCILWOMAN MARIA D. QUINONES-SANCHEZ  
COUNCILWOMAN BLONDELL REYNOLDS BROWN

RESOLUTION 130333 - Resolution calling on the  
City Council Committee on Education to hold  
hearings to examine the feasibility of  
choosing a locally elected Board of Education  
and furthermore to examine the process  
required to do so.

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COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good morning, everyone. We welcome all of you who are here for the City Council Committee on Education. We will call our meeting to order.

As many of you know, there are people in their offices, and we invite them to come down. We will not wait. We will value everyone's time. And at this point, we're going to ask the Clerk to read the title of the resolution.

THE CLERK: Resolution 130333, calling on the City Council Committee on Education to hold hearings to examine the feasibility of choosing a locally elected Board of Education and furthermore to examine the process required to do so.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much.

Again, we welcome you. As you know, many people have varying opinions about this. There are many elected school boards across the country. Philadelphia is something like number

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2           nine. There have been people who have  
3           asked that we be here, Leon Williams  
4           specifically, for example, who has dealt  
5           with this issue some 20 years, and we  
6           thought it is time to at least begin the  
7           discussion.

8                   I've got many complaints that  
9           people feel that if they had an elected  
10          school board, they would have more  
11          accountability and they would have more  
12          access to them.

13                  So those are just some of the  
14          reasons. We'll mention other issues as  
15          we move forward, and we are glad to have  
16          you all here.

17                  And having said that, we're  
18          going to call on Panel 1. That panel  
19          will be led by State Representative Mark  
20          Cohen, Pennsylvania House of  
21          Representatives, 202nd Legislative  
22          District, Philadelphia County. Thank  
23          you, Representative, for being here.

24                  The Chair also notes that  
25          Councilman Oh is present.

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2                   (Witness approached witness  
3           table.)

4                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:

5           Representative, thank you.

6                   REPRESENTATIVE COHEN: Thank  
7           you, Madam Chairman. I will first talk  
8           about the need for greater funding and  
9           then talk about the elected school board.

10                  COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
11           you.

12                  REPRESENTATIVE COHEN:  
13           Chairwoman Blackwell, members of the City  
14           Council Education Committee, I am pleased  
15           to be here this morning. As a graduate  
16           of the Philadelphia public school system,  
17           the son of a graduate of the Philadelphia  
18           public school system, the father of a  
19           graduate of the Philadelphia public  
20           school system, the husband of a long-term  
21           teacher, and the son of two short-term  
22           teachers, I know how important public  
23           education is to the City of Philadelphia.

24                  One of the highlights of my  
25           high school years was the release of the

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2           Odell Report, an exhaustive examination  
3           of the Philadelphia school system in the  
4           mid 1960s. Written by William Rockhold  
5           Odell, the 389-page 1965 report, formally  
6           called the Educational Survey Report for  
7           the Philadelphia Board of Education,  
8           noted in copious detail that the system  
9           was underfunded and underperforming. It  
10          called for massive changes to make a  
11          better system.

12                 There's been no shortage of  
13          changes in the nearly 50 years since the  
14          report was released. Collective  
15          bargaining, higher pensions, the School  
16          Reform Commission, new ways of appointing  
17          board members, the succession of  
18          superintendents from out of town,  
19          frequent changes in the number and duties  
20          of school district regions, a dramatic  
21          reduction in the percentage of school  
22          dropouts, higher test scores, greater  
23          college attendance, expanded summer  
24          school, charter schools, schools without  
25          walls, new disciplinary schools, new

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2           School District headquarters, reduced  
3           School District administrative staff,  
4           smaller schools, new school buildings,  
5           school closings, new curricula for  
6           established subjects, new subjects, more  
7           students learning English as a second  
8           language, more students in special  
9           education, including an explosive growth  
10          in students with autism, school  
11          partnerships with outside organizations,  
12          greater School District utilization of  
13          graduate educational programs for  
14          teachers, integration of the Internet  
15          into day-to-day instruction, the list of  
16          major changes and how the process of  
17          education works in Philadelphia goes on  
18          and on.

19                       There are success stories  
20          galore. At the hundredth anniversary of  
21          my legislative district's Howe Academics  
22          Plus Elementary School coming up on June  
23          7th, 2013, there will be proud alumni  
24          present from all over the Philadelphia  
25          area, plus Canada, California, and

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2           Florida. All over America, in the public  
3           and private sectors alike, there are  
4           graduates of the Philadelphia public  
5           schools working and doing their jobs  
6           well.

7                       The City of Philadelphia has  
8           changed also. The Odell Report  
9           chronicled the problems of the heavy  
10          African American School District trying  
11          desperately to get support from  
12          inattentive and unsympathetic public and  
13          leadership structure in an overwhelmingly  
14          Caucasian city in which there were many  
15          more white children in the Catholic  
16          school system and in other private  
17          schools than there were in the School  
18          District of Philadelphia.

19                     I personally remember City  
20          Council President Paul D'Ortona, an  
21          elementary school dropout and a graduate  
22          of the School of Hard Knocks, repeatedly  
23          making clear his belief that money for  
24          the Philadelphia School District was  
25          wasted money. You didn't need a good

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2           education to get a good job then in a  
3           heavily industrialized city, and the  
4           taxpayers had little reasons to want to  
5           subsidize education.

6                     There were all of two African  
7           Americans on City Council then, neither  
8           of whom was particularly influential or  
9           assertive. It is quite likely at that  
10          point there had been fewer African  
11          Americans City department heads and fewer  
12          African American members of City Council  
13          in the entire history of Philadelphia  
14          than there are in 2013 alone.

15                    The demography of the School  
16          District today is reasonably  
17          representative of the demography of the  
18          City. Industrial jobs are a small  
19          fraction of what they once were. Job  
20          growth today is heavily concentrated in  
21          jobs that either require a college  
22          education or give a strong competitive  
23          edge to people who have a college  
24          education. While it is great that people  
25          from all over the country are flocking to



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2           Philadelphia to get the good white-collar  
3           jobs our city offers, it is a sad  
4           situation that many of our citizens have  
5           no access to the vast majority of  
6           opportunities being offered because of  
7           the inadequate education they've received  
8           in Philadelphia or elsewhere.

9                       Educating students who do not  
10          yet understand the importance of learning  
11          to their futures is never an easy task.  
12          It is labor intensive. It is materials  
13          intensive. Schools are competing not  
14          only with the wars with the street, legal  
15          and illegal alike, but with television,  
16          radio, the Internet, cell phones, video  
17          games, et cetera. Teachers, principals,  
18          teachers aides, school counselors, school  
19          psychologists, and others work in a  
20          highly stressful and emotionally  
21          demanding environment where it's easy to  
22          get burned out and enthusiasm for the job  
23          is often an act of will more than a  
24          rational response to the difficulties one  
25          faces.

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2                   The School District of  
3 Philadelphia desperately needs more money  
4 for its operations. The requests made by  
5 Chairman Ramos, Superintendent Hite, and  
6 Mayor Nutter are, in my judgment, far too  
7 small. The City of Philadelphia, at the  
8 very least, should meet requests, as  
9 should the state. Hopefully visionary  
10 leadership will appear which will make it  
11 possible to give students a first-rate  
12 education.

13                   The easy cuts have long since  
14 been made. The fat is gone. The top two  
15 floors of 440 North Broad Street, which  
16 in itself was a consolidation of three  
17 buildings, are almost empty. We are now  
18 talking about how much of the muscle and  
19 vital arteries of the School District  
20 will be cut. I appreciate the progress  
21 that the cigarette tax has made, and it  
22 is time for other revenue to be generated  
23 in significant amounts as well. Money  
24 raised by the City of Philadelphia cannot  
25 help but positively influence the

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2           Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in our  
3           budget negotiations, despite the  
4           far-right political orientation of the  
5           Governor.

6                       No politician, including  
7           myself, likes being identified with tax  
8           increases. But sometimes the dangers of  
9           not being for tax increases may be  
10          greater than the penalties of being for  
11          them. This is one of those times. Our  
12          legislative delegation and our City  
13          Council members have made great strides  
14          in working together, and we should  
15          continue to do so in defense of our  
16          School District and our children.

17                      Philadelphia is not a  
18          one-industry town like Detroit. We are a  
19          port city, a transportation hub, a  
20          college city, the state's legal capital,  
21          the state's restaurant capital, the  
22          state's medical capital, the state's  
23          financial capital, the state's arts  
24          capital. We are not a dying city, but an  
25          annually growing city, a mecca for

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2       millions of people. The better our  
3       school system, the more we will grow.  
4       Let us meet this challenge together, and  
5       we will prosper together with the support  
6       our mutual constituents.

7           Now, on an elected school  
8       board, I was very active in trying to  
9       create an elective school board in the  
10      1970s, and the issue foundered then on  
11      the question of taxing power for the  
12      elected school board. It would seem to  
13      me that if an elected school board is  
14      going to be meaningful, it has to have  
15      taxing power. All the other school  
16      districts in Pennsylvania which are  
17      elected have independent taxing power.  
18      The School District levies taxes, so do  
19      local governments. It is very clear who  
20      is paying for what.

21           The traditional arguments  
22      against having an elected school board  
23      include the argument that the demography  
24      of the City is different from the  
25      demography of the School District and,

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2           therefore, people will not be  
3           sympathetic. That argument, I believe,  
4           is out of date. The demography of the  
5           School District, as I've said, is not  
6           precisely the same as the demography of  
7           the City. The white percentage of the  
8           City remains higher than the white  
9           percentage of the School District. But  
10          it is far, far closer to being  
11          representative of the City than it used  
12          to be.

13                   And in addition, the period of  
14          racial polarization is largely over.  
15          There is far less racial polarization in  
16          voting or everyday encounters than there  
17          used to be, and I would tend to believe  
18          that the City of Philadelphia, black,  
19          white, Asian, Latino, will care about the  
20          education of the School District and not  
21          mindlessly vote against pro-education  
22          candidates.

23                   Other issues the City Council  
24          may wish to deal with in recommending an  
25          elected school board plan to the state

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2       would be whether or not school board  
3       members should get paid. Generally  
4       around the state they do not get paid,  
5       and they generally only serve one term  
6       because of burnout and the inherent  
7       difficulty of the job.

8                   I think an elected school board  
9       has a great deal of potential. It is  
10      certainly a means of mobilizing people.  
11      It is a means of making known the  
12      constituency for education, and I would  
13      endorse it. It is not -- it is, however,  
14      a long-term process. First we need a  
15      sense that Philadelphians really want an  
16      elected school board, and then we have to  
17      get the votes in the State Legislature to  
18      allow Philadelphia to have it. It is  
19      ultimately -- it ultimately would either  
20      require an amendment to the City Charter  
21      or an amendment to state law. It  
22      probably would be easier to amend the  
23      City Charter. Without a Charter  
24      amendment, it's the duty of the state to  
25      determine it.

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2                   I'd be glad to answer any  
3                   questions either of you might have.

4                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
5                   you. Thank you, Representative Cohen.  
6                   As a member of Council -- and we  
7                   generally try to speak to my colleagues  
8                   when we're considering issues like this,  
9                   and it seems to me that for us to move  
10                  forward, it is my opinion at this point  
11                  that Council is not willing to give away  
12                  its taxing authority. And I never ask  
13                  people to vote themselves out of a vote.

14                  My question to you is, how do  
15                  you feel about an elected school board  
16                  making recommendations to the Council? I  
17                  mean, it would be a hybrid model, I  
18                  assume.

19                  REPRESENTATIVE COHEN: It would  
20                  be a hybrid model. I am unaware of any  
21                  place in the United States which has that  
22                  authority.

23                  COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Right.

24                  REPRESENTATIVE COHEN: It is a  
25                  question of what power the school board

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2           actually would have under that model.  
3           Right now we have the School Reform  
4           Commission, which is taking all the  
5           powers away from the school board.  
6           Getting rid of the School Reform  
7           Commission would require an amendment to  
8           state law.

9                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:  
10          Exactly. Certainly they wouldn't have  
11          any less power than they do now.

12                   REPRESENTATIVE COHEN: Right.

13                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: And  
14          they would have more accessibility by the  
15          public, which is part of the point. I  
16          just wanted your opinion on that.

17                   REPRESENTATIVE COHEN: It's --  
18          I don't think it will hurt. I think  
19          you'll find that there will be a lot of  
20          opposition expressed to it from education  
21          groups.

22                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Okay.  
23          All right. Thank you.

24                   Councilman Oh, you had a  
25          question?



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2                   COUNCILMAN OH: Yes, I do.

3                   Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

4                   REPRESENTATIVE COHEN: I would  
5                   just add -- excuse me, Councilman Oh. I  
6                   would just add, there's nothing stopping  
7                   both the school -- creating a system  
8                   under which both the school board and the  
9                   City Council have taxing authority for  
10                  education.

11                  Councilman Oh.

12                  COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very  
13                  much. I was just thinking, and you may  
14                  know this history, but I am trying to  
15                  think and it occurs to me that since the  
16                  founding of Philadelphia and the  
17                  establishment of a school district,  
18                  originally the ward leaders made up the  
19                  elected school board, and then because of  
20                  dissatisfaction, even corruption that far  
21                  long ago, there was a reform effort  
22                  whereby the judges then appointed the  
23                  school board members, which was then so  
24                  corrupt and unhappy situations that the  
25                  Blue Ribbon Panel was created in the

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2           1950s reform whereby the Educational  
3           Nominating Panel was created, and the  
4           Mayor basically got to a point from the  
5           three names that were delivered to the  
6           Mayor. But at no time did this entity in  
7           any of its different formats have taxing  
8           authority. I think that's correct. Is  
9           that your recollection as well?

10                    REPRESENTATIVE COHEN: I do not  
11           know that.

12                    COUNCILMAN OH: Okay.

13                    REPRESENTATIVE COHEN: I do  
14           know that for a while Philadelphia did  
15           have an elected school board in which the  
16           wards -- in which people ran in each  
17           individual ward.

18                    COUNCILMAN OH: Right. That  
19           was back when the City was about the size  
20           of Center City.

21                    REPRESENTATIVE COHEN: And that  
22           was changed -- that started when the City  
23           was about the size of Center City. It  
24           continued after 1854, and in the late  
25           1800s, it was abolished and the power was

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2           given to the Board of Judges.

3                   I would be skeptical about the  
4           conclusion that it was corruption that  
5           caused it, because that's always argued  
6           in Philadelphia. Philadelphia has by far  
7           the smallest number of elected officials  
8           of any county in the state. There are  
9           probably very few places in the country  
10          that have fewer elected officials than in  
11          Philadelphia. Whenever an elected  
12          official in Philadelphia does poorly, we  
13          are told that that proves that the office  
14          has to be abolished.

15                   Philadelphia, for instance, is  
16          the only county in the state without  
17          magistrates. We're the only county in  
18          the state without elected constables.  
19          We're one of, I think, a very small  
20          number of counties without an elected  
21          coroner. You can go on and on and on.  
22          There are loads of officials in all the  
23          other counties who don't exist in  
24          Philadelphia, and there are endless  
25          demands from so-called good government

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2           groups that we cut the size of City  
3           Council. Maybe we only need 11  
4           Councilmen. Maybe we only need 13  
5           Councilmen, they say. And do we really  
6           need the row offices. And in other  
7           counties, these demands are not made. Or  
8           if they're made, they're not taken very  
9           seriously, but in Philadelphia, they are  
10          taken very, very seriously as though they  
11          represent -- revealed wisdom, the wisdom  
12          of the ages. And if this is such a good  
13          idea, I would just suggest why doesn't  
14          Montgomery County abolish its coroner?  
15          Why doesn't Montgomery County abolish its  
16          court system? Why doesn't Montgomery  
17          County abolish its local school board?

18                           (Applause.)

19                   REPRESENTATIVE COHEN: Why  
20           doesn't Montgomery County abolish its  
21           Clerk of Courts?

22                   There is no -- and they have  
23           elected tax collectors. We don't have  
24           elected tax collectors. Why don't they  
25           abolish their elected tax collectors?

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2                   COUNCILMAN OH: I appreciate  
3                   your answer, and I had asked because I  
4                   know you're quite interested in policy  
5                   and have a very good knowledge of the  
6                   history, but I want to get just to the  
7                   issue, and, that is, in relation to the  
8                   Chairwoman's question about elected  
9                   school boards, yet they have no taxing  
10                  power, there has been different ways of  
11                  appointing school board members, and if  
12                  it is a hybrid situation where it is  
13                  either entirely elected or some members  
14                  are appointed based on certain skills or  
15                  ability or education levels and others  
16                  are elected, even though they don't have  
17                  taxing powers -- and I'm not saying that  
18                  they may not. As you said, it's just a  
19                  question of appetite and where things  
20                  stand, but even if they didn't have  
21                  taxing powers but had the ability to  
22                  administrate, manage, be responsible and  
23                  accountable for the fiscal state of the  
24                  School District, having the people have a  
25                  say over members on that board that

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2           reflect their wishes, do you think that  
3           is a better idea? Is it a good idea?  
4           What is your --

5                       REPRESENTATIVE COHEN: I think  
6           it's a good idea. There obviously have  
7           to be cuts made if there's no revenue.  
8           The question always is where are the cuts  
9           made. And if there is revenue, where are  
10          the increases in revenue made. And these  
11          are policy decisions, and it certainly  
12          couldn't hurt the City of Philadelphia to  
13          have the citizens of the City of  
14          Philadelphia have a greater role. Others  
15          are saying now, which is gaining  
16          widespread currency -- I traced it on the  
17          Internet the other day. Somebody said it  
18          first in 2011 and it's been copied. The  
19          saying says people have to be treated as  
20          citizens and not just as consumers of  
21          services. And it's the statement that's  
22          picked up support and been paraphrased  
23          and quoted by people on the left and the  
24          right, in the center. And it's true.  
25          There's a lack of engagement within this

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2           city, and people just demanding something  
3           for themselves, which is what the vast  
4           majority of complaints to state  
5           legislators and City Council, is not the  
6           same as people having a sense of  
7           collective responsibility for the whole.  
8           And I think having an elected school  
9           board will move us into the direction of  
10          having more people with the sense of  
11          collective responsibility for the whole.

12                   COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very  
13          much, State Representative.

14                   Thank you, Chairwoman.

15                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: One  
16          question. Would you expound on your  
17          statement that both the School District  
18          and Council could have taxing authority?  
19          In your experience or knowledge of this,  
20          how would that work?

21                   REPRESENTATIVE COHEN: Well,  
22          right now the State Legislature has  
23          taxing authority over the people of  
24          Philadelphia. The City government has  
25          taxing authority. The City government is

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2           allowed to tax those things which are not  
3           banned by the state.

4                       Exactly what power the School  
5           District would have I guess would depend  
6           on acts by the State Legislature and/or  
7           the Charter Reform Committee and/or the  
8           Charter amendment. But I think that's  
9           something to think about, what a school  
10          district would be to have power to tax.  
11          It could tax real estate.

12                     I know because I spend a lot of  
13          time in Harrisburg, I own property there  
14          and I pay taxes annually to the City of  
15          Harrisburg, to Dauphin County, and to the  
16          Harrisburg School District, and there are  
17          three separate tax bills on the real  
18          estate. Is that somewhat inconvenient?  
19          Yeah, because they come due at different  
20          dates and it's sometimes difficult to  
21          keep track of them, but I suppose they  
22          come at different dates so everybody  
23          isn't hit with one tax bill all at the  
24          same time.

25                     What the rules are is something



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2           that can be determined by whoever makes  
3           the decision, by City Council or by the  
4           state, but I think taxing power would be  
5           helpful to get buy-in from education  
6           groups who are worried about lack of  
7           funds, as well they should be.

8                     The Rendell Administration gave  
9           the greatest increase in state aid to  
10          education in the history of Pennsylvania,  
11          and Governor Corbett has followed that by  
12          having the greatest state cuts in  
13          education in the history of Pennsylvania,  
14          and they are hurting. I have no doubt  
15          that the hurt is real, and I think it has  
16          to be met -- the needs have to be met  
17          immediately, but for the long run, I  
18          think it would help if there was an  
19          elected school board which had taxing  
20          authority as well, and it would be  
21          subject to the same political pressures  
22          as the City Council.

23                    City Council would also  
24          determine how many members there are, are  
25          they elected citywide, are they elected

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2           by districts, what are the districts. In  
3           the 1970s, we had 34 State House  
4           districts. So my suggestion was you  
5           create two state -- you start out with  
6           two State House districts per school  
7           district and then you let them redistrict  
8           independently after they've been in  
9           existence.

10                   The PFT at that time was  
11           basically against the idea, but they said  
12           they'd be less opposed if they had  
13           at-large School District members as well  
14           as local School District members, like  
15           the Council model.

16                   A practical problem you have is  
17           that if you have a school district -- an  
18           elected school board with a constituency,  
19           some members of City Council would be  
20           afraid that the school board members  
21           would likely run against them, because  
22           it's unlikely that whatever you pay the  
23           school board, they'll be paid as much as  
24           the City Council. So City Council would  
25           be considered a promotion. That's

1           6/3/13 - EDUCATION - RES. 130333  
2           something for City Council and others to  
3           work out, but I think it would be a  
4           positive step in getting more public  
5           engagement.

6                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
7           you very much, Representative.

8                   Any further questions?

9                   (No response.)

10                  REPRESENTATIVE COHEN: Thank  
11       you.

12                  COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
13       you very much for coming.

14                  REPRESENTATIVE COHEN: Thank  
15       you for having me here.

16                  COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: We  
17       appreciate your insight and experience.

18                  Next we will have the Honorable  
19       Michael Stack, Pennsylvania State  
20       Senator, 5th District. And we thank you,  
21       Senator, for being here. I've been  
22       seeing you a lot. I just saw you at the  
23       rally on Friday.

24                  (Witness approached witness  
25       table.)

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2                   SENATOR STACK: Great to see  
3                   you, Councilwoman, and it was great to  
4                   stand with you in support of our parents  
5                   and teachers, Philadelphia public  
6                   education, and I appreciate you allowing  
7                   me to be here with you and give testimony  
8                   at the hearing, and also, Councilman Oh,  
9                   I appreciate everything you're doing for  
10                  public education, and thanks to both of  
11                  you for the great job you're doing for  
12                  Philadelphia.

13                 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
14                 you. We invite you to make your  
15                 testimony.

16                 SENATOR STACK: I'll make  
17                 sure -- I essentially am going to read my  
18                 testimony, because I want to make sure I  
19                 get it on the record.

20                 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Great.

21                 SENATOR STACK: But I want to  
22                 reiterate once again I want to thank you  
23                 for holding the hearings on this  
24                 important issue of giving Philadelphia  
25                 voters the ability to elect members of

1           6/3/13 - EDUCATION - RES. 130333  
2           the Philadelphia Board of Education.  
3           Philadelphia is the only one of 501  
4           school districts in the Commonwealth that  
5           has an appointed board and not an elected  
6           board. And since the 1800s,  
7           Philadelphians have not been able to  
8           elect their own local Board of Education.  
9           Instead, mayors would appoint members to  
10          the board. Now the School Reform  
11          Commission is composed of three  
12          appointees made by the Governor of  
13          Pennsylvania and two appointees made by  
14          the Mayor of Philadelphia.

15                 Each reiteration of the Board  
16          of Education was supposed to increase  
17          accountability, transparency, and improve  
18          fiscal oversight. Instead, we have had  
19          year after year of dysfunction, fiscal  
20          crisis, and schools that fail our  
21          students.

22                         (Applause.)

23                 SENATOR STACK: Teachers,  
24          students, and taxpayers alike feel  
25          disenfranchised and abandoned. Our

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2           students and education system is falling  
3           further and further behind. We are not  
4           living up to our potential.

5                     Additionally, the SRC fails the  
6           accountability and transparency test,  
7           because its members are not elected by  
8           the taxpayers.

9                     (Applause.)

10                    SENATOR STACK: Therefore, they  
11           are not accountable to parents, students,  
12           and certainly not to taxpayers. They are  
13           only accountable to the Governor or the  
14           Mayor who appoints them.

15                    The SRC is supposed to be  
16           focusing on improving education, solving  
17           fiscal problems, and innovating how we  
18           deliver public education, but that has  
19           not happened. Instead, if you look at  
20           the headlines in the news stories and  
21           from the data from the Pennsylvania  
22           Department of Education, they are crushed  
23           with the same problems as previous  
24           Philadelphia Boards of Education.

25                    For example, the Pennsylvania

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2           Department of Education's Academic  
3           Achievement Report for 2011-12 shows that  
4           the School District of Philadelphia  
5           failed to reach its targets in graduation  
6           rates and in overall academic  
7           performance. Each grade starts the year  
8           with the goals they wish to achieve in  
9           academic performance. They are scored on  
10          a point system.

11                       In grades 3 through 5, the  
12          School District of Philadelphia scored a  
13          1 out of 10 in reading and a 2 out of 9  
14          in math. This means that out of a  
15          possible 10 points, they received one or  
16          two points, respectively. For grades 6  
17          through 8, the increase was only slightly  
18          better, scoring 3 out of 10 in reading  
19          and 3 out of 9 in math.

20                      The SRC's hope in the beginning  
21          of the year was to achieve a perfect 10  
22          out of 10 points. At worst, they were  
23          hoping for a 9 out of 10. They received  
24          one and two points, respectively.

25                      So the SRC's lack of

1           6/3/13 - EDUCATION - RES. 130333  
2           performance and lack of accountability  
3           are driving my and other legislators and  
4           leaders in Philadelphia and parents and  
5           kids to push to bring a publicly elected  
6           school board to Philadelphia.

7                        (Applause.)

8                        SENATOR STACK: Parents are  
9           frustrated, teachers are handcuffed,  
10          students are suffering. Let's give them  
11          a voice and give them a role in electing  
12          our school leaders.

13                       (Applause.)

14                       SENATOR STACK: Boy, I really  
15          like testifying before City Council.

16                       Let's hold them accountable.

17                       I've introduced Senate Bill 913  
18          which would allow for an elected school  
19          board in the City of Philadelphia and the  
20          elimination of the School Reform  
21          Commission.

22                       (Applause.)

23                       SENATOR STACK: The school  
24          board would be unpaid, non-partisan, and  
25          locally elected from nine districts



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2           throughout the City, and the districts  
3           shall be similar to the School District's  
4           existing nine regions. Every ten years,  
5           the districts would change based on the  
6           census, and members of the school board  
7           would have four-year terms.

8                       Now, some people ask if an  
9           elected school board would truly get  
10          qualified people to serve on the school  
11          board or would it lead to more problems.  
12          I think we already have a lot of problems  
13          in our school districts, and I --

14                       (Applause.)

15                       SENATOR STACK: And I think an  
16          elected school board would attract people  
17          that care about public education.

18                       (Applause.)

19                       SENATOR STACK: People that  
20          care about our students and really want  
21          to make a differences. It may attract  
22          parents of public school students. In  
23          fact, I feel certain it will. These are  
24          the people who understand what's going on  
25          in their communities and schools and can

1           6/3/13 - EDUCATION - RES. 130333  
2       bring fresh ideas and experiences to the  
3       table. Most importantly, I think an  
4       elected school board will attract a very  
5       important attribute, someone who cares  
6       about our kids and wants to help our kids  
7       succeed and achieve.

8                       (Applause.)

9           SENATOR STACK: While there  
10       would be an elected school board under  
11       Senate Bill 913, the Mayor and City  
12       Council would still play a significant  
13       role in public education. In fact, more  
14       so. The Mayor would be the appointor of  
15       the school's superintendent. An elected  
16       school board could pass a resolution of  
17       no confidence on the superintendent.  
18       Such a resolution shall be forwarded to  
19       the Mayor and shall decide whether to  
20       keep or fire the superintendent.

21                       (Applause.)

22           SENATOR STACK: The Mayor may  
23       also fire the superintendent at any time  
24       for any reason that does not violate  
25       existing law.

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2                   The school board shall have no  
3           taxing authority or ability to incur  
4           debt. These powers shall remain with  
5           City Council and the State Legislature.

6                   While the board cannot raise  
7           revenue, the board will have several  
8           important duties, including crafting an  
9           annual operating budget and a five-year  
10          budget plan, and the budgets will be  
11          drafted with the superintendent and other  
12          school administrators and require public  
13          hearings and input. Annual budget and  
14          five-year budget plans shall be submitted  
15          to the Philadelphia Intergovernmental  
16          Cooperation Authority for their review  
17          and approval.

18                  Finally, the elected school  
19          board shall have the authority to approve  
20          labor, service, and other contracts. The  
21          City Controller and State Auditor General  
22          shall have post-audit, fiscal, and  
23          performance audit powers over the  
24          Philadelphia School District. This means  
25          that they can look at the programs,

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2       contracts, and other issues during the  
3       school year. They don't have to wait to  
4       the end of the school year to examine  
5       whether programs and contracts are not in  
6       the best interest of the City of  
7       Philadelphia. I believe this type of  
8       auditing provides a significant and  
9       important protection to taxpayers.

10               The auditing, budgeting, and  
11       governance reforms contained in Senate  
12       Bill 913 are one option to address the  
13       chronic problems plaguing the  
14       Philadelphia School District. They may  
15       not be the best solution or the ultimate  
16       product, but I think we can and we should  
17       strive to improve the School District for  
18       taxpayers, students, and parents.

19               (Applause.)

20               SENATOR STACK: We can stick to  
21       the SRC model that has not worked or we  
22       can try a different path to academic  
23       success.

24               (Applause.)

25               SENATOR STACK: We can try a

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2           path that puts the power to create a  
3           better public education system in the  
4           hands of Philadelphians. Senate Bill 913  
5           is focused on students, and it also  
6           strives to generate parent and community  
7           involvement in our schools. This input  
8           and involvement has been lacking for many  
9           years. I think we need to have faith in  
10          the voters, the parents, the students,  
11          and the teachers to make the right  
12          choices on how to govern our School  
13          District.

14                    I think we need change, and I  
15          think Senate Bill 913 is a vehicle to get  
16          us where we need to go.

17                    Again, I want to thank you,  
18          Chairwoman Councilwoman Blackwell and  
19          Councilman Oh and all the members of the  
20          Council who are working on this issue,  
21          and I look forward to answering any  
22          questions you might have or providing  
23          testimony at a later time. But, once  
24          again, it has been truly an honor and a  
25          pleasure to be with you today.

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2                   Thank you very much.

3                   (Applause.)

4                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
5                   you, Senator Stack. We are very  
6                   impressed with all that we've heard. It  
7                   is obvious that you have pondered and  
8                   researched this issue thoroughly, and we  
9                   look forward to working with you to see  
10                  what we can do to work with the state and  
11                  go to the next level.

12                  SENATOR STACK: Thank you,  
13                  Madam Chairwoman.

14                  (Applause.)

15                  COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:  
16                  Councilman Oh.

17                  COUNCILMAN OH: Yes. Thank you  
18                  very much, Chairwoman.

19                  I'd just like to say that I too  
20                  am very impressed with your plan. It's  
21                  very well thought out, both structurally,  
22                  politically. I don't know where we're  
23                  going to end up on it, but as you went  
24                  through it, I see that you've covered all  
25                  the bases. It's a very well-thought-out

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2           plan. Thank you very much.

3                   SENATOR STACK: Thank you.

4           Thank you, Councilman.

5                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
6           you, Senator.

7                   May we note that attorney Leon  
8           Williams is there.

9                   Leon, raise your hand.

10                  He is the gentleman who has  
11           worked on this issue 20 years, who  
12           probably started more than I will know.

13                  (Applause.)

14                  COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: And  
15           certainly we're going to invite him to be  
16           in touch with your staff as well to help  
17           keep us informed about what the issues  
18           are.

19                  SENATOR STACK: That's great.

20                  COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
21           you very much, Senator.

22                  SENATOR STACK: Thank you  
23           again. Have a great day.

24                  COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
25           you.

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2                   Next we have for Panel 2 Jerry  
3 Jordan, President of the PFT.

4                   (Applause.)

5                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: And we  
6 thank him for coming. I know they're in  
7 contract negotiations. I didn't see you.  
8 I didn't realize you were here. Thank  
9 you. Thank you again. Thank you. We  
10 were very proud to stand with you at the  
11 rally on Friday, and we're --

12                   (Witness approached witness  
13 table.)

14                   MR. JORDAN: Thank you very  
15 much, Councilwoman.

16                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: --  
17 proud of the work you do. Thank you.

18                   MR. JORDAN: Good morning. On  
19 behalf of the 15,000 members of the  
20 Philadelphia Federation of Teachers, I  
21 want to thank Councilwoman Blackwell, the  
22 Education Committee, and City Council for  
23 holding this hearing that speaks to the  
24 very future of public education in  
25 Philadelphia.



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2                   Last week, the School Reform  
3                   Commission passed a budget that barring  
4                   any adjustments for additional revenue  
5                   virtually eliminates the very programs  
6                   that distinguish schools from a building  
7                   full of classrooms. The immorality of  
8                   opening a school in September with no  
9                   sports, no music or art program, no  
10                  counselors, no nurses, secretaries or  
11                  librarians is mind boggling. Yet --

12                                (Applause.)

13                  MR. JORDAN: Yet, that is where  
14                  we are today.

15                  In 2001, when Governor Mark  
16                  Schweiker signed the legislation that  
17                  foisted the SRC on our city, two promises  
18                  were made. One, additional revenue for  
19                  schools would be a part of the state  
20                  takeover, and, number two, the SRC would  
21                  be a financial watchdog that would fix  
22                  the School District's finances.

23                  Neither promise has been kept.  
24                  With the exception of the years we  
25                  operated under the fair funding formula

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2       developed by the Rendell Administration,  
3       then eliminated by the Corbett  
4       Administration, our School District has  
5       yet to see adequate and sustainable  
6       funding.

7                   Overspending and budget cuts  
8       have been the order of the day under the  
9       SRC's watch. From Paul Vallas  
10      overspending on charter schools and  
11      leaving us with a \$73 million deficit, to  
12      Arlene Ackerman's misuse of federal  
13      stimulus dollars and a \$700 million  
14      deficit, the SRC has rubber-stamped the  
15      poor financial stewardship of past  
16      superintendents.

17                   What began as a \$115 million  
18      deficit in 2002 has exploded into today's  
19      projected five-year \$1.1 billion deficit.  
20      To make up for what was lost in Governor  
21      Corbett's nearly \$2 billion in cuts to  
22      education spending, the District went to  
23      the bond market to borrow money. The  
24      District will pay 280 million in debt  
25      service this fiscal year.

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2                   Today, our School District  
3           faces a deficit that we would never have  
4           imagined 13 years ago. Not only is the  
5           SRC's mission not accomplished, our  
6           District is in worse financial shape than  
7           it has ever been.

8                   Instead of creating a fiscal  
9           landscape that allows investment in  
10          school programs and staff development,  
11          Governor Tom Corbett's SRC has overseen  
12          school closings, staffing cuts, and the  
13          elimination of vital student programs.  
14          It is a gross understatement to say that  
15          this experiment in state takeover of  
16          public schools is an utter failure.

17                  The winners under the current  
18          system have been those who financially  
19          benefit from school privatization and  
20          education policy think tanks like the  
21          Boston Consulting Group, who designed the  
22          educational blueprint the SRC has  
23          followed closely over the past year.

24                  The losers have been the  
25          children who attend neighborhood schools

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2           and their parents who rely the most on  
3           public schools to educate, nurture, and  
4           protect their children.

5                     They feel the sting of SRC  
6           policies, policies that have been crafted  
7           by outsiders and encouraged by a Governor  
8           who has clearly demonstrated his disdain  
9           for our city's children by underfunding  
10          our schools.

11                    State takeover of our schools  
12          has driven our District to the brink of  
13          financial ruin. The pain caused by the  
14          SRC has far outweighed the benefits of  
15          this failed experiment. It is time for  
16          the management of the School District to  
17          be returned to the City of Philadelphia.

18                    (Applause.)

19                   MR. JORDAN: It is hard to  
20          imagine that a community-represented  
21          school board could do a worse job  
22          managing the District's resources than  
23          the SRC has done.

24                    (Applause.)

25                   MR. JORDAN: At least

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2                   Philadelphia's taxpayers would be able to  
3                   hold them accountable.

4                   Thank you again for allowing me  
5                   to share my thoughts with you today.

6                   (Applause.)

7                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
8                   you, Mr. Jordan. We certainly agree,  
9                   some level of accountability, somebody  
10                  that people can go to, and we sure  
11                  couldn't be in worse shape.

12                  We'll entertain questions. Let  
13                  me note that Councilwoman Blondell  
14                  Reynolds Brown is here, as well as  
15                  Councilwoman Maria Quinones-Sanchez is  
16                  here. We thank them too.

17                  Questions for Mr. Jordan?

18                  (No response.)

19                  COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: No  
20                  questions? Well, let me --

21                  MR. JORDAN: Thank you very  
22                  much.

23                  COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
24                  you. And we appreciate you. I know  
25                  you're in negotiations. Thank you very

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2                   much.

3                   MR. JORDAN: Thank you.

4                   (Applause.)

5                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:

6                   Councilman Oh said he had questions, but  
7                   he wants to respect your time,  
8                   Mr. Jordan. He knows you're in contract  
9                   negotiations.

10                  Kate Shaw, Executive Director,  
11                  Research for Action, and then Leon  
12                  Williams, Moderator, Marketplace of  
13                  Ideas.

14                  Is Kate Shaw here?

15                  (No response.)

16                  COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Leon  
17                  Williams, Moderator, Marketplace of  
18                  Ideas.

19                  (Applause.)

20                  (Witness approached witness  
21                  table.)

22                  COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Again,  
23                  we want to thank you, Mr. Williams. You  
24                  have been the catalyst for saying now is  
25                  the time to talk about this.

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2                   Dr. Thompson, thank you for  
3                   being here, and I know you've been  
4                   pushing this for many years. I remember  
5                   years ago we had the discussion, too many  
6                   for me to remember when, but we certainly  
7                   thank you for your work in this area and  
8                   look forward to your counsel and advice  
9                   and input.

10                  MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you very  
11                  much, Madam Councilwoman. We want to  
12                  thank you for focusing the attention of  
13                  parents, community leaders, and others on  
14                  this worthy cause here. I also want to  
15                  thank you for introducing me to Senator  
16                  Stack, because I will be up in Harrisburg  
17                  to talk to him.

18                  (Applause.)

19                  MR. WILLIAMS: It's good that  
20                  Senator Stack has an elected school  
21                  board, but we have to get that provision  
22                  out of there that allows the Mayor to  
23                  appoint the school superintendent. An  
24                  elected school board should have the  
25                  right and the power to do that on its

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2                   own.

3                               (Applause.)

4                   MR. WILLIAMS: There's no need  
5                   to start off by crippling an elected  
6                   school board.

7                               I would advise any of the  
8                   elected officials or people who are  
9                   interested in this question to do like I  
10                  have done, go to the City archives at  
11                  3101 Market Street, and there's a wealth  
12                  of information. All of these questions  
13                  have been already asked and answered, and  
14                  they are in the records.

15                              For instance, I have a letter  
16                  today written by the League of Women  
17                  Voters dated February the 28th, 1964  
18                  where they answered many of these  
19                  questions, and it was clear during that  
20                  process -- we were going through -- this  
21                  was the first real public session where  
22                  people debated the issue of what kind of  
23                  school board should we have, and we  
24                  approved the Charter, Educational Home  
25                  Rule Charter, in 1965, and during that



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2       process, there was a lot of testimony,  
3       verbal and written and what-have-you, and  
4       I would like to read you some of the  
5       quotes from this letter from the League  
6       of Women Voters.

7           School districts are  
8       characterized as fiscally independent or  
9       not depending upon the following factors  
10      inherent in their administrative  
11      structure. Number one, an independent  
12      school board would have the right to  
13      determine its own budget. This would  
14      include the right to determine the  
15      overall amount that would be needed as  
16      well as the right to determine the amount  
17      of money for each expenditure.

18           An independent school board  
19      would have the right to determine its own  
20      tax rate under broad legal terms as  
21      determined by the State Legislature or  
22      Constitution.

23           Professionals in this field  
24      have suggested the possibility of a  
25      referendum to establish the tax and debt

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2           limit for education.

3                   An independent school board  
4           would have enough taxable wealth in its  
5           community to adequately support the  
6           school system. Without this factor of  
7           significant taxable wealth, all the other  
8           criteria could be meaningless.

9                   An independent school board  
10          would be able to levy and collect its own  
11          taxes.

12                   An independent school board is  
13          usually characterized by having its  
14          accounting procedures separate and  
15          distinct from its municipality.

16                   I also have a letter written by  
17          the vice president of the school board  
18          back then, which is John F. Lewis, Jr. --  
19          I'm sorry; Ada Lewis. This letter was  
20          written on June the 18th, 1964 to -- the  
21          Commission conducted hearings on the  
22          Educational Home Rule Charter. And it  
23          ends by saying, May I reiterate that the  
24          most important single need for the school  
25          board is independent local taxing power.

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2           As I said in my original testimony, I  
3           personally will even support partisan  
4           elections of school board members if  
5           that's the only way to secure fiscal  
6           independence.

7                       This issue of taxing powers for  
8           an elected school board has been hashed  
9           out, has been looked at extensively by  
10          experts, and most of the experts agree  
11          that that power has to be independent of  
12          the City Council, simply for the very  
13          reason of what we have now, that once the  
14          school board can't make its own decisions  
15          as far as money, they really become  
16          hampered by the political process. And  
17          if voters are going to elect a school  
18          board, then voters are going to have to  
19          give that board the same respect as they  
20          give the Councilpeople and other people  
21          who are elected that have that kind of  
22          power.

23                      Now, if an elected school board  
24          goes out there and just start raising  
25          taxes like a runaway train, that elected

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2           school board is not going to be around  
3           long, and just like City Council people  
4           know that there are consequences to  
5           raising people's taxes. And I can tell  
6           you that most people I know are willing  
7           to pay a little more taxes if they get  
8           better services. You can't give people a  
9           bunch of slop and then turn around and  
10          raise their taxes for it.

11                        (Applause.)

12                   MR. WILLIAMS: People determine  
13           where they're going to live by the  
14           quality of the schools. They'll live in  
15           a house that really they can't even  
16           afford, but they know the children are  
17           going to get a quality education, and  
18           that's important to parents. It's not a  
19           matter of necessarily how much tax. It's  
20           really a matter of what you're doing with  
21           that tax money, and I believe that a  
22           board that's controlled by the people is  
23           more likely to use that money in a way  
24           that supports the people's interests.

25                        Now, the Pennsylvania

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2           Constitution, Article 10, Section 1  
3           states as follows: The General Assembly  
4           shall provide for the maintenance and  
5           support of a thorough and efficient  
6           system of public schools wherein all  
7           children of the Commonwealth above the  
8           age of 6 years may be educated, and shall  
9           appropriate at least \$1 million each year  
10          for that purpose.

11                       We know that the City Council  
12          can't give us an elected school board.  
13          We're hoping that City Council would do  
14          what Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell has  
15          done, to raise the issues, to contact the  
16          people in the state who can do this, and  
17          to help us to lobby the state officials.  
18          I heard Representative Cohen talk about  
19          how hard it is to get rid of the SRC, but  
20          really it's not hard. If you look at the  
21          statute 6-696 and Act 46 that establishes  
22          the SRC, we could get rid of the SRC  
23          tonight. It simply calls for the  
24          Secretary of Education, who is controlled  
25          by the Governor, to issue a statement of

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2           no confidence in the SRC. And it calls  
3           for three members of the SRC, who are  
4           controlled by the Governor, to vote in  
5           affirmative with that resolution, and  
6           that's it. The SRC would be gone. And  
7           there are other ways. If there's a will,  
8           there's a way. And I think clearly I  
9           think most people who I talked to today  
10          believe that the SRC has outlived its  
11          usefulness.

12                                (Applause.)

13                       MR. WILLIAMS: I would like to  
14           give a little history of the development  
15           of public school and public education in  
16           Philadelphia. And, Councilwoman, if I  
17           take too long, just let me know. I know  
18           you have a lot of other people who want  
19           to testify.

20                           The Act of March 6th, 1818  
21           designated the City and County of  
22           Philadelphia as the first school district  
23           in Pennsylvania. It provided for the  
24           education of children at public expense.

25                           The first school district was

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2           divided into various sections, including  
3           the City proper, Northern Liberties,  
4           Kensington, Moyamensing, Passyunk, and  
5           Penn Township. The first board of  
6           Philadelphia was empowered as follows:  
7           The City Council of the City proper  
8           elected 24 school directors. The  
9           commissioners of Northern Liberties  
10          elected 12. The commissioners of  
11          Southwark elected six. Moyamensing  
12          elected six. The commissioners of Spring  
13          Garden elected six. The school directors  
14          chosen elected one out of every six of  
15          their members to a central board called  
16          the Controllers of the Public Schools for  
17          the City and County of Philadelphia.

18                 Now, this was 1818, and this  
19                 was not an elected school board. As I  
20                 said, the directors were selected by the  
21                 City Council, and the controllers were  
22                 selected by the directors. The voters  
23                 had no say in that.

24                 Directors were to receive no  
25                 compensation, but were exempt from the

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2       military and from jury service and exempt  
3       as arbitrators and as overseers of the  
4       poor. Thus, the first public school  
5       district was controlled by two political  
6       bodies - controllers and directors.  
7       Their duties were as follows:  
8       Controllers were to decide how many  
9       schools to build; to limit school  
10      expenses; to establish model schools to  
11      train teachers; to provide suitable  
12      books; to supervise all schools; to make  
13      rules governing the district and its own  
14      body.

15               The directors were to erect and  
16      establish schools; appoint teachers;  
17      superintend and provide all necessary  
18      things for schools; meet at least  
19      monthly; form as many committees as there  
20      were schools; report to controllers on  
21      the state schools every six months.

22               The first Board of Control  
23      consisted of nine men. The controllers'  
24      headquarters was located in City Hall.  
25      They elected Robert Vaux as their



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2           President and went to work establishing  
3           schools. The first schools were the  
4           Adelphia School, the Kensington School,  
5           Moyamensing School, Southwark School, and  
6           Spring Garden School.

7                       As the first year came to a  
8           close, there were 2,845 students in the  
9           public schools of Philadelphia, 1,504 of  
10          them were boys and the rest were girls.  
11          Both genders were instructed in reading,  
12          writing, and arithmetic. The girls also  
13          had to take a class in needlework.

14                     The early schools were subject  
15          to regular visits by the controllers and  
16          directors, and their reports reflected  
17          that they were very pleased with the  
18          orderliness of the schools and the  
19          perceived moral influence the educational  
20          policymakers had over public education.

21                     These early schools were still  
22          considered to be mainly for the poor, and  
23          they became known as charity schools. So  
24          many people had contempt for them.

25                     Student populations continued

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2           to increase and school buildings  
3           continued to be erected. In 1919, a new  
4           school was erected on Lombard Street for  
5           children in South Philly. In the same  
6           year, a new school was erected for  
7           children in Kensington and Northern  
8           Liberties. By the end of 1919, there  
9           were 3,268 students, an increase of 423  
10          schools. At the close of 1821, there  
11          were 2,969 students. Then there were a  
12          sharp decline in student enrollment. The  
13          manufacturing industry was on the rise  
14          and there was a great demand for child  
15          labor.

16                   The Board of Controls  
17          established on Mary Street a school for  
18          the instruction of colored youth in 1822.  
19          There were some questions whether this  
20          was wise or legal, but nevertheless, the  
21          school opened with 200 black students.  
22          The board consisted of -- considered it a  
23          success, and a few years later  
24          established another colored school in  
25          Northern Liberties. Around this time, a

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2           model school was established to train  
3           teachers.

4                       In 1835, an African American in  
5           Luzerne County, Pennsylvania sued to  
6           establish his right to vote, but the  
7           State Supreme Court said blacks could not  
8           vote. The Constitution of 1790 was  
9           unclear on the subject, and some counties  
10          in Pennsylvania were allowing blacks to  
11          vote, and democrats in Pennsylvania  
12          suspected that they lost an election in  
13          Bucks County because blacks had been  
14          permitted to vote and believed that they  
15          might suffer future losses.

16                      A new Pennsylvania Constitution  
17          was ratified in 1838 and it cleared up  
18          all questions, providing that only white  
19          men had the right to vote.

20                      The first and only experience  
21          Philadelphia had with an elected school  
22          board by voters happened in 1854. The  
23          Act of Consolidation was passed that  
24          united all the boroughs and villages of  
25          Philadelphia County into one municipality

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2           and provided that each ward in  
3           Philadelphia should constitute a school  
4           section, and the voters of every ward  
5           were empowered to elect 12 citizens to  
6           serve as directors of public schools for  
7           three years, and the directors were  
8           empowered to elect one of their members  
9           as controller to serve for a term of one  
10          year, but black people still could not  
11          vote.

12                       In 1869, Pennsylvania adopted  
13          the 15th Amendment to the United States  
14          Constitution, which provided that the  
15          right to vote could not be denied based  
16          on color or race, but this was too  
17          little, too late for blacks to take part  
18          in electing the school board. This right  
19          was taken away from white males and from  
20          all voters two years earlier, in 1867,  
21          and given to the board of Common Pleas  
22          judges.

23                      So basically there was an  
24          elected school board in Philadelphia. It  
25          came through the Consolidation Act of

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2           1854, but it's important to realize that  
3           African Americans could not vote during  
4           that time. So it's accurate to say that  
5           African Americans in Philadelphia has  
6           never, have never been given the right to  
7           elect their school board.

8                        (Applause.)

9                       MR. WILLIAMS: I have much more  
10          history here, but I'm not going to  
11          belabor it, Councilwoman Blackwell. I  
12          would like to just deal with a couple of  
13          the criticisms against an elected school  
14          board, because I've asked the question a  
15          lot. Why is it that 501 school districts  
16          in Pennsylvania and only one,  
17          Philadelphia, cannot elect its board?  
18          And I think anybody who would oppose an  
19          elected school board, I think they're  
20          going to have to grapple with that  
21          lopsided statistic. I've asked this  
22          question mainly to elected officials, and  
23          this is some of the responses that I got.  
24                       A former chairperson of the SRC  
25          told me that an elected school board

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2           would generate low turnout elections. I  
3           responded that appointed school boards  
4           generate zero turnout elections.

5                       (Applause.)

6                       MR. WILLIAMS: A Congressperson  
7           in Philadelphia told me that voters in  
8           Philadelphia were not sophisticated  
9           enough to be entrusted with electing  
10          their school board. I responded that  
11          maybe we should appoint Congresspeople  
12          because it's the --

13                      (Applause.)

14                     MR. WILLIAMS: It's the same  
15          voters that are electing Congresspeople,  
16          that are electing presidents, governors.  
17          So that doesn't make sense.

18                     A power State Rep in Harrisburg  
19          told me that the problem is that in  
20          elected school districts, people who  
21          don't support public schools come out en  
22          mass to oppose school budgets and vote  
23          against tax measures. My question was,  
24          isn't that what democracy is all about?  
25          Isn't that exactly what we have been

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2           taught, that it's not a matter of what  
3           your position is in a democracy and  
4           that's what makes us better than a  
5           totalitarian system, that we come out and  
6           represent what we stand for or what we  
7           oppose?

8                       I don't think we have anything  
9           to worry about people who want to starve  
10          the school board of taxing revenues if we  
11          come out ourselves and represent what we  
12          feel and to tell the City, the State, the  
13          Governor, the politicians what we want  
14          for our school board.

15                     So in closing, I think one of  
16          the most popular gimmicks of those who  
17          oppose elected school boards is to demand  
18          that an elected school board -- to demand  
19          proof that an elected school board is  
20          more effective in delivering a quality  
21          education. I've heard that a lot. Show  
22          us that an elected school board can do a  
23          better job. Well, the fact is that there  
24          is no evidence to that effect, and nobody  
25          ever said it would do a better job. The

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2           evidence shows that there are good and  
3           bad in both forms of selection of school  
4           board. It is not a question of how a  
5           board member is selected but whether or  
6           not he or she is effective. This  
7           question is really a side track and it  
8           misses the point. An elected school  
9           board is not better than an appointed  
10          one. It is more democratic than an  
11          appointed one. It is more accountable to  
12          parents and voters than an appointed one,  
13          and it is more likely to listen to and  
14          respond to the people on the ground than  
15          an appointed one.

16                        (Applause.)

17                   MR. WILLIAMS: Some people look  
18           with anxiety over the 9 percent turnout  
19           we experienced in Philadelphia's primary  
20           last month and wonder would switching to  
21           an elected school board make the  
22           situation worse. But history shows that  
23           people come out in large numbers when the  
24           issue is a burning issue to them, and  
25           there is no more burning issue in this



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2           city than public education.

3                   (Applause.)

4                   MR. WILLIAMS: We can say in  
5           every other election what the turnout was  
6           or will be, but we can never say that  
7           what it will be in Philadelphia, because  
8           we have never had an elected school board  
9           in Philadelphia where all citizens can  
10          vote.

11                   It is time to end all of the  
12          excuses, the contradictions, the  
13          hypocrisy. It is time to end 330 years  
14          of discrimination against Pennsylvania's  
15          largest city. And to all of the state  
16          officials who are listening to or reading  
17          these words, it is time to stop treating  
18          the first-class city in this state like  
19          second-class citizens.

20                   Thank you.

21                   (Applause.)

22                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
23          you very much, Mr. Williams. And let me  
24          note that your entire testimony will be  
25          made part of the record as if you had

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2           read it all. We thank you for your  
3           commitment on this. I guess I would  
4           like -- we'll have further discussions as  
5           we go on the money aspect of it, but  
6           certainly this is excellent testimony and  
7           your work is very thorough, and we really  
8           appreciate the historical perspective as  
9           well that took us from then, the  
10          beginning of it, until now. We thank you  
11          very, very much.

12                       Do we have questions?

13          Councilman Oh.

14                       COUNCILMAN OH: Yes. Thank you  
15          very much, Chairwoman.

16                       I thank you for your testimony  
17          and particularly I really appreciate your  
18          historical document here. So important  
19          to know history.

20                       Could I ask you, as you were  
21          answering the last portion about people  
22          who argue for and against the elected  
23          school board and without me making a  
24          statement for or against it, let me ask  
25          you how to, in an elected school board,

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2           deal with the following considerations:

3           One is that we're an urban center.

4           Unlike a residential community or smaller  
5           communities, the City of Philadelphia  
6           School District is larger than the next  
7           largest ten school districts combined.

8                       We, unlike other smaller  
9           communities, are not selective in terms  
10          of being able to dissuade people who are  
11          poor from coming into our communities.  
12          We have a lot of communities and people.  
13          We have a lot of homelessness, social  
14          issues, and at the end of the day, our  
15          real estate taxes only pay for about 34  
16          percent of our schools' needs, even  
17          without providing the extra money.

18                      If we have an elected school  
19          board, how shall that school board be  
20          able to retain the approximately 40  
21          percent of state funding within its  
22          budget as well as providing an ability to  
23          increase funding through better education  
24          and better programs? You have answered  
25          one part of the fact that if people raise

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2           taxes too much, they may not be there.

3           On the other hand, at the same time, the  
4           reverse is true. Some people being  
5           elected may not want to raise the taxes.  
6           And I'm not saying they should be, but  
7           they may not necessarily raise the taxes  
8           to the extent they're needed.

9                        So could you kind of give me  
10          your thoughts on those considerations in  
11          how an elected school board would be  
12          configured.

13                       MR. WILLIAMS: Yes. First, I  
14          would say it shouldn't matter how big it  
15          is. We have state representative  
16          districts. We have state senatorial  
17          districts, councilmanic districts. We  
18          have gubernatorial districts. We have a  
19          nation where the President is over 50  
20          states. I think a good, sound policy  
21          should apply regardless of the size of  
22          the political district.

23                       I also believe that schools  
24          have to -- they have to be fully owned by  
25          the community. Right now what we have is

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2           these schools are almost like foreign  
3           embassies. They open up at maybe 7:00,  
4           7:30 in the morning, 3:30 they close. I  
5           think that these schools should be used  
6           for the purposes of the community, and it  
7           should go beyond just educating --

8                        (Applause.)

9                       MR. WILLIAMS: It should go  
10          beyond just educating children. Our  
11          adults need education and training,  
12          training for jobs and what-have-you, and  
13          that should be the school's purpose. In  
14          short, that once the community embrace  
15          the schools, you're going to find out  
16          that a lot of things that you're paying a  
17          whole lot of money for, you really don't  
18          have to pay.

19                      For instance, I see a crossing  
20          guard outside of a school directing the  
21          children and then I see the crossing  
22          guard is sick and nobody is out there  
23          helping the little children cross the  
24          street, and you have men standing on the  
25          corner talking and you have people coming

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2           through, but everybody sees that's  
3           somebody else's job, because we don't  
4           have one school community where the  
5           building and the people living in the  
6           community are one and the same and the  
7           people own up to the school.

8                        So I think a lot of things  
9           you're spending money for, you wouldn't  
10          have to spend. Security is another one.  
11          Why should there be cops in the schools  
12          when there are men in the community? Why  
13          can't they be trained --

14                       (Applause.)

15                      MR. WILLIAMS: -- to take care  
16          of the schools? No child should ever be  
17          in physical jeopardy as long as the  
18          people in the community know who is  
19          really in charge and not worrying about  
20          somebody else fixing the problem.

21                      As to what to tax, I think the  
22          history will show that the City of  
23          Philadelphia has shortchanged the schools  
24          probably as much, if not more, as the  
25          State of Pennsylvania. When you look

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2           at -- and a lot of people talk about  
3           amount of money spent per child, which is  
4           very, very -- most people don't realize  
5           that -- it's unclear, it's tricky that  
6           they take the amount of the budget and  
7           they divide into that the amount of  
8           students, and then they come up and tell  
9           us we spend a certain amount of money per  
10          child when they don't.

11                   I think that you take the real  
12          estate tax itself. The schools don't get  
13          a hundred percent of the real estate tax.  
14          The last I checked, the school only gets  
15          55 percent. There's more money there  
16          that could go to the schools, and I think  
17          the City of Philadelphia should stop  
18          pointing to the state and find out ways  
19          right now that it can develop money to  
20          help these schools.

21                   (Applause.)

22                   MR. WILLIAMS: The bottom line  
23          is that there are other sources of  
24          revenue out there that the schools can  
25          use, and I think an elected school board

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2           would be better positioned to find it  
3           than the present SRC.

4                    (Applause.)

5                    COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very  
6           much, and thank you, Chairwoman.

7                    COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
8           you, Councilman Oh.

9                    Councilwoman Reynolds Brown.

10                   COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good  
11          morning.

12                   MR. WILLIAMS: Good morning.

13                   COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I would be  
14          remiss as well not to thank you for the  
15          historical history lesson you've given me  
16          and I'm sure others in the room. Just to  
17          be able to see the evolution of why we  
18          ended up where we are is deeply  
19          informative and informs why doing this or  
20          not going forward becomes a big lift.  
21          But to present the historical perspective  
22          in the way you have, in the 12 years I've  
23          been here, I've never heard before, so  
24          thank you very much.

25                   MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you.



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2                   Thank you.

3                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
4                   you very much.

5                   Any other questions or  
6                   comments?

7                   (No response.)

8                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Let me  
9                   again thank Mr. Williams for bringing me  
10                  this issue and for being such an  
11                  authority on this issue over the years.  
12                  We told him that we would certainly lean  
13                  on him during these hearings if questions  
14                  came up, the answers to which he knew and  
15                  we don't know. You've been around a long  
16                  time. We've heard a lot on this  
17                  discussion, but we appreciate his  
18                  commitment to it, and we know that if  
19                  we're able to move forward -- this is  
20                  just fact finding; this is step one -- it  
21                  certainly will be with your support and  
22                  concurrence. Thank you very much.

23                  MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you very  
24                  much.

25                  (Applause.)

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2                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:

3                   Research for Action. Obviously you're  
4                   not Kate Shaw. Would you give us your  
5                   name.

6                   MR. SCHOTT: Sure. Good  
7                   morning, Chairwoman and honorable  
8                   Committee members. I'm Adam Schott, the  
9                   Senior Policy Analyst at --

10                  COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Adam,  
11                  what's your last name? Spell it.

12                  MR. SCHOTT: It's S-C-H-O-T-T.

13                  COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:  
14                  Thanks.

15                  MR. SCHOTT: And I'm the Senior  
16                  Policy Analyst at Research for Action.

17                  By way of background, my work  
18                  on education governance included  
19                  services, Executive Director of the State  
20                  Board of Education under Governor  
21                  Rendell.

22                  COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
23                  you.

24                  MR. SCHOTT: I'm going to  
25                  summarize my testimony because the

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2           previous panels, I think, have covered in  
3           great detail and expertly some of the  
4           historical aspects both for Philadelphia  
5           and for governance reforms nationally.

6                     Takeovers have typically  
7           occurred, and this was certainly the case  
8           in Philadelphia, but across major  
9           districts nationwide at periods of  
10          significant financial strain. That was  
11          clearly a piece undergirding the state's  
12          action in 2001. At the time, the  
13          District faced a \$200 million deficit and  
14          lagging student achievement. Ten years  
15          on, the District's circumstances are  
16          every bit as acute, and while there have  
17          been some academic gains over the course  
18          of the past decade, Philadelphia still  
19          has a great ways to go obviously to make  
20          improvement.

21                    Many of the policies enacted  
22          under the SRC stewardship have produced  
23          similarly ambiguous results, and that  
24          includes both the experimentation with  
25          private management of schools and also

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2           the renaissance schools initiative for  
3           the schools that were contracted out to  
4           charter providers.

5                   I think we've all learned that  
6           in Philadelphia, school reform  
7           discussions past is prologue, and many of  
8           the challenges before the City and the  
9           School District today are not new, and  
10          the historical perspective is certainly  
11          useful in thinking about reform plans  
12          going ahead.

13                   Looking at the academic  
14          research, there is no compelling  
15          long-term evidence that a given  
16          governance model results in improved  
17          student performance. The point was made,  
18          and it's certainly true, that it's the  
19          individuals who occupy those positions.  
20          There is more evidence that a governance  
21          model might -- an appointed governance  
22          model might introduce some stability over  
23          an elected school board, for example.  
24          That has been the case in places like  
25          Boston, which has had an appointed school

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2           committee for about 20 years and had a  
3           superintendent who served for more than a  
4           decade. But that has not been the case  
5           in Philadelphia given that there's the  
6           significant turnover in  
7           superintendencies.

8                     But even if longevity and  
9           consistency in the governance model are  
10          achieved, it really -- those are simply  
11          ingredients in school reform. And the  
12          more central elements are coherent  
13          research-based policy, strong  
14          instructional leadership, and a  
15          commitment to meaningful community  
16          involvement and, of course, adequate and  
17          predictable resources. So whatever the  
18          discussion is about the governance model,  
19          there needs to be equal and probably  
20          greater attention to those central  
21          elements of what makes for strong state  
22          and community support of public  
23          education.

24                     So thank you.

25                     COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Councilman

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2           David Oh.

3                   COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very  
4           much, Vice Chairwoman.

5                   Thank you for your testimony.

6           I do have some questions along the points  
7           you've made. So one of the challenges  
8           that you are probably dealing with in  
9           your work and your research is that issue  
10          of establishing central elements to good  
11          education, and one of the things that I  
12          find frustrating about our situation in  
13          Philadelphia is that the issue of getting  
14          to these central elements of good  
15          education -- and I'm going to guess that  
16          you are familiar with other models in  
17          other countries and other cities of  
18          excellence in education, but we have been  
19          really challenged in the City of  
20          Philadelphia to have our school  
21          leadership pursue those best practices to  
22          the point where I do think that we have  
23          to do something about the governance,  
24          because if you can't get the people  
25          running things to look at and implement

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2           best practices, there must be some way to  
3           change the governance so that the folks  
4           in charge will look at those central  
5           elements.

6                     What I've heard, not a few  
7           times, from educational experts is that  
8           the leadership of the schools doesn't  
9           matter, that you have to change it at the  
10          ground level. I'm challenged to  
11          understand that, and so I'm asking you to  
12          explain within the context of what I'm  
13          saying -- I know this is getting longer  
14          and longer. I'll try to cut down  
15          shorter. In other words, I just think  
16          given the situation that we have,  
17          leadership is always important. You  
18          cannot change things at the ground  
19          without authority and support from above  
20          to say these are the central elements.

21                    So within the context of what  
22          you talked about, could you give me your  
23          insights.

24                    MR. SCHOTT: So I think you  
25          raise a really important point, and, that

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2       is, whether you're a policy-maker in  
3       Harrisburg or even in the District, the  
4       great majority of education policy  
5       actually happens in the classroom between  
6       the teacher and the student. So it can  
7       be tempting to think about governance as  
8       an element for reform, and as I  
9       mentioned, there are some evidence that  
10      when there's a governance change and an  
11      appointed school committee or a school  
12      board, you can have more stability, and  
13      that is an important element in ensuring  
14      that long-term policies which are -- you  
15      need to carry out to see long-term gains  
16      in student achievement. It may afford  
17      that. But it's certainly not a proxy for  
18      the instructional reforms that are at the  
19      heart of learning and teaching. So an  
20      adequate supply of highly skilled  
21      teachers, meaningful professional  
22      development, opportunities for parental  
23      engagement. The structure of the  
24      governing board I don't think gets you to  
25      those points, and so whatever discussion



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2                   transpires around the governance model in  
3                   the City, it's important to be equally  
4                   attentive to those piece. And I  
5                   recognize your point about best  
6                   practices. I have to confess, we haven't  
7                   done research on what is the component of  
8                   local school committees in other  
9                   countries, but that might be an important  
10                  thing to look at.

11                 COUNCILMAN OH: Okay. I will  
12                 say that I'd love to have a conversation  
13                 with you offline. I know we're running  
14                 behind and we have so many other people  
15                 speaking, so I'll give you my card, and  
16                 we will have a hearing in the future on  
17                 best practices.

18                 MR. SCHOTT: That would be  
19                 great.

20                 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you.

21                 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:  
22                 Councilwoman Reynolds Brown.

23                 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Know that  
24                 I in particular appreciate the work of  
25                 your organization. I read with interest

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2           the documents that you send us, because  
3           it's nice to have that kind of data and  
4           research, which drives so many opinions.  
5           So I just need to say thank you for that.

6                       And given that you all live and  
7           breathe research and data and finding  
8           best practices nationally, can you ID a  
9           municipality that has actually gotten it  
10          right when it comes to educating children  
11          in large urban communities, which bring  
12          uniquely different challenges and  
13          challenges and challenges than  
14          surrounding suburban communities and  
15          rural communities in green county across  
16          the Commonwealth.

17                      MR. SCHOTT: Yeah. In terms of  
18          the state, I mean, every district has a  
19          great deal of work to do. There are -- I  
20          would give an example in terms of another  
21          large urban school district. Boston has  
22          had impressive gains over a long period  
23          of time, but you also need to account for  
24          the fact that that's a state that has  
25          made historic levels of investment in

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2           public education across both republican  
3           and democratic governors, from Governor  
4           Dukakis to Governor Romney. That was a  
5           state that worked in lockstep to ensure  
6           dramatic levels of funding for public  
7           education and for Boston in particular.  
8           So the combination of a superintendent  
9           who served over to decade and was able to  
10          see reforms through, funding, very  
11          intentional policies around community  
12          engagement, you have seen real payoff in  
13          terms of academic outcomes because of  
14          some of those pieces.

15                   COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: And so  
16          given that real-life story, would it  
17          behoove the next Mayor of the City to  
18          make a commitment that they then offer a  
19          contractual opportunity that's not  
20          optional but requires the next  
21          superintendent or the current  
22          superintendent to add a length of time?  
23          And that's arbitrary, but when you look  
24          at Boston's example and success, then for  
25          me that's a signal that the longevity of

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2           the superintendent matters. And so is  
3           that something we need to be  
4           conscientious about as we look towards  
5           the next occupant of the second floor?

6                   MR. SCHOTT: Well, having  
7           served in a policy role, I'm really happy  
8           that now I don't have to recommend any  
9           policy directives to anyone, but I think  
10          you make a great point, and we certainly  
11          saw it at the state level in the  
12          transition between the Rendell  
13          Administration and the current one.  
14          School districts understandably have some  
15          anxiety whenever there's a transition,  
16          whenever there's a transition in city  
17          government, state government, because  
18          policies change and work gets unwound.

19                   COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: As we are  
20          clearly seeing now between the Rendell  
21          Administration and the Corbett  
22          Administration.

23                   MR. SCHOTT: So whatever you  
24          think of the individual policies of an  
25          administration, I think recognizing that

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2           we all want to see education policies  
3           transcend a part as an agenda or change  
4           in administration, and any opportunity to  
5           allow for more comprehensive and  
6           long-term implementation of proven  
7           reforms is a central element.

8                   COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: How old is  
9           the Research for Action?

10                   MR. SCHOTT: It's 22 years old.

11                   COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

12                   MR. SCHOTT: It's been around  
13           since --

14                   COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: And I pay  
15           attention to the educational documents  
16           that you send out. No offense. But do  
17           you research other areas as well?

18                   MR. SCHOTT: RFA's work has  
19           historically been on Philadelphia school  
20           reform and lately more regionally.

21                   COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: And lately  
22           more?

23                   MR. SCHOTT: More regionally.  
24           So we've been looking at New Jersey and  
25           the experience of other states.

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2                   COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I see.

3                   Okay, then. Well, thank you again very,  
4                   very much for the important work that you  
5                   do.

6                   MR. SCHOTT: Thank you.

7                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:

8                   Councilwoman Maria Quinones-Sanchez.

9                   COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Thank  
10                  you.

11                  I want to kind of hone in on  
12                  the point that was gathered through the  
13                  exchange with Councilwoman Blondell  
14                  Reynolds Brown. Have you seen the -- we  
15                  talked about stability, notwithstanding  
16                  stability, which we've had issues with.  
17                  You talked about consistency in funding.  
18                  Have you seen this level of divestment  
19                  from a state takeover board when you've  
20                  compared it to other places where there's  
21                  been a state takeover?

22                  MR. SCHOTT: I'm sorry. I  
23                  missed the middle part of your question.

24                  COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Have you  
25                  seen the kind of divestment in a state

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2           board? Because one would think -- this  
3           is a state board, it's their board --  
4           that they will be committed to supporting  
5           stability, funding, and policy formation.  
6           Have you seen this in other places where  
7           an administration comes in, reestablishes  
8           a board? In this particular case, the  
9           Governor came in, appointed his chair and  
10          then withdrew all the type of money that  
11          we've seen in Pennsylvania.

12                   MR. SCHOTT: Well, I would say  
13          that in 2001 when the takeover  
14          legislation was enacted, there was a  
15          significant infusion of state dollars in  
16          the District. And typically large-scale  
17          governance reforms are accompanied by an  
18          infusion of state or other resources. So  
19          you raise a really important point about  
20          the fact that a governance discussion  
21          going forward, when you are likely to  
22          have an absence of additional state  
23          funds, it is uncharted territory in a  
24          lot of ways.

25                   COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Can you,

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2           if you recall, what's the number? When  
3           we -- obviously you were at the state  
4           during the Rendell, the cost-out study  
5           that began to get us -- at that  
6           particular time, the cost-out study said  
7           a billion dollars underfunded.

8                       Given the reductions over the  
9           last few years, how far behind are we now  
10          in comparison to when we had a number?  
11          Because people ask for a number. We did  
12          a study. There was a number. And so how  
13          far back have we gone from that number?

14                      MR. SCHOTT: I can certainly  
15          get that data point for you later today.  
16          I don't have it off the top of my head.

17                      COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: That  
18          would be good for your record.

19                      MR. SCHOTT: Sure.

20                      COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Thank  
21          you for the work that you do.

22                      MR. SCHOTT: Thank you.

23                      COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
24          you.

25                      Any other questions?



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2                   (No response.)

3                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
4 you very much.

5                   Helen Gym, Founder, Parents  
6 United for Public Education; Mr. Darren  
7 Spielman --

8                   (Applause.)

9                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: --  
10 President and CEO, the Philadelphia  
11 Education Fund; and Fran Aulston,  
12 President and CEO of the Paul Robeson  
13 House and West Philadelphia Cultural  
14 Center.

15                   While they're coming forward,  
16 let me note that we received  
17 notification, in case some of you have  
18 not heard, that Senator Frank Lautenberg,  
19 the oldest member of the U.S. Senate,  
20 died at 4:02 a.m. He was the only World  
21 War II surviving member in the Senate.  
22 So we certainly extend our condolences to  
23 his family and acknowledge that this has  
24 been a loss.

25                   Thank you very much.

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2                   (Witnesses approached witness  
3                   table.)

4                   MS. GYM: Thank you very much  
5                   for that, Chairwoman Blackwell. Thank  
6                   you very much, members of the Committee.  
7                   My name is Helen Gym. I'm a Philadelphia  
8                   public school parent and along with  
9                   Mr. Gerald Wright, a co-founder of  
10                  Parents United for Public Education,  
11                  which has been working on School District  
12                  budget issues in particular and parent  
13                  engagement in that process since 2006.

14                  Before I begin, I wanted to  
15                  talk a little bit about the fact that  
16                  there's no question that the issue of an  
17                  elected school board raises questions  
18                  about the confidence of governance issues  
19                  around the School District of  
20                  Philadelphia at a very tenuous time when  
21                  the City and State elected officials are  
22                  set to discuss and address more than \$180  
23                  million in basic funding needs for the  
24                  District. And despite my deep concerns  
25                  about the role of the School Reform

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2           Commission, I hope there is no question  
3           about the necessity and urgency of  
4           funding for the District at this time.

5                     The issue of a locally elected  
6           school board to me is fundamentally  
7           rooted in the intent locally to invest,  
8           care for, and manage our school system.  
9           And many Councilmembers or some  
10          Councilmembers may think that the  
11          responsibility is slightly less on the  
12          City because the City only provides 30  
13          percent of the School District's total  
14          budget, but, in fact, we believe that the  
15          City funding is the most central funding,  
16          mostly because it is a critical buffer in  
17          a state where Philadelphia schools are  
18          often at the whim of whichever political  
19          party is ruling at the state level.

20                    So in these worst of times, we  
21          need -- we want to make clear and to  
22          continue to strongly urge City Council  
23          and the Education Committee in particular  
24          to find the generous and complete  
25          fulfillment of the \$60 million that's

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2           been requested for the schools. This is  
3           not just an issue about the SRC. This is  
4           about a clear investment in a locally  
5           driven, locally guaranteed future for  
6           Philadelphia's school children.

7                        Last Thursday, the School  
8           Reform Commission, which is responsible  
9           for over 200,000 public and charter  
10          students in the City of Philadelphia,  
11          voted to pass a budget that more than one  
12          commissioner questioned was valid or  
13          barely constitutional. Stripped from the  
14          budget were all staff members except for  
15          a principal and legally mandated  
16          individuals. Nothing else remained. Not  
17          a single guidance counselor in any school  
18          in the City, no assistant principals or  
19          secretaries to answer the phone, not a  
20          dime for books or supplies, no arts for  
21          music, arts or the gifted programs, and  
22          no sports, this on top of a fractious  
23          year in which the School District closed  
24          24 schools across the City and made a  
25          promise to public school parents that

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2           those children would find a better  
3           education than the one they were  
4           currently in. Clearly, this budget has  
5           shown that they were -- they will not.

6                     Presenting this budget publicly  
7           was supposed to demonstrate the  
8           possibilities that could happen should  
9           City and State money as well as  
10          gargantuan union concessions not come  
11          through, but passing the budget  
12          demonstrated a complete evisceration of  
13          the District's education and moral vision  
14          for our children's future. As I have  
15          said before, this was not an official  
16          act. It was a deeply immoral act that  
17          betrayed a mission and responsibility to  
18          protect children's education, especially  
19          in the hardest of times.

20                     (Applause.)

21                     MS. GYM: So that's why I'm  
22           here today, to talk about the urgency of  
23           an elected school board.

24                     Thirteen years ago, the State  
25           of Pennsylvania took over the

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2           Philadelphia public schools with a clear  
3           mission to turn our schools around, but  
4           13 years later, I define the state  
5           takeover less by the bankruptcies, which  
6           many of us count, than by the fact that  
7           we are dealing with a very different  
8           School District than the one that we  
9           originally started out with. We've seen  
10          the closing of dozens of schools, a  
11          massive expansion of non-District managed  
12          schools, a host of questionable entities  
13          actually that form independent government  
14          associations such as the Great Schools  
15          Compact, and a number of increasingly  
16          complicated and troubling ethics issues  
17          arising out of everything from land  
18          transactions to lobbying to contracts to  
19          the school closings themselves. So this  
20          situation around our schools has become  
21          far more complex, far more political  
22          under the state takeover, even as the  
23          consequences grow for us.

24                       The School District of  
25          Philadelphia is the third largest budget

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2       in the State of Pennsylvania behind the  
3       state itself and the City of  
4       Philadelphia. Governing this money are  
5       individuals whose qualifications for  
6       service are a mystery, whose goals and  
7       intentions are kept private, and who most  
8       of the public cannot even name. Never --

9                        (Applause.)

10               MS. GYM: Never has so much  
11       money had so little accountability.

12               The SRC has seen a number of  
13       commissioners over the years of varying  
14       skills, backgrounds, and abilities come  
15       and go. And while most have stayed their  
16       term, it's been distressing to see a  
17       number of really thoughtful members not  
18       be able to last through the full term.  
19       Heidi Ramirez, Lorene Cary come to mind.

20               One of the stalwart  
21       commissioners currently asking probing  
22       questions and taking his responsibility  
23       seriously in terms of oversight is Joseph  
24       Dworetzky, a Rendell era gubernatorial  
25       appointee. His term ends in December,

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2           and it will be chilling to see who the  
3           Governor appoints next to replace him.

4                       Despite these varied  
5           backgrounds, the SRC has still struggled  
6           and its often been a mystery to many  
7           people why five smart, experienced people  
8           cannot figure out what to do best with  
9           their schools. And to me, it has less to  
10          do with qualifications of those  
11          individuals than it has to do with the  
12          fact that they have a role and  
13          responsibility as a public servant and we  
14          have no public vetting process for them.

15                      There are no explicit  
16          qualifications for the SRC. What makes  
17          someone qualified for the SRC? That's a  
18          complete mystery to most people. We've  
19          seen a host of lawyers --

20                      (Applause.)

21                      MS. GYM: -- university  
22          presidents, a private hedge fund manager,  
23          a former U.S. ambassador determine our  
24          children's future, but what actually made  
25          them qualified to sit in those chairs has



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2           never been articulated or upheld.

3                       (Applause.)

4                       MS. GYM: This is going back a  
5           little bit to the Research for Action  
6           commentary as well.

7                       There's also no requirement to  
8           have SRC commissioners announce their  
9           goals, framework, vision or engagement  
10          schools. The only people who get to hear  
11          from a prospective SRC commissioner is a  
12          small group of select lawmakers in the  
13          Pennsylvania Senate who have private  
14          meetings with potential commissioners.  
15          What transpires in those meetings, what  
16          exchanges are made, what goals are  
17          established or set, what promises may be  
18          given is known to no one but those  
19          individuals in that room.

20                      (Applause.)

21                      MS. GYM: There is absolutely  
22          no opportunity to engage or question a  
23          commissioner's backgrounds, goals, and  
24          intent to handle two and a half billion  
25          dollars of taxpayer money.

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2                   Most SRC commissioners have  
3                   little understanding or responsibility in  
4                   seeing their role, therefore, as a public  
5                   official or engaging with the public. As  
6                   a close observer of the District, I would  
7                   say that a handful of commissioners have  
8                   truly felt that they live up to their  
9                   responsibilities as public officials.  
10                  That is engaging regularly with the  
11                  public, responding to questions, being  
12                  available, going out to events, and  
13                  presenting themselves as members of the  
14                  School Reform Commission responsible for  
15                  our children.

16                  As I said, most of the public  
17                  cannot name the names of the  
18                  commissioners, and that too is a major  
19                  problem. Where there is less visibility,  
20                  there is very little accountability.

21                  Number four, there's no  
22                  compelling mission of oversight right  
23                  now. An appointed, unpaid SRC goes up  
24                  against a high-powered, high-wattage CEO  
25                  superintendent hired with great fanfare

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2           coming in with a huge salary, an enormous  
3           entourage, and probably an ego to match.  
4           So what is an unpaid, appointed board to  
5           do? What they're not doing is practicing  
6           the basic responsibility of oversight and  
7           not rubber-stamping everything a  
8           superintendent does.

9                        So I am cautious and aware of  
10          not wanting conflicting agendas going up  
11          against each other. But at the same  
12          time, I think this critical question of  
13          why oversight has failed so often and why  
14          this duty is not a central issue for the  
15          School Reform Commission has not been  
16          explored near enough.

17                      And the last issue I wanted to  
18          raise and that I think helps get  
19          addressed ideally by a public vetting  
20          process is the question of ethics and  
21          transparency. Good government happens  
22          when people are aware of and accountable  
23          to it. People may complain about City  
24          government been opaque, but there is no  
25          question that the District's inner

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2       workings trump almost any publicly  
3       managed entity. There is very little  
4       transparency about how money is decided  
5       and where it goes.

6                       (Applause.)

7           MS. GYM: And as other people  
8       have said, at the end of the day, the SRC  
9       are ultimately accountable to those who  
10      appointed them. And we hear this often  
11      when people resign from the SRC and said  
12      it has been an honor to serve. It should  
13      not be an honor to serve. It is a duty  
14      and a mandate and a public need for them  
15      to serve responsibly.

16                    So at the end of the day, I  
17      believe in a complicated, troubling, and  
18      difficult process of electing our  
19      officials. Unlike some people who have  
20      spoke today, I'm not naive -- I'm not as  
21      quite as hopeful about all the things  
22      that can happen through an elected  
23      process, but I think that there are some  
24      elements that are important to think  
25      about in discussing local independence.

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2           I actually think that now is a very good  
3           time. The current Governor could not be  
4           more irresponsible or uninterested in the  
5           fate of our schools.

6                       (Applause.)

7                       MS. GYM: There can be a tide  
8           shift that changes should another  
9           Governor replace this person, but I think  
10          now is very clear about why local  
11          governance matters.

12                      State takeovers have clearly  
13          failed to make any significant  
14          difference. You can look at  
15          Chester-Upland, Harrisburg, any of the  
16          other places. The media have also  
17          stepped up their coverage of the  
18          Philadelphia public schools, led most  
19          notably by the Philadelphia Public School  
20          Notebook, but also other media as well.  
21          And to me, paying public attention to our  
22          schools is the single most critical  
23          factor in guaranteeing a strong election.

24                      So some elements that I wanted  
25          to share with you regarding a locally

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2       elected school board. One, I think that  
3       there needs to be some consideration  
4       about a Council-like approach towards  
5       governance and elections. In other  
6       words, I like the idea of both a majority  
7       looking at citywide elections, but also  
8       allowing for some neighborhood  
9       representation at the School District  
10      level.

11                   (Applause.)

12           MS. GYM: It's a complicated  
13      issue, but I think that in particular  
14      areas where we saw school closings hit,  
15      primarily African American neighborhoods  
16      in specific sections of the City, that  
17      this becomes an urgent issue for us to  
18      consider.

19                   I want -- I hope that City  
20      Council will think about term limits. I  
21      do think that those are an important  
22      thing to think about with public  
23      officials and with the School District in  
24      particular. We also hope you might think  
25      about staggered terms, so that you don't

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2           see political sweeps going through the  
3           School District that could create or  
4           reinforce sort of sweeping reforms that  
5           swing the District back and forth.

6                       I would -- unlike the Senator  
7           who testified earlier, we feel very  
8           strongly that this position needs to be a  
9           paid full-time position. Two and a half  
10          billion dollars of public money should  
11          not be left to volunteer people who are  
12          unpaid and who do this work after hours.  
13          It will not create an ability for parents  
14          to apply. It will not create an ability  
15          for more citizens to apply. It will  
16          likely limit the possibility for regular  
17          citizens to consider governance of the  
18          School District.

19                     Taxing authority is an  
20          extremely important issue. I feel  
21          strongly that having a school board that  
22          is unpaid, where the Mayor could  
23          potentially fire or hire the  
24          superintendent, and then has no taxing  
25          authority is creating just the shell of a

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2       public body without actually having any  
3       teeth to it. So we do believe in a  
4       limited taxing authority. We want the  
5       school board to be able to have a say in  
6       how taxes get distributed and also how  
7       much they bring in.

8                   And, finally, I hope that there  
9       is some discussion and recognition of the  
10      scope of responsibility that the District  
11      deals with right now. It's not just the  
12      education of children in the classroom.  
13      I wish that was the number one primary  
14      goal, but when we think about things like  
15      the closure of 24 public schools, we have  
16      to think about that the District is now  
17      responsible for the use, sales, and  
18      disposal of public land. The transfer of  
19      24 public schools and the sale of them  
20      could be the largest transfer of public  
21      land to private hands in the City's  
22      history. I don't know of any other  
23      institutions that are moving that much  
24      public land so significantly at this  
25      time.



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2                   So we need to think very  
3           broadly about the responsibilities of the  
4           School District. And in no way do I  
5           believe that an elected school board  
6           solves all problems or perhaps even most  
7           problems. Like most processes, it will  
8           probably create its own new set of  
9           problems, everything from campaign  
10          finance to voter turnout in Philadelphia,  
11          depending on the election cycle. But  
12          given what we've lived with through the  
13          last 13 years, given the lack of  
14          accountability and the lack of public  
15          voice available, it is clearly time for a  
16          change, and it's the people's turn to  
17          decide.

18                               (Applause.)

19                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
20          you very much.

21                               Any questions?

22                               Councilwoman Reynolds Brown.

23                   COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good  
24          morning, and thank you always for your  
25          activism and your voice that you bring to

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2           these discussions.

3                   I am one who likes to see the  
4           glass is half full. You have given us a  
5           number of legitimate, accurate  
6           observations that the glass is half  
7           empty. So share with me what is working  
8           at the School District. Name me three  
9           things that you believe -- teachers who  
10          come and do their job the best they can  
11          everyday. Young people who show up with  
12          their glasses all empty because they  
13          don't have the necessary supports at home  
14          or necessary supports that we believe are  
15          vital for young people to come in and  
16          thrive. Some principals who do show up  
17          and do do the extra, but because of the  
18          other numerous challenges facing the  
19          system, get dwarfed because of the other  
20          serious challenges facing the system.

21                   So share with me three things  
22          that you believe are working and that we  
23          can build on going forward.

24                   MS. GYM: Thank you so much,  
25          Councilwoman. Thank you very much. And

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2           I hope that -- one of the things that we  
3           believe for Parents United for Public  
4           Education is that our schools are our  
5           city's best assets. So if my testimony  
6           came across as negative about our public  
7           schools, I do apologize. I think it was  
8           meant more as a discussion about  
9           leadership and governance than it would  
10          be about the schools themselves.

11                   The Philadelphia public schools  
12          to me are the City's backbone. I think  
13          it is tempting to think about and hear  
14          very frequently about failing schools or  
15          students who do this or a failing  
16          narrative in schools. If you look across  
17          the City, I would say that many of our  
18          schools and most of our schools, in fact  
19          over two-thirds, are the backbone of  
20          their neighborhood and community. They  
21          are high performing, local, neighborhood  
22          elementary schools that do well by their  
23          community and move their children on to  
24          better and more important opportunities.

25                   That is the number one thing

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2           that we want to preserve and protect, and  
3           that is what the School Reform Commission  
4           did not do with their budget that they  
5           passed last week. They impacted every  
6           single school in the City, no matter  
7           whether they were the most struggling,  
8           most deserving school, the most elite  
9           magnet school, and most especially they  
10          took out and harmed the most responsible,  
11          stable, consistent schools across the  
12          District. Because of that, we've seen  
13          the loss of one out of four principals  
14          have left the School District of  
15          Philadelphia this year, have announced a  
16          vacancy. Huge changeover in stability  
17          and leadership. And although we do have  
18          lots of concerns and have raised them  
19          about principal leadership, there's no  
20          question that the people who are leaving  
21          right now, these are principals at CAPA,  
22          at Carver, at GAMP, at Kearny, these are  
23          backbone schools that have always done  
24          well by our children.

25                        So we are very proud of the

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2           backbone schools, of the stable  
3           neighborhood elementary schools, of  
4           principals who have led them, and a  
5           stable school staff. Those are the  
6           things that we want to preserve and  
7           protect and make sure that they are at  
8           the top of the list.

9                       Clearly, the second thing that  
10          we want to protect is the wonderful  
11          opportunities for students that exist  
12          even in Philadelphia that I don't think  
13          get appreciated enough, wonderful  
14          after-school programs, public league  
15          sports teams that do great. Swenson  
16          girls took the state championship in  
17          track.

18                      So there's amazing things that  
19          happen within our Philadelphia public  
20          schools. We need to uphold, stabilize,  
21          and ensure them and guarantee them, not  
22          hold them hostage or risk them or play  
23          games of brinksmanship with them. Those  
24          are the things that should be protected  
25          and established at all costs.

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2                   The last thing that I want to  
3                   say and the third thing is that you've  
4                   seen a tremendous amount of public  
5                   engagement that's come up this year as a  
6                   result of these things being threatened.  
7                   With the number of Philadelphia public  
8                   schools that were on the chopping block,  
9                   you saw thousands of Philadelphia  
10                  parents, community members, faith-based  
11                  communities, business leaders come out  
12                  and talk about the importance of these  
13                  schools and what they mean and, most  
14                  importantly, what is the District doing  
15                  to guarantee something better for the  
16                  children.

17                  So aside from the schools  
18                  closing -- because I don't think that  
19                  people would be up in arms if they were  
20                  going to a brand new school building,  
21                  fully outfitted, and with a spectacular  
22                  educational program. We would not be  
23                  having an argument about school closings.  
24                  Close them all, if that's what was the  
25                  exchange going to be. But we knew that

1           6/3/13 - EDUCATION - RES. 130333

2           that was not the discussion and the  
3           exchange. So you saw thousands of  
4           parents come out and talk about the  
5           importance of a quality and guaranteeing  
6           a quality school environment.

7                         In this last round of budget  
8           cuts, we had hundreds of parents come  
9           out. We have had hundreds of parents  
10          come through City Council, write  
11          thousands of letters to the state  
12          government. There is more engagement now  
13          and more recognition about the fragility  
14          and importance of public education than  
15          we've seen in a very long time. I don't  
16          think it needed to take a crisis to do  
17          it, and I'm sorry that the District  
18          pushed it to that extreme. I think that  
19          what it showed is that people have a  
20          fundamental belief in public education,  
21          whether or not they send their children  
22          to public school. Many of us are charter  
23          school parents. Some of us have sent  
24          their kids to private school. But we all  
25          believe in the importance of a free,

1           6/3/13 - EDUCATION - RES. 130333  
2           quality neighborhood public school within  
3           our community that provide a stable  
4           learning environment and an option -- not  
5           even an option, but a baseline guaranteed  
6           for our children. If we choose to go  
7           outward, that would be fine, but  
8           Philadelphia, unlike Lower Merion, for  
9           example, 30 percent of Lower Merion  
10          parents choose to send their children to  
11          a school other than the Lower Merion  
12          district schools, which earn 28,000 --  
13          \$26,000 to \$28,000 a year. They've  
14          chosen to send their children elsewhere.  
15          But there's not a single bit of  
16          discussion in that community that the  
17          school district has failed or that the  
18          schools are miserable and we shouldn't  
19          invest more in them. In fact, the  
20          opposite is true. They invest more.  
21          They develop more. They appreciate more.  
22          And people move out there because of it.  
23                  So I think that -- I'm sorry,  
24          Councilwoman.

25                   COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Do you



1           6/3/13 - EDUCATION - RES. 130333  
2       believe then that -- is it fair to say  
3       then that you believe the public  
4       engagement has been good and healthy?  
5       Because as a result of the public  
6       engagement, we started out with X number  
7       of schools closing, and then as the  
8       members of the SRC and interested voices  
9       like yours and hundreds of others  
10      attended those many community meetings  
11      around the City and we ended up at a  
12      very, very different place. So with that  
13      outcome or that yield, do you believe  
14      that the public engagement was healthy?  
15      Try to keep your answer brief because  
16      there are -- yes or no. That's a yes or  
17      no question.

18                   MS. GYM: Yes, the engagement  
19      was healthy, but, no, the response was  
20      not what we wanted.

21                   COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: We're not  
22      saying it was perfect, but there was an  
23      uptick in the public engagement, quite  
24      frankly, in ways that I had not seen  
25      before.

1                   6/3/13 - EDUCATION - RES. 130333

2                   MS. GYM: Absolutely.

3                   COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: My last  
4 question is --

5                   MS. GYM: And it will continue.

6                   COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: And try to  
7 give me a cliff note answer.  
8 Qualifications do matter. You were very  
9 thorough in identifying the number of  
10 different types of professionals that  
11 have served on the SRC board. So what  
12 top three qualifications do you believe  
13 should be required and considered for the  
14 appointment of SRC members going forward?

15                   MS. GYM: Number one, I would  
16 say an engagement with K to 12  
17 Philadelphia public school education,  
18 particularly District-managed public  
19 schools. I think that there can be lots  
20 of other engagement, but there's got to  
21 be a level of engagement, demonstrated  
22 engagement, with K to 12 District-managed  
23 public schools in some significant way.

24                   Two, I think that there needs  
25 to be a recognition of this role as being

1           6/3/13 - EDUCATION - RES. 130333  
2           a public servant. And I don't think  
3           anyone is doing anybody -- a lot of the  
4           comments that come out of the SRC after  
5           they resign is, as I said, it's been an  
6           honor to serve. Well, this wasn't a  
7           favor. It wasn't a favor. You weren't  
8           doing a favor for anybody. You were  
9           conducting a formal responsibility to the  
10          children of the City and actually to the  
11          City of Philadelphia itself. So a strong  
12          sense of the public duty and public  
13          nature of this role.

14                 And the last one is a strong  
15          sense of oversight, that your job is to  
16          be an oversight manager. It is not to be  
17          just a reinforcer or kind of -- I think  
18          other people have played roles where they  
19          want to step back a little bit. And I  
20          think that what we see with, for example  
21          Commissioner Dworetzky and sometimes with  
22          Commissioner Ramirez and Commissioner  
23          Lorene Cary is that we saw someone who  
24          had engaged oversight and engagement with  
25          the District around critical issues,

1           6/3/13 - EDUCATION - RES. 130333  
2       asked questions, requested data, did  
3       research, explained their vote, et  
4       cetera, and so that's what we are  
5       missing.

6           COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.  
7       That's very, very, very helpful. Thank  
8       you for your testimony.

9           Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

10          COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
11       you very much.

12          (Applause.)

13          COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Any  
14       other questions for Ms. Gym?

15          (No response.)

16          COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
17       you.

18          Gerald Wright, you're also part  
19       of Parents United for Public Education.

20          MR. WRIGHT: Yes, I am, Madam  
21       Chairwoman. Since Helen Gym has already  
22       given my testimony and -- good afternoon,  
23       Councilwoman Blackwell and other  
24       Councilmembers who are present. Thank  
25       you, Councilwoman, for allowing me to

1           6/3/13 - EDUCATION - RES. 130333  
2           tack on to this presentation. And I  
3           wanted to not necessarily talk about  
4           statistics or try and be perfect in  
5           articulating a perspective on governance,  
6           but I want to, one, say that we as  
7           Parents United for Public Education  
8           support an elected school board. And,  
9           Councilwoman Reynolds, you essentially  
10          asked the kinds of questions that I  
11          wanted to address.

12                        So, first, I want to say  
13          publicly we really appreciate  
14          Commissioner Dworetzky. He has --

15                        (Applause.)

16                        MR. WRIGHT: He has asked  
17          questions. He has voted based on  
18          credible information. He has not just  
19          been a rubber stamp. So we want to  
20          publicly and we intend to document our  
21          thanks to him in a letter, but I want to  
22          say that here today before Council,  
23          because that's what we need when we talk  
24          about governance and leadership at the  
25          School District of Philadelphia. We are

1           6/3/13 - EDUCATION - RES. 130333  
2           in times now where it is critical, and we  
3           are at the point of either dismantling  
4           our public education system or doing  
5           something new that will sustain it.

6                       So we support an elected school  
7           board, because it will force the  
8           dialogue. It will force those who want  
9           to be in leadership to engage parents,  
10          include parents, bring them into the  
11          process of decision-making.

12                      We have fought hard for  
13          transparency in budgeting and in major  
14          decision-making, and we've constantly  
15          been locked out. So we think the elected  
16          board will do just that.

17                      And you asked a question I want  
18          to just comment on, what is working at  
19          the School District of Philadelphia. We  
20          are of the belief that the public schools  
21          are a community asset and that many of  
22          them and many of the young people are  
23          doing quite well despite disinvestment by  
24          the leadership. We have been cutting the  
25          individual school budgets for years now.

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2           We're now looking at in some cases 25  
3           percent budget cuts at local schools.  
4           We're cutting out everything except for  
5           teachers and principals. Who is going to  
6           take attendance? What happens if a child  
7           is injured? What happens to the  
8           relationship that was developed between  
9           teacher and student? What happens to the  
10          institutional nature of those  
11          relationships in education? So that my  
12          daughter who attends a public school -- I  
13          have two. They look forward to getting  
14          one of the teachers that were there the  
15          previous year, and up until next year,  
16          they felt very good about being able to  
17          see those teachers. We're destroying  
18          those relationships.

19                 So I just want to make one  
20          quick shift. If we don't have an elected  
21          school board, if we don't have the  
22          ability of parents to determine who sits  
23          in the seat, why should anyone listen to  
24          us parents who have no power, who have no  
25          particular money -- and just as an aside,

1           6/3/13 - EDUCATION - RES. 130333  
2           it was said to me by several people, do  
3           you have money to foot the bill for  
4           public education? Where are we going to  
5           get the money? I would like to offer  
6           that if we actually sat in the room with  
7           parents, many of them would have great  
8           suggestions as to efficiencies, as well  
9           as help us to develop ways to raise  
10          additional money.

11                        So --

12                        (Applause.)

13                       MR. WRIGHT: So I want to not  
14          take much time today except to raise this  
15          human cry. Our children are worth it,  
16          and they are doing quite well despite all  
17          of the disinvestment that's going on.  
18          Many of the top schools, when you look at  
19          the region, are here in Philadelphia.  
20          What school is like Saul, an agricultural  
21          school? What school is like a Central or  
22          a Bodine or a Constitution or Science  
23          Leadership Academy? Why aren't we taking  
24          these tremendous successes in light of  
25          disinvestment and bringing those people



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2           into a room and saying, How do we make  
3           this work for more people as opposed to  
4           less?

5                       So an elected school board  
6           would have to answer those questions to  
7           me. Currently, the School Reform  
8           Commission legally has no obligation to  
9           answer my questions or even respond to my  
10          very logical and reasonable statements.

11                      So last week on Thursday, a  
12          thousand people or so were there, over  
13          50-some presentations, and the attitude  
14          in the room was basically, We're going to  
15          vote this no matter what. We won't even  
16          delay. Given all of your enthusiasm, all  
17          of your participation, we're still going  
18          to vote this just the way we intended to  
19          do it when we walked through the door.

20                      Again, thank you very much for  
21          giving me this opportunity.

22                      (Applause.)

23                      COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
24          you very much. Thank you, Mr. Wright.  
25          Thank you, Ms. Gym.

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2                   The Chair notes that quite some  
3                   time ago Councilman Brian O'Neill is  
4                   here, another member of the Committee.  
5                   So we thank him very much.

6                   Now we're ready for Darren  
7                   Spielman, President and CEO of the  
8                   Philadelphia Education Fund.

9                   MR. SPIELMAN: Thank you,  
10                  Councilwoman Blackwell, for convening  
11                  this hearing and for the opportunity to  
12                  testify today. Thank you, Council, for  
13                  your commitment to the education of all  
14                  Philadelphia's children. My name is  
15                  Darren Spielman. I am CEO of the  
16                  Philadelphia Education Fund. At the Ed  
17                  Fund, we have been champions for public  
18                  education since 1985. We believe that  
19                  opportunity is for all young people, not  
20                  only the fortunate few. We support more  
21                  than 15,000 students and 600 teachers in  
22                  30 schools across our city. We grant \$1  
23                  million per year in last-dollar  
24                  scholarships to send neighborhood high  
25                  school students to college. And we have

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2           helped transform Philadelphia's approach  
3           to dropout prevention.

4                     We know education at many  
5           levels, from the City and system to  
6           school by school, teacher by teacher, and  
7           child by child.

8                     We were here when the state  
9           took over the District. The deal was  
10          more state oversight in exchange for more  
11          funding. Today we have neither.

12                    I believe that over time we  
13          will need to establish local control of  
14          the District -- reestablish local control  
15          of the District. However, now is not the  
16          moment. We're going to get a bad deal.  
17          Now is the not the moment.

18                    I also recognize that every  
19          governance structure has pros and cons,  
20          but when the moment does arrive, on  
21          balance, maybe unique today, I do not  
22          favor an elected school board. Elected  
23          boards often struggle to make hard  
24          decisions and implement change, and they  
25          do add complexity to an already complex

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2           budgeting process. Despite its own set  
3           of challenges, I believe mayoral control  
4           presents a more efficient solution. The  
5           District then can join every other City  
6           agency and report to City Hall.

7                     Today, in this moment, we need  
8           to make sure that we have a District  
9           worth governing, a District that oversees  
10          schools that provide children with the  
11          education they and their parents deserve,  
12          a District that provides educators with  
13          the conditions they need to succeed. To  
14          do this, we need revenue.

15                    I encourage you and everyone  
16          listening to raise the local dollars we  
17          require. The cigarette tax is a start.  
18          Move liquor by the drink forward. Move  
19          use and occupancy. Find a way to find  
20          the money. Continue to advocate for the  
21          120 million and the tax approvals we need  
22          from the state.

23                    The District has taken  
24          substantial strides to be more efficient.  
25          They'll need to continue to be

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2           accountable. But to be comfortable that  
3           funds are well spent, Council can assert  
4           that with additional revenue come the  
5           commitment to maintain arts education,  
6           extracurriculars, sports, and current  
7           levels of counselors. You can assert  
8           that, in the wake of coming layoffs, we  
9           need to prioritize stability in schools  
10          and students' relationships with caring  
11          adults, as my colleague from Parent  
12          United cited. Therefore, that when  
13          laid-off workers -- and the layoffs are  
14          coming -- hopefully return, schools  
15          should have latitude to decide to bring  
16          staff back rather than shuffling across  
17          the District based on time of service.  
18          Students should not bear the brunt of a  
19          contractual provision that was not  
20          designed to address such a crisis.  
21          Further, Council can assert that funds  
22          should be linked to efforts to affect the  
23          upcoming teachers' contract to permit  
24          site selection hiring in every school.

25                   If we want governance to

1           6/3/13 - EDUCATION - RES. 130333  
2       matter, we need a public education system  
3       with the funds and the form to function.  
4       One day we will get local control.  
5       Today, let's get what matters most to our  
6       city's children and families. Please do  
7       everything you can to find the money for  
8       our schools.

9                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:  
10       Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown,  
11       then Councilman Oh.

12                   COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So have we  
13       exhausted all possible non-traditional  
14       options for where we can find the 60  
15       million?

16                   MR. SPIELMAN: I will take it  
17       from wherever I can get it. I see these  
18       as the most likely to succeed right now,  
19       and I feel like our crisis is immediate  
20       and that we have 200,000 kids waiting on  
21       us.

22                   COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: This may  
23       have been a question more appropriate for  
24       the gentleman from Research for Action,  
25       but when it comes to the resources or the

1           6/3/13 - EDUCATION - RES. 130333  
2           source pools, does the Education Fund  
3           study or research how other  
4           municipalities find their dollars?

5                   MR. SPIELMAN: We're not a  
6           school financing expert. I bet your RFA  
7           guy would have a stronger answer. I will  
8           say that we do know -- what do we know?  
9           We know in Pennsylvania that we are among  
10          the lowest across the nation in states as  
11          far as we have the highest percentage of  
12          our funding coming from property taxes  
13          versus other funding sources. We all  
14          know that that creates massive disparity,  
15          as Helen was talking about, 26 to 28  
16          grand in Lower Merion and we're less than  
17          half of that here. And that is a result  
18          of overreliance on property tax, and I  
19          would fix that if I had a wand to fix.

20                   COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: All right,  
21          then. Thank you.

22                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:  
23          Councilman Oh.

24                   COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very  
25          much, Chairwoman.

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2                   I apologize for my allergies.

3                   They've just been reoccurring this year.

4                   MR. SPIELMAN: You sound good.

5                   COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you.

6                   I do want to state and

7                   certainly welcome your input. This idea

8                   that we can give money and make some

9                   assertions with the School District is

10                  historically not something that has

11                  worked. Councilwoman Maria

12                  Quinones-Sanchez and Councilman Bill

13                  Green, I believe, and others put together

14                  some type of agreement that they would

15                  give money last year in exchange for

16                  certain assertions that never were

17                  complied with. And I think it is one of

18                  the reasons why we're having this

19                  discussion about changing the leadership

20                  structure, because we too cannot get

21                  things done by the School District

22                  leadership. Even though we are called

23                  upon to deliver funds, we don't get

24                  responses back that allow us as elected

25                  representatives to do what little we can



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2           as articulated in the Charter and how the  
3           school is run to get some type of  
4           oversight and responsiveness.

5                     The other thing that is  
6           challenging as well is when we look at  
7           the context of the high unemployment that  
8           we have in the City, the large number of  
9           seniors on fixed income, we are not  
10          trying to raise their taxes beyond which  
11          they can live in their homes.

12                    (Applause.)

13                    COUNCILMAN OH: So, I mean,  
14          there's many concerns, and I'm not  
15          diminishing your cry for more funding,  
16          but it is complicated in the sense that  
17          the more we try to put our hand into a  
18          pocket some place, we are losing jobs,  
19          losing homes, losing. And if the central  
20          problem is the governance of the School  
21          District itself -- and you may disagree  
22          with this, and I welcome your  
23          disagreement -- would our solution be  
24          then, since everybody is trying to  
25          influence the School District management

1           6/3/13 - EDUCATION - RES. 130333  
2           and leadership without much success,  
3           perhaps that leadership has to be made  
4           more responsive to the needs of the  
5           people.

6                        (Applause.)

7                       MR. SPIELMAN: So a few  
8           comments. I agree we need to get local  
9           control back. I would just say this very  
10          moment, there's a lot of complex stuff  
11          going on. I don't think we have the team  
12          in Harrisburg that I want to frankly  
13          negotiate with to cut a deal. I mean, I  
14          think that we do ourselves a lot of  
15          credit by solving the emergency on the  
16          table and then ramping up our efforts to  
17          get local control a moment from now.

18                      I do believe that at the end of  
19          the day, public schools are the economic  
20          backbone of the City. They are what  
21          allow people who start in challenging  
22          circumstances to have opportunity to  
23          realize their potential, and they are  
24          simultaneously what allows to keep folks  
25          that already have had the privilege to

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2           realize their potential to stay around in  
3           the City. And so that if we want long  
4           ongoing to do justice for young people,  
5           for families, and for the City, we're  
6           going to need to invest in our schools.

7                     On AVI in particular, which you  
8           referenced sideways, my understanding is  
9           on the table now is a budget neutral, and  
10          I think we do need to be careful. People  
11          on fixed income need to be protected.  
12          Me, I need to be taxed more. I live in a  
13          house that's probably assessed at what it  
14          was worth in 1815 or something or, you  
15          know, I can't even -- and I probably  
16          should get taxed more. And people have  
17          asked me, and I said I'm ready to pay.  
18          I'm ready to pay.

19                    COUNCILMAN OH: You may get  
20          your wish next year or the year after.  
21          And I appreciate what you're saying. I'm  
22          not trying to belittle what you're  
23          saying. Thank you very much for your  
24          testimony.

25                    MR. SPIELMAN: Thank you. Oh,

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2           let me say I think right now our best  
3           options, liquor by the drink, cigarette,  
4           push the U&O. Let's get the money on the  
5           table.

6                       Thank you guys very much for  
7           all you do for Philadelphia.

8                       COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
9           you very much.

10                      Ms. Fran Aulston, President and  
11           CEO of the Paul Robeson House and the  
12           West Philadelphia Cultural Alliance.  
13           Thank you so much. Thanks for your  
14           patience.

15                      Next, Panel 4, Eric Hayes,  
16           Reverend Jim Royal, and Veronica Joyner.  
17           I haven't seen her, nor have I seen Jim  
18           Royal. Is Eric Hayes here?

19                      Oh, Jim Royal is here. Okay.  
20           Is Eric Hayes? I didn't see Veronica  
21           Joyner. Okay. Then that will be that  
22           panel. Thank you very much, and you'll  
23           be next.

24                      Thank you. Thank you,  
25           Ms. Aulston.

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2                   MS. AULSTON: Thank you. Good  
3 morning, Council President, in your  
4 absence, Clarke and Councilwoman Jannie  
5 L. Blackwell, Councilmembers, parents,  
6 students, teachers, community advocates,  
7 and stakeholders. I'm Frances Aulston,  
8 Executive Director of the West  
9 Philadelphia Cultural Alliance and  
10 steward of the historically designated  
11 Paul Robeson House Museum. I am a  
12 parent, grandmother, mentor, and  
13 passionate and devoted advocate for a  
14 quality education for the welfare of our  
15 children and our community.

16                   I would like to start by  
17 thanking Councilwoman Blackwell for your  
18 many years of determined leadership to  
19 advocate for your constituents and for  
20 the benefit of all individuals of the  
21 entire City of Philadelphia. I am proud  
22 to be one of the many members of the  
23 village who are grateful for your  
24 introduction of Bill No. 130333 that  
25 offers options for the citizens of

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2           Philadelphia, which states in part the  
3           authorization of the City Council  
4           Committee on Education to hold hearings  
5           to examine the feasibility of choosing a  
6           locally elected Board of Education and to  
7           define the process required to accomplish  
8           this resolution.

9                     My position on today's topic,  
10           an elected school board versus an  
11           appointed one, is that an elected school  
12           board will be able to administer  
13           education initiatives more effectively  
14           and efficiently than an appointed board  
15           based upon a tried and true personal  
16           investment in the children. I believe  
17           that members of an elected board are more  
18           likely to be fully committed stakeholders  
19           in our educational system, bringing our  
20           world-class city into the 21st century  
21           with a positive and affirmative action  
22           plan to educate our children to become  
23           community, national, and world leaders.

24                     It is referenced --

25                     (Applause.)

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2                   MS. AULSTON: -- in current  
3       literature as recent as 2012 that  
4       advocates of electing school board  
5       members argue that elected boards are  
6       more responsive to the public will. In  
7       addition, electing members increases  
8       public interest in the schools, as it  
9       ensures that people have a direct voice  
10      in the selection of the school system's  
11      governing body. Elected school board  
12      members have greater independence and  
13      freedom to act in the best interests of  
14      the school system than do appointed board  
15      members.

16                   (Applause.)

17                   MS. AULSTON: An elected board  
18      is in a better position to work closely  
19      and effectively with its superintendent  
20      and professional staff than an appointed  
21      board.

22                   It is also referenced that the  
23      proponents of electing board members  
24      assert that the elective method provides  
25      opportunity for greater selectivity in

1           6/3/13 - EDUCATION - RES. 130333  
2       choosing board members, thus assuring  
3       capable board members with proper  
4       motives. The election of board members  
5       helps to ensure harmonious working  
6       relationships between the school board  
7       and the local government. Ensuring board  
8       stability and continuity of service are  
9       better secured by the elective method.

10               As a committed stakeholder, I  
11       have recently witnessed the horrific  
12       process in the threats to close our  
13       community schools based on questionable  
14       information. This threat to our precious  
15       children, who are blessings from God,  
16       devoted parents, and professional and  
17       dedicated educators is in part directly  
18       attributed to the controlling power of an  
19       appointed school board.

20               As a long-time Philadelphia  
21       resident and an advocate interested in  
22       sustaining a secure future for our  
23       children, I wholeheartedly recommend that  
24       Council invest in the future of our  
25       children by voting on an elected school



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2       board process. This will serve to  
3       complement our vitally important and  
4       pivotal American city which you govern  
5       and where we all live, that we all love,  
6       and where we all pay our taxes to.

7                   Thank you for your attention  
8       and your consideration.

9                   (Applause.)

10                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
11       you, Ms. Aulston, and thank you for your  
12       leadership a long time, the West  
13       Philadelphia Cultural Alliance and the  
14       Paul Robeson House and all that has to do  
15       with that. Thank you.

16                   MS. AULSTON: Thank you.

17                   COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good  
18       morning. And note for the record as well  
19       your work is invaluable there in West  
20       Philly on so many fronts. So I know for  
21       sure the work around arts and culture,  
22       but to see you here being an advocate  
23       and, to use your word, stakeholder in  
24       what we do around education is vitally  
25       important as well.

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2                   It's additionally important  
3           that we help those who care about this  
4           issue understand that what Council  
5           Chairlady of the Committee has done is  
6           exactly what the resolution says, given  
7           us an opportunity to have the  
8           conversation, the debate to examine the  
9           feasibility. The authorization of such,  
10          as I have come to learn, happens at the  
11          state. So we would have to lift up a  
12          real, real, real big elephant  
13          collectively to persuade, entice, push,  
14          nudge members of the State Legislature,  
15          starting with the Philadelphia  
16          delegation, to agree with us that this is  
17          the right way to go.

18                  So I share that with you,  
19          because it's important for citizens who  
20          care to understand what the process is.  
21          Some things are in our control and some  
22          things are not.

23                  The appointment or the decision  
24          for an elected school board, though we  
25          might desire it and believe it the right

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2           or appropriate way to go, ultimately the  
3           decision rests with the state.

4                   MS. AULSTON: Thank you. And  
5           what we hear as the village, we know that  
6           as long as we keep doing the same thing  
7           the same way, we will continue getting  
8           the same results.

9                   Thank you.

10                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
11          you. One moment, please. Thank you.  
12          Fran, Ms. Aulston, one moment, please.

13                   Councilman O'Neill.

14                   COUNCILMAN O'NEILL: Yes.  
15          Madam Chair, I know this is not a one-day  
16          issue for you, and we all appreciate  
17          that. I was just thinking of this issue  
18          and back when we had a school board and  
19          it was appointed, this discussion went  
20          back and forth and also the discussion of  
21          taxing authority versus not having it.  
22          But I think that one reason, if not the  
23          major reason -- and this is just my faint  
24          memory of some discussions. When  
25          Governor Ridge, who was very strong on

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2           education, and Mayor Street, who also  
3           was, worked out this new governance  
4           model, the School Reform Commission, I  
5           believe -- and this is where I hope the  
6           Chair goes next -- is that both the  
7           Governor and the Mayor felt that this was  
8           a way to put the burden more heavily on  
9           the party that could pay more and has the  
10          constitutional responsibility to pay,  
11          period, which is the State of  
12          Pennsylvania. And I think it started out  
13          that way. It has not ended well to this  
14          point and it -- while Governor Rendell  
15          was Governor -- and it could have been  
16          any Governor -- he was very good to  
17          schools and public education, but we  
18          found out that there's another side to  
19          that. If the state runs a very large  
20          deficit, there's only like three areas  
21          that they can cut to get back to -- the  
22          state can cut to get back to a balanced  
23          budget, and the number one is education,  
24          because it's discretionary. And some of  
25          these other things, like prisons, they

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2           pretty much know what they have to pay.

3           You can't change those numbers. Some of  
4           the other areas like public welfare are  
5           federal dollars being passed through the  
6           state.

7                       But what I hope follows this is  
8           that we really examine why -- Mayor  
9           Street is still around and very actively  
10          teaching at Temple and coming into  
11          Council every so often. While Governor  
12          Ridge may be a little harder to get a  
13          hold of, the people that Mayor Street and  
14          his staff were dealing with, the  
15          Education Secretary at that time and  
16          others, might be able to shed some light  
17          on what they intended versus what has  
18          actually happened.

19                     We're actually in worse shape  
20          now than before it started. Whatever all  
21          the reasons are, it didn't quite work out  
22          the way those two executives thought it  
23          would. And while the obvious answer is  
24          an elected school board, this model had a  
25          lot of promise when it started, but a lot

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2       of it was around funding. And that has  
3       really been the crippling problem up to  
4       now. I mean, there has been very much,  
5       as witnesses have talked about,  
6       grassroots activity in the schools that  
7       we don't usually see. They've been  
8       recommended by the school leadership, the  
9       superintendent, to make people aware of  
10      the three parts to this funding crisis,  
11      and it's greater than I've seen in a  
12      long, long time.

13                 But they also -- the parents,  
14      and as I've talked to parents, this is  
15      just to get back to normal. This is not  
16      to do anything but really keep the  
17      schools functioning, because without --  
18      if these cuts come in, you really don't  
19      have schools. Teachers can't do  
20      counseling. They can't do nursing. They  
21      can't do other things. And then there's  
22      teachers missing as well as under the  
23      cuts.

24                 And so the same level of  
25      proactivity, if you will, after this

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2           July, August we get back, has to be  
3           really pressing the same way but for a  
4           lot more than just sort of the crumbs of  
5           putting the Band-Aids on everything,  
6           because nobody is happy with the way  
7           things are. And that's all we're talking  
8           about, is getting back to the way things  
9           are in May come September. So -- or June  
10          now come September.

11                 So I just wanted to inject that  
12          idea. I mean, there was promise, and it  
13          did not -- we did not give up. The Mayor  
14          did not give up his ability to appoint  
15          the school board without assurances from  
16          the state that this was a win for the  
17          City as well as the state. It just  
18          hasn't worked out that way. And we may  
19          want to go back through some of that.  
20          We're one Governor -- we're two Governors  
21          removed, one in office and one that had  
22          eight years since the Ridge  
23          Administration when Mayor Street did all  
24          this, and it just hasn't worked out.  
25          Maybe we can find out in the current

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2           setup where things went wrong, should  
3           there have been funding built into the  
4           legislation that set up the School Reform  
5           Commission, some funding guarantees, that  
6           kind of thing, because there certainly  
7           should have been.

8                       Thank you.

9                       MS. AULSTON: I would just like  
10          to thank you for understanding the  
11          importance of community grassroots and  
12          how we work and the importance of the  
13          leadership that's here recognizing the  
14          opportunities of us working with  
15          organizations like Leon Williams' group,  
16          of which I am a part of as well. And  
17          Thomas Edison I believe said that vision  
18          without execution is hallucination. So  
19          we have a collective vision. Help us not  
20          to hallucinate.

21                      (Applause.)

22                      COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
23          you very much.

24                      The Chair notes that Bilal  
25          Qayyum, Father's Day Rally Committee, was



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2       here. He had to leave, who supports an  
3       elected school board. And Jim Royal, I'm  
4       going to ask you to wait one moment.  
5       Certainly we want to ask the head of  
6       32BJ, SEIU union, George Ricchezza, to  
7       come forward. Then we'll go back to our  
8       agenda and we'll have Jim Royal. After  
9       Jim Royal, we'll have Panel 5, Lisa  
10      Haver, Laura Dijols. I hope I said her  
11      last name right.

12                   MS. DIJOLS: Dijols.

13                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Say  
14      that again.

15                   MS. DIJOLS: Dijols.

16                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:  
17      Dijols. Oh, Spanish. Okay. Theresa  
18      McCormick and Carol Piazzo. Thank you.

19                   (Witness approached witness  
20      table.)

21                   MR. RICCHEZZA: Good afternoon,  
22      Madam Chair, Councilmembers, taxpayers.  
23      My name is George Ricchezza. I'm the  
24      President, District Leader of Local 32BJ,  
25      District 1201, and I thank you for having

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2           me today.

3                       This is a city of history, as  
4           you know, and I'd like to just give a  
5           little bit of history in regard to the  
6           school board here.

7                       It's time and it's -- yes.

8           It's time to take back our School  
9           District. I go back to the days when the  
10          superintendent of the school board were  
11          Philadelphians, who worked and cared  
12          about our children receiving a proper  
13          education, not an unelected commission,  
14          largely controlled by state republicans  
15          in Harrisburg making decisions for our  
16          children. I go back to a time when the  
17          superintendent came from within the  
18          ranks, dedicated people who were career  
19          educators, and some you may recall,  
20          Dr. Costanza, Dr. Marchese, Dr. Constance  
21          Clayton. I go back to board members such  
22          as Dr. Ruth Hayre, Dr. Farnese, Floyd  
23          Alston, Dr. Poindexter, Rotan Lee, Arthur  
24          Thomas, Herman Mattleman, and I can go on  
25          and on and on. A board who cared about

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2           our children and their education.

3                       Since 2002, we have watched SRC  
4           members come and go, multiple  
5           superintendents, all with their own ideas  
6           and who have left either because of the  
7           budget or failed programs.

8                       Philly is facing a huge crisis  
9           in our public schools with no local  
10          voice. The City has little  
11          accountability or oversight for charter  
12          schools. Parents have no say or  
13          influence over budget decisions and  
14          school closings. Despite massive  
15          protests and parent and community  
16          outrage, 23 schools will be closing this  
17          September, some popular and some  
18          successful.

19                      We live in a democracy, and we  
20          need democratic control for our  
21          children's futures. Parents need a voice  
22          and a system of accountability over the  
23          people that control our children's  
24          futures. The biggest problem is funding.  
25          An elected school board will not make up

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2           for 12 years of failure since the state  
3           takeover and the SRC appointments. It is  
4           still crucial that the state adequately  
5           fund education in the Commonwealth for  
6           all our children. Parents and taxpayers  
7           deserve a real voice. Philadelphians  
8           deserve to elect those making decisions  
9           about our public schools and our  
10          children. It is time to bring back a  
11          school board for the people and for our  
12          children.

13                       Thank you.

14                       (Applause.)

15                       COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
16          you, and we thank you for your  
17          commitment, for always being there and  
18          fighting so well for your membership.

19                       MR. RICCHEZZA: And I thank you  
20          and Council for support. Thank you very  
21          much.

22                       COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
23          you.

24                       Any questions?

25                       (No response.)

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2                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
3 you very much. Thank you.

4                   Jim, Mr. Royal. And next would  
5 those folks come forward and sit inside  
6 the gate. That's Lisa Haver, Ms. Laura  
7 Dijols, Theresa McCormick, and Carol  
8 Piazza. Thank you.

9                   Thank you for your patience,  
10 Mr. Royal.

11                  REVEREND ROYAL: You're so  
12 kind.

13                  MS. HAVER: We go back a long  
14 way.

15                  REVEREND ROYAL: Good  
16 afternoon. My name is Reverend James  
17 Royal. I want to thank Councilwoman  
18 Blackwell for the invitation and  
19 Councilmembers as well and to the public.  
20 I'm President of a group called 7000  
21 Villagers organization. We're here today  
22 to support the idea of an elected school  
23 board. For the last eight years, I and  
24 many others have been working to change  
25 the School District to better educate our

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2           children, the 200,000 children -- I call  
3           them babies -- with a real and wholesome  
4           education.

5                       We are here today to start the  
6           process to give all our young people a  
7           chance for a real education. With an  
8           elected school board, we have a chance to  
9           educate all students at grade level and  
10          also students with special needs and  
11          homeless and Muslims and foster care and  
12          others. We look forward to help  
13          establishing the process within the next  
14          60 days.

15                      There are so many other  
16          problems such as diet, world history,  
17          science, arts, et cetera. We would hope  
18          to get your support for our civil action  
19          at the state level, which is No. 96 MD  
20          2013. This is in the Commonwealth Court.

21                      We don't believe that the  
22          schools are closed. We believe that  
23          recess is going on in the minds of the  
24          administrators and those that run  
25          government. The bottom line is, we

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2           haven't quit. We don't think that the  
3           children ought to be the recipients of  
4           bad management. The bottom line also --  
5           because I keep hearing about the money.  
6           What do they call it, the Facilities  
7           Master Plan. It should have been the  
8           Student Master Plan.

9                       When you plan a seedling in the  
10          ground, you dig a hole and you put  
11          something around it. When you put the  
12          children first, wood shop, electric shop,  
13          metal shop, home economics and go on down  
14          the list, then you start talking about  
15          bringing in, as you were alluding to a  
16          moment or two ago. But one of the  
17          largest, I think, points that are left  
18          out is parental governance. And I don't  
19          just think we ought to have appointed or  
20          elected school board. What I done have  
21          is a roadmap from the people that are  
22          paying the bills, because everybody works  
23          for us. Everybody. If this was a  
24          private corporation, all you guys  
25          wouldn't have a job. And this is not --

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2           and see -- well, Jannie and I know. I am  
3           not talking about you. I'm talking about  
4           the generic you. Because if that was  
5           true, then we would be talking about  
6           profit and loss. Now if you losing, you  
7           out. If we're gaining or even less  
8           sustaining. And going back to sustaining  
9           doesn't mean anything, because our school  
10          is safe, Strawberry Mansion, but the  
11          bottom line was, that documentary that  
12          was on television was a piss in the face.  
13          There's not even a real home and school  
14          there. There wasn't one last year.  
15          There was one the year before that, but  
16          Dr. Williams did a good job, so they  
17          traded him out and put somebody in there  
18          that just going to laugh and grin at you.

19                 I just here to -- I support the  
20          idea, but we are fighting right now to  
21          stop the closure because the school board  
22          and the SRC broke the law of not  
23          recognizing children of special needs.  
24          So that's really why I'm here. See, I'm  
25          here to support the elected school board,



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2           but the door has not closed. They have  
3           not gotten away with murder. Our  
4           children are suffering. Our parents are  
5           suffering and the good teachers, the good  
6           administrators. We have folks that's  
7           ready to come back on board with --  
8           Dr. Madeline Cartwright, she's been  
9           retired for a long time. She's my  
10          children's elementary school teacher.  
11          Great person. Dr. Umar Johnson, he's  
12          right on board, and a whole host of  
13          others. Ain't no time for names. It's  
14          time for action. We ask you to join our  
15          lawsuit. Stop the closing of the schools  
16          and now let's sit down. And one of the  
17          things I haven't heard, how did they get  
18          here? We want an audit for what they've  
19          done point by point --

20                        (Applause.)

21                        REVEREND ROYAL: -- code by  
22           code, federal and state. Did you apply  
23           for the money? Did you use it? Did you  
24           use it correctly or did you not apply for  
25           the money or you applied for the money

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2           and didn't use it and gave it back? Why?

3           Because you did not execute properly,

4           because there was no real parental

5           governance.

6                       I thank you so much.

7                       (Applause.)

8                       COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank

9           you very much, Mr. Royal. Thank you.

10                      MS. HAVER: Good afternoon,

11           Madam Chairwoman Blackwell and members of

12           the Education Committee. If you don't

13           mind, I'd like to really thank Mr. Oh,

14           who is always here and always listening.

15           I really appreciate that.

16                      Thank you for the opportunity

17           to testify on the subject of returning

18           control of our public schools to the

19           people of Philadelphia. There are so --

20                      COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Please

21           identify for the record.

22                      MS. HAVER: Oh, I'm very sorry.

23           My name is Lisa Haver, resident of

24           Philadelphia, retired teacher.

25                      COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank

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2           you.

3                   MS. HAVER: There are so many  
4 reasons for disbanding the School Reform  
5 Commission and reinstituting local  
6 control, which so many others have  
7 already attested to so eloquently. The  
8 most important reason: the Commonwealth  
9 of Pennsylvania under the aegis of the  
10 SRC has betrayed its mission to the  
11 people of the City, in particular its  
12 students.

13                   (Applause.)

14                   MS. HAVER: In fact, they  
15 should all resign right now, and I mean  
16 all of them.

17                   (Applause.)

18                   MS. HAVER: They performed an  
19 immoral unconstitutional act, and they  
20 should resign.

21                   I've been a regular attendee of  
22 the School Reform Commission meetings  
23 over the years, beginning with the very  
24 first one held at 21st Street and the  
25 Parkway chaired by James Nevels. That

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2           day I stood up and asked why control of  
3           Philadelphia schools was being handed  
4           over to a businessman from Radnor.

5           That's one of the many questions I have  
6           asked over the years, which have yet to  
7           be answered. For years I asked why  
8           meetings were held in the middle of the  
9           day when teachers, students, and most  
10          parents could not attend. I questioned  
11          an agenda which had speakers commenting  
12          after votes were cast. I questioned why  
13          this SRC has halved its official meetings  
14          from two per month to one. I now  
15          question how anyone can speak on proposed  
16          resolutions when they are not even  
17          posted, and when they are, they're posted  
18          online about two to three days before the  
19          actual meeting. Now that there's no  
20          longer a planning meeting, only an action  
21          meeting, votes are taken on almost every  
22          resolution with no public discussion.

23                               (Applause.)

24                       MS. HAVER: Because you have to  
25          sign up 24 hours before this meeting,

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2           this would give you a day or two to go  
3           through pages of resolutions. Rarely do  
4           we see, as Mr. Wright attested to, rarely  
5           do we see the SRC listen to a speaker's  
6           comments, then discuss the issue before  
7           taking its vote. Rarely.

8                        (Applause.)

9                        MS. HAVER: From the beginning,  
10          there has only been the illusion of real  
11          opportunity for public participation.  
12          And I say in comment to Councilwoman  
13          Reynolds Brown -- I'm sorry. I include  
14          those community meetings where parents  
15          came out, because what they said was not  
16          listened to. I include those meetings.

17                      Attached to my testimony, which  
18          I have given to Madam Chair, is an  
19          article dated November 24th, 2011 written  
20          by Kristen Graham of the Philadelphia  
21          Inquirer. The meeting referred to in  
22          that article was not announced on the  
23          District's website. It was held the day  
24          before Thanksgiving. There was hardly  
25          anybody there. There were a couple

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2       people here who were there. The actions  
3       of the SRC at this meeting represent one  
4       of the most egregious examples of how the  
5       SRC's arrogance and its dismissal of the  
6       public's right to know has led us down a  
7       very destructive path. At that meeting,  
8       I raised my objection to the SRC's  
9       approving the Great Schools Compact,  
10      formulated by Bill and Melinda Gates, who  
11      know nothing about education, because it  
12      had never been discussed at any SRC  
13      meeting, including that one. I'm quoted  
14      in that story as objecting to the SRC's  
15      making such a momentous decision with no  
16      opportunity for public comment. I was  
17      assured by Chairman Pedro Ramos that this  
18      was only a preliminary vote to explore  
19      the possibility of signing on to the  
20      Compact, which mandated more charter  
21      schools, forced transfers of entire  
22      faculties through implementation of  
23      turnaround schools, and mass school  
24      closings. Almost two years later, the  
25      subject has yet to be placed on any SRC

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2           agenda. And as we now see, this one  
3           vote, effectively hidden from the public,  
4           has had disastrous effects on the public  
5           schools in this city.

6                       (Applause.)

7           MS. HAVER: If we had had an  
8           elected school board over these past  
9           years, we would have been able to form  
10          alliances with other school boards across  
11          the state who have common interests and  
12          are dealing with similar problems. It  
13          might have led to a statewide  
14          mobilization, demanding the Governor  
15          adequately fund public education. As it  
16          is, we are subject to the actions and  
17          decisions of the SRC, such as the  
18          unconstitutional and tragic one taken  
19          last Thursday, an SRC who rather than  
20          advocate for the children of Philadelphia  
21          are de facto advancing the Governor's  
22          position.

23                       (Applause.)

24          MS. HAVER: When I hear about  
25          the subject of corruption, I don't know

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2           what's more corrupt than what is going on  
3           now, which is we have private entities  
4           such as the Gates Foundation, the  
5           Philadelphia School Partnership, the  
6           Boston Consulting Group, the Penn  
7           Foundation who have more influence right  
8           now, overwhelmingly more influence over  
9           what that SRC does than anybody here,  
10          parent, student or teacher. That's what  
11          I call --

12                                (Applause.)

13                       MS. HAVER: That is what I call  
14          corruption. That is corruption.

15                       I am here as a parent whose  
16          children graduated from public high  
17          schools, as a retired teacher, as a  
18          lifelong resident of this city to ask  
19          this Committee to do whatever you can to  
20          get our public schools out from under the  
21          purposefully destructive control of the  
22          state. But we have to be clear. We will  
23          not take back a broke and broken system.  
24          The state must take responsibility for  
25          repairing the School District, which it



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2                   has tried to destroy over these past 12  
3                   years.

4                   Thank you.

5                   (Applause.)

6                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
7                   you very much, Ms. Haver. Thank you.

8                   Any questions?

9                   (No response.)

10                  COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
11                  you very much.

12                  MS. HAVER: Thank you.

13                  COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:  
14                  Ms. Dijols.

15                  MS. HAVER: Thank you for your  
16                  support.

17                  COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
18                  you. Certainly.

19                  MS. DIJOLS: Good morning.

20                  Good morning, Councilwoman Jannie L.

21                  Blackwell, members of City Council, and  
22                  all who are in attendance today.

23                  My name is Laura C. Dijols and  
24                  I am a longtime resident of Philadelphia,  
25                  concerned senior citizen, and member of

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2           the Marketplace of Ideas, the  
3           Pennsylvania State Chapter National  
4           Action Network, and a part of PCAPS,  
5           Philadelphia Coalition Advocating for  
6           Public Schools.

7                       As the Chairperson of City  
8           Council's Education Committee,  
9           Councilwoman Blackwell, I thank you for  
10          not only convening this hearing to pursue  
11          the feasibility of having an elected  
12          public school board in the City of  
13          Philadelphia but also having the  
14          political courage to do the same.

15                       (Applause.)

16                       MS. DIJOLS: My focus is on six  
17          specific reasons which I believe support  
18          the request to remove the current  
19          appointed School Reform Commission, SRC,  
20          and replace it with an elected school  
21          board in Philadelphia, followed by my  
22          recommendations to make this action a  
23          successful one.

24                       Number one, Philadelphia is the  
25          largest school district in Pennsylvania,

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2       whose population, according to the 2010  
3       federal census, exceeds one and a half  
4       million residents. Our School District  
5       is reportedly the only one out of 501  
6       Pennsylvania school districts without an  
7       elected school board. Why is this this  
8       way? Does that make sense?

9                   It is ludicrous that the most  
10       populus city in Pennsylvania does not  
11       have governance of its own public school  
12       board. Please note that one of the main  
13       reasons other regions in close proximity  
14       to Philadelphia have increased their  
15       populations, businesses, and their  
16       revenues is a result of our great  
17       metropolis. There is something wrong  
18       with this picture. In fact, I have heard  
19       of people luring our residents to move  
20       from Philadelphia to neighboring  
21       counties. However, some of these same  
22       people love to say they're from the  
23       renowned Philadelphia cultural area.

24                   Two, it is non-democratic to  
25       impose the current five-member SRC which

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2           renders us helpless to govern our own  
3           School District. The Commission is  
4           comprised of three appointees by the  
5           Governor and two from the Mayor. Their  
6           allegiance is to their appionters and not  
7           to the constituents and taxpayers of  
8           Philadelphia.

9                       Three, our city is known as the  
10          birthplace of the nation's government,  
11          yet we, the citizens of Philadelphia, do  
12          not have the freedom to elect the persons  
13          who should be accountable to us for the  
14          educational decisions as well as the  
15          financial choices affecting our  
16          children's lives and also the future of  
17          our city.

18                      Four, having an elected public  
19          school board in Philadelphia would be a  
20          bold, new, and equitable approach to  
21          correcting a system which discriminates  
22          in the purchases of goods and services  
23          for the District's annual \$2.5 to \$3.5  
24          billion, with a B, dollar budget. A case  
25          in point is in 2010, the late Dr. Arlene

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2           C. Ackerman, former Superintendent of the  
3           School District of Philadelphia, she  
4           awarded a million dollar contract to a  
5           minority firm which resulted in her being  
6           vilified through a seemingly never-ending  
7           media-driven attack. Dr. Ackerman dared  
8           to act upon her belief in inclusion and  
9           equity in contracts. The December 8,  
10          2010 SRC meeting had an overflowing crowd  
11          supporting the late Superintendent, with  
12          testimonies citing the following:  
13          Specifically, that the School District of  
14          Philadelphia's contracts were to 10  
15          percent white women, 10 percent to be  
16          shared among blacks, Asians, Hispanics,  
17          et cetera, and the remainder,  
18          approximately 80 percent, to white men.

19                 Please remember that the  
20          student body in Philadelphia's schools is  
21          80 percent minorities. In spite of this  
22          fact, those minority students do not see  
23          people who look like them making money as  
24          contractors/entrepreneurs working on  
25          Philadelphia's school jobs. What lesson

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2           or lessons is this teaching our children?

3                   Furthermore, an elected school  
4           board would have the power to assess  
5           taxes to operate its budget. This  
6           revenue from Philadelphia's resources  
7           would be in addition to the state's  
8           allocated funds for public education.  
9           However, ultimately it is the  
10          Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's  
11          responsibility to fund the education of  
12          our children.

13                   Five, an elected school board  
14          would be accountable to the Philadelphia  
15          parents, voters, and City to teach the  
16          truth about the contributions of African  
17          people to our city, state, country, and  
18          the world, especially since 55 percent of  
19          the City's population is people of color.

20                   I think I miscounted my number,  
21          but let me continue.

22                   In closing, I recommend the  
23          following: Number one, the newly elected  
24          school board of Philadelphia will have  
25          ten members. That is one member from

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2           each councilmanic district. Whenever  
3           there is a tie vote, the superintendent  
4           or the School District of Philadelphia's  
5           legal counsel would cast the deciding  
6           vote.

7                       Two, the composition suggested  
8           of the elected school board would be an  
9           educator, a parent, an attorney, a banker  
10          or CPA, a student, an entrepreneur, an  
11          activist, a grandparent, a member of the  
12          arts community, and an athlete.

13                      Three, we are aware that most  
14          or all of the current and probably the  
15          previous board members are financially  
16          secure. However, we would offer a token  
17          of our appreciation for their services in  
18          the form of a stipend or business expense  
19          account of \$75,000 per year.

20                      Four, the elected school board  
21          would have term limits of six years, with  
22          similar revolving terms as found in the  
23          U.S. House of Representatives. This will  
24          ensure stability to the elected school  
25          board of Philadelphia.

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2                   Now is the time for our current  
3 Governor and legislators to cease and  
4 desist discriminating against the  
5 Philadelphia School District in this  
6 manner. Today I say to Governor Tom  
7 Corbett and the Pennsylvania General  
8 Assembly change this inequitable policy  
9 immediately.

10                  Today's hearing is the first  
11 step. In words I've heard spoken by  
12 Brother Ari Merretazon, let the healing  
13 begin.

14                  Thank you very much.

15                  (Applause.)

16                  COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
17 you very much.

18                  Any questions?

19                  (No response.)

20                  COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
21 you very much.

22                  Mr. Joseph Dennis, Ms. Betty  
23 Alderman, Ms. Toni Brazington, Mr. Andrew  
24 Brazington, you're up.

25                  (Witnesses approached witness



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2           table.)

3                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
4           you very much and thank you for your  
5           patience. Thank you very much. Thank  
6           you for your patience. We know it's a  
7           long day, and we appreciate your  
8           commitment.

9                   MS. BRAZINGTON: Good  
10          afternoon, everyone. My name is Mabel  
11          Coffey Brazington. Thank you,  
12          Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell, for  
13          setting this hearing in motion. Thank  
14          you to the people from Harrisburg who  
15          have come to Philadelphia to hear why we  
16          want and deserve an elected school board.

17                   Philadelphia has many problems.  
18          The latest coming to light is the school  
19          problem and undereducated children and  
20          many now labeled as problem children  
21          through no fault of their own.

22                   (Applause.)

23                   MS. BRAZINGTON: I am 100  
24          percent in favor of an elected school  
25          board. Why? Because the appointed board

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2           has not worked in the interest nor  
3           protected the inner City children's  
4           education. Don't --

5                       (Applause.)

6                       MS. BRAZINGTON: Don't tell me  
7           an elected school board might fail. Let  
8           me tell you what we know is the  
9           important -- let me tell you, what we  
10          know is the appointed school board has  
11          failed.

12                      (Applause.)

13                      MS. BRAZINGTON: Let's compare  
14          might fail against has failed. Pointers  
15          on why appointed has failed: When a  
16          person is appointed, they are owned by  
17          the politician --

18                      (Applause.)

19                      MS. BRAZINGTON: -- who has  
20          appointed them. Millions of dollars in  
21          contracts are given to friends, not to  
22          benefit the school children but to  
23          benefit power and greed.

24                      (Applause.)

25                      MS. BRAZINGTON: The club of

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2           the good ol' boys in power.

3                     If in the whole State of  
4           Pennsylvania the elected school board is  
5           in operation, then why not Philadelphia?  
6           In my 91 years of living, I was --

7                     (Applause.)

8                     MS. BRAZINGTON: -- I was aware  
9           the people of color in Philadelphia lived  
10          on a plantation. Our good education was  
11          deliberately denied by past unions and  
12          religious groups.

13                    Solution: An elected school  
14          board for the School District of  
15          Philadelphia.

16                    Thank you.

17                    (Applause.)

18                    COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
19          you for your strong statement. Thank  
20          you, Ms. Brazington.

21                    Who is next? Ms. Alderman?

22                    MS. ALDERMAN: Good morning.  
23          Well, now it's good afternoon to  
24          everyone, and thank you, Councilwoman  
25          Jannie Blackwell, for this forum that is

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2           so much needed.

3                       We, the parents of  
4           Philadelphia, the mothers, the fathers,  
5           and relatives of all denomination, are  
6           ready to challenge and remove the current  
7           selected school board and replace it with  
8           an elected school board, because the  
9           selected school board is leading us back  
10          to a position where our present  
11          generation and the future generation of  
12          our children will return to the system of  
13          imprisonment and free labor of our  
14          children.

15                       (Applause.)

16                      MS. ALDERMAN: In other words,  
17          our children will not receive a  
18          traditional public school education. And  
19          this is done intentionally, so that they  
20          will be placed in a corporation -- so  
21          that they will be placed in the  
22          corporation's prison system of free  
23          labor.

24                       Documents, statistics confirm  
25          that 85 percent of our people that are in

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2           state custody have dropped out of school  
3           and out of high schools at an early age  
4           in the State of Pennsylvania, and they  
5           are now a part of the capitalistic  
6           corporate free labor prison system that  
7           continues to grow. This is the reason  
8           for the intensification of prisons and  
9           the de-escalation of schools and  
10          education of our children in  
11          Philadelphia.

12                 We, the parents, the advocates,  
13          the students, the young people, will not  
14          allow this to happen. We will not allow  
15          any part of any current system to take us  
16          back to the convict labor system of 1886.

17                         (Applause.)

18                 MS. ALDERMAN: We insist that  
19          an elected school board take place in  
20          Philadelphia without hesitation.

21                 I implore every one of us to  
22          take a look at a documentary called  
23          "Slavery by Another Name" by Douglas  
24          Blackmon. Channel 12 PBS has access to  
25          the film.

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2                   Today, we have stacks and  
3                   stacks of petitions of citizens of  
4                   Philadelphia that are requesting that  
5                   there be an elected school board in  
6                   Philadelphia. We ask that all of you  
7                   join us in that effort.

8                   Thank you and have a blessed  
9                   day.

10                  (Applause.)

11                  COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
12                  you very much. Thank you, Ms. Alderman.

13                  Any questions?

14                  (No response.)

15                  COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
16                  you very much.

17                  Mr. Brazington.

18                  MR. BRAZINGTON: Good  
19                  afternoon, Committee Chair Blackwell and  
20                  Councilman Oh. My name is Andrew Paul  
21                  Brazington. Thank you for allowing me to  
22                  share my thoughts, observations, and  
23                  reflections concerning the largest school  
24                  district in the Commonwealth of  
25                  Pennsylvania, and thank you to all

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2           inspired citizens and elected officials  
3           who have responded to this call, this  
4           public hearing, to examine the  
5           feasibility of choosing a local elected  
6           school board and examine the process  
7           required to do so in the City of the  
8           first class, Philadelphia.

9                       This 12-year-old SRC experiment  
10          is over.

11                      (Applause.)

12                      MR. BRAZINGTON: Six to eight  
13          months ago, the District community  
14          meetings drew more than 4,000 involved  
15          and committed residents, parents,  
16          students, and families. Clearly, the  
17          stakeholders, the taxpayers, are informed  
18          and involved and their commitment level  
19          rises for greater success.

20                      At this very moment with five  
21          appointees, as Dr. Hite said on the 12th  
22          of February, the District is only as  
23          strong as the weakest link. Established  
24          in December 2001 -- that's 12 years  
25          ago -- the School District of

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2           Philadelphia has been governed by the  
3           School Reform, SRC, and the results and  
4           their accomplishments: 60,000 students  
5           have left the District, 24 neighborhood  
6           schools closing within African American  
7           neighborhoods that traditionally have  
8           been neglected and have been in decline  
9           since the SRC was established, facing  
10          \$1.35 billion deficit over five years.  
11          District facilities need \$4 billion in  
12          renovation and repair. District-wide  
13          less than half of the District students  
14          can read or do math at grade level.

15                       This is all from Dr. Hite's  
16          testimony.

17                       So don't tell us an elected  
18          school board might fail. The SRC is  
19          failing our future right now.

20                       (Applause.)

21                       MR. BRAZINGTON: From day one,  
22          the clock is ticking. We don't have much  
23          time, and just enough time for an elected  
24          school board to steer our future on a  
25          pathway back to common sense and success.



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2                   Thank you very much.

3                   (Applause.)

4                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
5                   you.

6                   Any questions?

7                   (No response.)

8                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
9                   you very much, Mr. Brazington.

10                  I assume Mr. Dennis is not  
11                  here. This is Mr. Cyé Sheppard. Next,  
12                  Carol Piazza. Is Ms. Marlene Jackson or  
13                  Ms. Sheila Benjamin here?

14                  MR. SHEPPARD: I'll be reading  
15                  Ms. Marlene Jackson's.

16                  COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Pardon  
17                  me?

18                  MR. SHEPPARD: I'll be reading  
19                  Ms. Marlene Jackson's presentation. I  
20                  have copies for all of you.

21                  COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
22                  you. You can hand the Sergeant-of-Arms  
23                  your copies. Thank you.

24                  Ms. Benjamin, yes, you can come  
25                  up and you'll talk after Ms. Piazza.

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2                   (Witnesses approached witness  
3                   table.)

4                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
5                   you. Feel free to identify yourself for  
6                   the record and begin your testimony.

7                   MR. SHEPPARD: Good afternoon.

8                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good  
9                   afternoon.

10                  MR. SHEPPARD: My name is  
11                  Brother Cyé Harold Sheppard. I'm a proud  
12                  member of the Marketplace of Ideas. I'm  
13                  also a proud member of the Universal  
14                  Negro Improvement Association and African  
15                  Communities League. Good afternoon again  
16                  and thank you City Council. Thank you,  
17                  Chair of the Education Committee, the  
18                  Honorable Jannie Blackwell, and thank you  
19                  for being a Southwest Philadelphian, my  
20                  Councilwoman.

21                  I'm going to read Ms. Marlene  
22                  Jackson, who is a member of the  
23                  Marketplace of Ideas.

24                  Dear Mayor Nutter, members of  
25                  Philadelphia City Council, fellow

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2           citizens and guests, especially to our  
3           Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell who  
4           advocated for a feasibility study for an  
5           elected school board. I want to thank  
6           Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell for  
7           bringing this matter to the forefront.  
8           The citizens of Philadelphia have seen  
9           the institutions they've relied on to  
10          educate their children become way  
11          stations of mismanagement allowing the  
12          State of Pennsylvania to replace a  
13          nine-member school board with a  
14          five-member School Reform Commission, or  
15          SRC. These members are not accountable  
16          to the citizens of Philadelphia for the  
17          decisions they make.

18                 Likewise, the stockholders have  
19          not seen any improvement for their tax  
20          dollars. It is now time to become fully  
21          vested in the process of deciding for  
22          ourselves as citizens what happens to our  
23          school tax dollars. We are now gathering  
24          support from some members in City Council  
25          and some State of Pennsylvania

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2       representatives who introduced Senate  
3       Bill SB 1210 in October 2011. State  
4       Senators Stack, Tartaglione, Washington,  
5       Farnese, Vulakovich, and Vance have  
6       reintroduced this bill as Senate Bill SB  
7       913 on May 3rd, 2013.

8                       We now demand to choose a  
9       qualified elected school board for  
10      ourselves, because -- and this is in  
11      quotes -- "a city of the first class  
12      deserves a first-class education," end of  
13      quote --

14                      (Applause.)

15                      MR. SHEPPARD: -- for their  
16      children. We are becoming more aware and  
17      will not just stand by while schools and  
18      programs are closed and dismantled  
19      without full accountability at the,  
20      quote, "beginning," end of quote, of the  
21      process rather than just be notified of  
22      actions done by backdoor deals. Out of  
23      501 school systems in Pennsylvania,  
24      Philadelphia is the only one without the  
25      process of electing our own school board

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2           members.

3                       We are the citizens of  
4           Philadelphia and we will have an elected  
5           school board of our choosing. We are now  
6           up for the task of self-determination in  
7           the City of Philadelphia.

8                       A qualified elected school  
9           board for Philadelphia: Number one, is  
10          historic and has never been done; number  
11          two, will start a dialogue that needs a  
12          resolution; number three, will allow the  
13          citizens to stay engaged with their civic  
14          duties; number four, will empower parents  
15          and children to want better; number five  
16          and lastly, will be just the start of  
17          what we want and expect from living and  
18          working in Philadelphia.

19                      If you live in and/or pay taxes  
20          to Philadelphia, sign the petition in  
21          support of an elected school board. For  
22          more information and background to  
23          prepare yourself, go to  
24          [www.electedschoolboardforphilly.com](http://www.electedschoolboardforphilly.com).

25                      And I might add that

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2           Ms. Marlene Jackson is the creator of  
3           that website for the Marketplace of Ideas  
4           and for the citizens of Philadelphia.

5                       We are one -- we, one, will  
6           find an online petition and paper  
7           petition. This site has documents,  
8           videos, and websites that will help us to  
9           build coalitions throughout the City and  
10          Commonwealth.

11                      We look forward to the other  
12          side of a victorious historic action that  
13          will inspire more positive outcomes.

14                      Sincerely, Marketplace of  
15          Ideas, Think Tank Member, Marlene  
16          Jackson, 5528 Windsor Avenue, 19143 of  
17          the 3rd District.

18                      (Applause.)

19                      COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
20          you very much. Thank you. Any  
21          questions?

22                      (No response.)

23                      COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
24          you. Thank you.

25                      MR. SHEPPARD: Now for Brother

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2           Cye.

3                   Thank you all again.   Also  
4           thank you, Councilman Oh.

5                   I'm a product of the  
6           Philadelphia school system all my life.  
7           Elementary school at Belmont in West  
8           Philadelphia.   Who sat right next to me  
9           was Jerry Jordan, President of the PFT.  
10          So a couple weeks ago during the rally  
11          outside, he said, Hey, Harold -- now, the  
12          last time we saw each other was one time  
13          in the last 25 years was at the rally  
14          where I met Reverend Jones and saw Jerry  
15          and he say, "Harold," and at Arlene  
16          Ackerman's going-away service, and we  
17          winked at each other and nodded.

18                   I have three -- four children,  
19          three from my marriage.   All of them went  
20          to public school.   And then one in the  
21          8th grade left Conwell and went to  
22          Chestnut Hill Academy.   They can help you  
23          get in, but you got to work hard to keep  
24          them in financially.

25                   My dad came up from Florida,

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2           the black flight. Then 11th grade when  
3           he left, got to Philly, they wanted him  
4           back in the 8th grade, even though their  
5           education was better. So moving right  
6           along, I had a fine education and so did  
7           my children because of their engaged  
8           parents, me and my former wife.

9                        So listening to Superintendent  
10          Dr. Hite this morning and the number of  
11          things he was talking about is, one  
12          police officer for each school, one nurse  
13          for over 20,000 students. That means  
14          maybe five or six schools. No lunchroom  
15          aides, no teachers aides. Can you  
16          imagine -- I just moved from  
17          Germantown -- closing Germantown High  
18          School, moving to Martin Luther King,  
19          which is already crowded. I don't want  
20          to live with 33 students in a class when  
21          I know in Africa it's 200 students to one  
22          teacher that are thirsty for learning  
23          because they want to go to school because  
24          it's an enjoyable, viable learning  
25          experience. And our children don't want



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2           to go to school, as Andrew said. Fifty  
3           percent drop off before the 8th grade,  
4           and the ones that happen to navigate  
5           through have to wait in line to sign a  
6           McDonald's application, and some go to  
7           school. Can you imagine the student  
8           trying to navigate themself or herself  
9           through the school system coming from a  
10          shelter? Can you imagine? Can you  
11          imagine the setup of the overcrowded  
12          Martin Luther King, the overcrowdedness  
13          on the bus, everybody packing into the  
14          poppy stores afterwards, everybody  
15          fighting to go the bathroom because now  
16          it's double the students, double at the  
17          water fountain? It's a setup for  
18          violence. As the sister just  
19          testified --

20                        (Applause.)

21                   MR. SHEPPARD: -- it's a  
22          pipeline from schools to the prisons.

23                   The neighborhood that you left  
24          at Germantown, that daycare across the  
25          street where those teachers and staff and

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2       aides and custodial workers drop their  
3       children off, it's going to affect it.  
4       It might close. The Newman Restaurant  
5       right across the street that serve  
6       breakfast and lunch that opened, moved  
7       down from Walnut Lane to be specifically  
8       across from Germantown High School, his  
9       business is suffering.

10                So to wrap it up, you see  
11       what's going on. Now, also the budget  
12       was \$2.3 billion allocated. Now our  
13       school board has to -- had suffered a \$1  
14       billion cut. So 6 percent from the  
15       state, 39 percent from the City, 38  
16       percent from the federal government.

17                You know what Superintendent  
18       Hite said this morning as I'm listening  
19       to the radio? This is a revenue problem.  
20       He didn't say that it was an education  
21       problem. He didn't say it was a poor  
22       people's problem. He didn't say it was a  
23       black and Latino and financially  
24       challenged white people problem. He  
25       didn't say it was the children and

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2           parents of those white folks who didn't  
3           do white flight and stood in the  
4           neighborhood and engaged with their new  
5           neighbors and stayed in those schools.  
6           He recommended a 10 percent salary cut, a  
7           one-year freeze on hiring and salaries.  
8           And now they're charged with the  
9           ridiculous task of trying to find money,  
10          and they don't even know the ending  
11          figures of the State and the City because  
12          the fiscal year doesn't end until June  
13          30th and they were forced Friday to  
14          deliver some drastic cuts based on some  
15          arbitrary numbers, because the budget  
16          from the State and the City, they don't  
17          have those figures to work with. So with  
18          the state cuts, we have to woman up, man  
19          up.

20                        I believe that an elected  
21          school board can't match monies from the  
22          democrat and republican parties when you  
23          know that they're going to put forth  
24          their own candidates. But in '66 we  
25          marched on the School Board of Education.

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2           John Skief, one of the first producers of  
3           a charter school in Philadelphia and my  
4           fraternity brother from Omega Psi Phi,  
5           along with Gary Bundy, another fraternity  
6           brother, along with the tutelage of the  
7           Honorable late David P. Richardson and  
8           with a lot of students being attacked by  
9           dogs and water hoses. We were successful  
10          in introducing the feasibility of black  
11          studies in the public school system.  
12          Those children and courageous teenagers  
13          (unintelligible) to override the  
14          apartheid system, the groundswell of Alex  
15          Frank without money that made the  
16          statement to the world without the money.

17                 So, no, we can't match them  
18          dollar for dollar, but with information,  
19          an informed electorate, and with  
20          galvanizing our community by going to  
21          Enon and getting Reverend Waller and his  
22          influence in his church to influence  
23          other black clergy to get out their  
24          parishioners, to look at these websites,  
25          and to be informed and to put that on the

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2       ballot question for something that's  
3       never been done before and that's  
4       happening not just here, all over the  
5       United States, and also finding out in  
6       Mexico on other challenged nations, this  
7       thing is just horrible.

8           So I conclude with, we are  
9       galvanizing. We have the petitions. We  
10      have the reason. So we can accomplish  
11      this. And in the words of the Honorable  
12      late Marcus Mosiah Garvey, up your mighty  
13      race. You can accomplish what you will.  
14      And our slogan is, get back up, you  
15      mighty people, and finish what you  
16      started.

17                   Thank you.

18                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
19      you.

20                   (Applause.)

21                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
22      you very much. Thank you.

23                   Ms. Benjamin.

24                   MS. BENJAMIN: Hi. Good  
25      afternoon.

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2                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good  
3                   afternoon.

4                   MS. BENJAMIN: I'm Sheila  
5                   Benjamin, a resident of Cathedral Park  
6                   located in West Philadelphia.

7                   I can vote for all public  
8                   offices, Mayor, Governor, State  
9                   Representative, State Senator, City  
10                  Council, various offices on the federal  
11                  level. I can even vote for Judge of  
12                  Elections, but I cannot vote for the  
13                  people who are in charge of the School  
14                  District here in Philadelphia.

15                 Parents, voters, and taxpayers  
16                 should have a say in how the School  
17                 District of Philadelphia educates its  
18                 children. If we had an elected school  
19                 board, the people sitting on the board  
20                 would be accountable to the citizens of  
21                 Philadelphia, and if they did not perform  
22                 their duties, they would be out of a job.

23                 The SRC took over the School  
24                 District in 2001, and we have gone from  
25                 bad to worse. And the latest insult from

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2           the SRC is a doom's day budget. I say  
3           that the SRC must go.

4                     Thank you very much.

5                     (Applause.)

6                     COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
7           you.

8                     Ms. Carol Piazzo.

9                     MS. PIAZZO: Good afternoon,  
10          Councilwoman Blackwell and Councilman Oh.  
11          I'm not going to take up too much of your  
12          time. I know you are all behind. I  
13          didn't have time to write a speech or  
14          anything because I just found out about  
15          this meeting yesterday.

16                    I'm here because I think  
17          everyone that spoke before me said  
18          basically what I was going to say, so I  
19          won't waste anyone's time and go over  
20          that again. I think you all got the  
21          message.

22                    It is time for the SRC to go,  
23          and it is time for the people of  
24          Philadelphia to take back what is needed  
25          for our children in public school. I'm

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2       here on behalf -- I'm a longtime resident  
3       of Philadelphia. I was born and raised  
4       here in Southwest Philadelphia, and I'm  
5       here also as a mother and a grandmother  
6       of an autistic grandson. I'll give you  
7       an instance of why it is so important to  
8       take back our schools.

9           Last May I was at work when my  
10      daughter had called me. My grandson goes  
11      to a public school, he's autistic, in  
12      Philadelphia, in South Philadelphia, and  
13      an incident happened to where he was  
14      overdosed. He is autistic and he takes  
15      certain medicine. At that time, as it is  
16      now, there is -- I believe there's a  
17      nurse in the schools one day a week. The  
18      Mayor had taken the nurses out because of  
19      the school budget as well as he's cutting  
20      back teachers and so forth.

21           The principal of the school had  
22      to give my grandson medicine, because no  
23      one else was there to give it to him. It  
24      is medicine that is needed because he's  
25      autistic.



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2                   He gave him somebody else's  
3                   medicine. My grandson was rushed to the  
4                   hospital and he was in a partial coma.  
5                   He's all right now, thank God.

6                   Several days following that  
7                   it -- it happened May the 4th. My  
8                   grandson was out of school for the rest  
9                   of the year. My daughter and myself had  
10                  desperately tried to call the school  
11                  board, the Mayor's Office, to know  
12                  availability until Channel 29 had to do a  
13                  follow-up story on what happened with my  
14                  grandson.

15                 The Mayor had no answer for the  
16                 news media. The School Board of  
17                 Education never called us back to try to  
18                 get my grandson into another school. The  
19                 only thing they told us was, There's no  
20                 place else to put him. You'll have to  
21                 send him back to the school where he was  
22                 overdosed at.

23                 We were very scared to do that.  
24                 For the rest of the school year, he was  
25                 out of school.

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2                   This year he had to go back to  
3                   the same school because they said there's  
4                   nowhere else to send him. To this day, I  
5                   am still worried about what's going to  
6                   happen with him, if they're going to do  
7                   that again to him or they're going to  
8                   give him the wrong medicine or so forth,  
9                   all because the Mayor cut out the nurses  
10                  out of the school.

11                  So I'm pleading with  
12                  Councilwoman Blackwell, Councilman Oh,  
13                  and all City Council members to please  
14                  try to solve this problem. Get the SRC  
15                  out. They're not helping us. We need to  
16                  take control of our schools. We need to  
17                  have a say of what goes on in our  
18                  schools.

19                  As a personal experience as to  
20                  what happened with me and my family, I'm  
21                  pleading for everyone in Philadelphia, I  
22                  think. We're worried about the safety of  
23                  our children in our schools.

24                  So that's basically all I have  
25                  to say, and I just wanted to thank you,

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2                   Councilwoman Blackwell, Councilman Oh.

3                   (Applause.)

4                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
5                   you. Let me note that we're willing to  
6                   follow up on your case for you. Leave  
7                   your number in my office, if you would.  
8                   It's right at the end of the hallway, and  
9                   we'll follow up.

10                  MS. PIAZZO: Yes. And just one  
11                  more thing I'd like to say. Where is the  
12                  Mayor? Why is he not here listening to  
13                  our cries?

14                  COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Well,  
15                  they have -- they can hear, and he has  
16                  people here, and they are able to hear in  
17                  their offices as well.

18                  Councilman Oh.

19                  COUNCILMAN OH: In all  
20                  fairness, this is a Council hearing, so  
21                  the Mayor would not normally be here. So  
22                  he has his own meetings and structures.  
23                  I'm not going to speak for the Mayor.  
24                  Councilwoman Blackwell has convened this  
25                  meeting. I'm happy as a member of this

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2                   Committee to be here to hear you, and I  
3                   think you certainly have had much to say.

4                   Thank you very much.

5                   MS. PIAZZO: Thank you so much.

6                   (Applause.)

7                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
8                   you very much. Thank you. And we're  
9                   sorry for what you've been through, but  
10                  we'll follow up with you, Ms. Piazza.

11                  Thank you.

12                  MS. PIAZZO: Thank you again  
13                  for listening to me, but, again, the  
14                  importance of the education is of our  
15                  children. They're our future. You can't  
16                  ignore the future.

17                  COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: No,  
18                  you can't. You can't.

19                  Melvin Prince Johnakin;  
20                  Madeline Shikomba, Philadelphia Neighbors  
21                  for Tax Action; Vernard Johnson; and  
22                  Denise Martin.

23                  MR. SHEPPARD: Councilwoman, I  
24                  represent Ms. Jackson.

25                  COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank

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2           you.

3                       MR. JOHNAKIN:   Melvin Prince  
4           Johnakin, J-O-H-N-A-K-I-N.   Let me just  
5           say thanks again, Chair and Councilman  
6           Oh, Chair Councilwoman Blackwell, thank  
7           you.

8                       There is a great need for us to  
9           support an elected board, a number of  
10          reasons.   I remember a friend of mine.   I  
11          had a great opportunity to be mentored by  
12          Brother Khalid Muhammad, and he would  
13          always say, If you would give someone the  
14          key to your house, then you give them  
15          entrance to your house when you're there  
16          and when you're not there.   And somehow  
17          we've given our kids as the key to our  
18          future to the SRC, and obviously they  
19          haven't done a good job.

20                      And so we -- my own dad would  
21          say, When you integrate, sometimes the  
22          power would be renovate.   And I come from  
23          this kind of wisdom.   And I'm not  
24          advocating -- I'm asking to get rid of  
25          the SRC, but Sam Cooke would sing a song

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2           and he would say when he died, but he  
3           don't know what's up there beyond the  
4           skies. I am not saying that an elected  
5           school board situation would be better  
6           than what we have now, but I'm saying  
7           what we have now is traumatizing and it's  
8           far worse than we've seen before. And so  
9           there's just three points. I'm going to  
10          pass it to my Brother Ron.

11                        There's three points that I  
12          would like to see, rather there's an SRC  
13          or rather there's an elected board. See,  
14          I grew up in an area called Nicetown, and  
15          in Nicetown when you got rid of  
16          Tastykake, when Budd left, Pep Boys is  
17          still here, we were still able to get a  
18          job that elementary school like Steel  
19          School or Gillespie or Gratz. So when  
20          you talk about schools being the  
21          all-inclusive part of a community, I  
22          wrestled at Simon Gratz, although I went  
23          to Germantown. I swam and was captain of  
24          the diving team at Germantown. You  
25          rarely hear that now in the youth. I

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2       played basketball in the evening time at  
3       elementary schools such as Edward T.  
4       Steel School. So these things were open  
5       and they were involved. I went to the  
6       Boys and Girls Club right next to the  
7       elementary school.

8                       So a working family like  
9       myself -- my dad was working as a  
10      longshoreman, and Councilwoman Blackwell  
11      husband was a foreman at the time. So I  
12      come from a working family, mom and pop.  
13      My mom was a housewife. So she would  
14      take me to the Boys and Girls Club in the  
15      morning. I would get breakfast. They  
16      would walk me over to the school. I  
17      would go to school. Lunchtime I would  
18      come back.

19                    So this whole relationship is  
20      important, you see. And so I think as we  
21      talked about closing and who is going to  
22      bear the responsibility, we hadn't really  
23      talked about and touched on the  
24      relationship of what it has as a  
25      community.

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2                   And one of the issues that I've  
3                   heard all day sitting here was that the  
4                   taxes and how do we pay for the school  
5                   and where do we get the money from.  
6                   Well, to me as a business owner, it's  
7                   quite simple. In those communities where  
8                   those schools are, you have high  
9                   unemployment rate of those residents in  
10                  that community. Start employing those  
11                  residents in that community the same way  
12                  the residents and homeowners work in the  
13                  suburbs. And then those residents that  
14                  you employ at the prevailing wage, since  
15                  they now making money, since African  
16                  Americans in these communities are like  
17                  66 percent unemployed, then you can say,  
18                  Would you put \$2 toward your school,  
19                  toward your kid's school education.

20                  So I'm not asking you to pass  
21                  the hat around. I'm not asking you to  
22                  think for me. I'm not asking you to work  
23                  something out for me. I'm asking you  
24                  that we give these African Americans  
25                  opportunities in those communities so



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2           when you ask or them \$2.50 towards their  
3           school education or preserving the school  
4           in their community, they can go in their  
5           own pocket and get it out and give it to  
6           you.

7                         Right now --

8                         (Applause.)

9                         MR. JOHNAKIN: Right now you  
10          taking it from them, and ethically you're  
11          not dealing with them on that level.  
12          It's like you're talking at them and not  
13          to them. Ethically everybody who looks  
14          not like the ethnicity inside of that  
15          community is the ones holding the  
16          meetings, talking at them, telling them  
17          exactly what they got to do, isolating  
18          them from the opportunities, when you  
19          don't have that in the Far Northeast, you  
20          don't have that in Abington, you don't  
21          have that Cheltenham, Chalfont. You  
22          know, you could keep on going down the  
23          list. So it shouldn't happen here. And  
24          I think what you have, you have folks  
25          come to this mic is a plate. They're

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2           agreeing with you 100 percent that there  
3           needs to be an election process, but  
4           they're asking that more of your Council  
5           folks could come and hear this plea so  
6           they can go with you guys to the state  
7           house as a collective body and fight this  
8           elephant or whatever terminology that  
9           someone would give this. So I think you  
10          should use the fact that your  
11          constituents are now ready to fight.

12                 And I just wanted to just ask  
13          you this other question. If they start  
14          to tax people and if the youth or the 45  
15          to 60 is not working, then who bears the  
16          burden of that tax? Because all I've  
17          been seeing lately is the elders that are  
18          willing to sacrifice and sacrifice and  
19          sacrifice. How much are we going to take  
20          from our seniors before we have to put  
21          them away because they done gave so much?

22                 So it's one of those things we  
23          need to look at. The whole totality of  
24          how the dollars are spent, where the  
25          dollars are located, and how can we

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2           infuse the relationship between those  
3           dollars and that community and folks who  
4           are working.

5                       So I thank you for your time.

6                       COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
7           you. Thank you, Mr. Johnakin.

8                       MR. ARMOUR: My name is Ronald  
9           Armour. I'm a retired City worker, a  
10          grandparent, and I'm here today to say to  
11          this Council, the Chairperson, Jannie  
12          Blackwell, Councilman Oh, to say to you I  
13          want to talk about the process. That's  
14          more valuable to me than all of the other  
15          things, and we know all of it  
16          intertwined. We have heard coming from  
17          the four corners of this city the  
18          parents, the children taking on they  
19          civic responsibility, and this is why I  
20          am for elected school board. Because  
21          when you take on civic responsibility  
22          that these young people have done for the  
23          last couple months, they have already got  
24          an apprenticeship program and it's  
25          significant of being able to vote for

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2           their elected persons to represent them  
3           in office. This is a wonderful day in  
4           the City of Philadelphia. What I mean,  
5           the Chamber is not packed with bodies but  
6           the ideas and the vision for the future.  
7           And any time the citizens are saying to  
8           them, saying to the Council, we're asking  
9           you, along with us, to become the  
10          lobbyists for this wonderful process, it  
11          is the process for generations to come  
12          that is more significant than any other  
13          thing that we can bring in place. We  
14          will have Councilpersons that will come  
15          and go, Administrations will come and go,  
16          but the citizens and through your  
17          behavior and through the electoral  
18          process, then we will remand this here  
19          victory. Isn't it a wonderful thing out  
20          of something as essential as -- something  
21          as devastating have taken place in this  
22          city to see the citizens standing up,  
23          especially the future generations,  
24          saying, Yes, we are going to participate.  
25          We don't have to tear nobody down to

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2           build up something. Let us have the  
3           process work for itself. Let us vote for  
4           an elected school board.

5                     Thank you very much.

6                     COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
7           you.

8                     (Applause.)

9                     COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
10          you very much.

11                    We note again absent is Denise  
12          Martin and Vivienne Crawford.

13                    Okay. Thank you. Thank you.

14                    Mr. Vernard Johnson, Healthy  
15          Family, Healthy Life.

16                    MR. JOHNSON: Good morning,  
17          Councilwoman.

18                    COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good  
19          morning.

20                    MR. JOHNSON: Councilman Oh. I  
21          just wanted to come out today to support  
22          Brother Leon in his effort and your  
23          efforts to bring this to the attention of  
24          the community. And anything that I can  
25          do in terms of work, we're prepared to

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2           do, my family and myself, we're prepared  
3           to help, to take this message into the  
4           communities, to organize in the  
5           community, to hold meetings in the  
6           community. We're prepared to do that.  
7           And I've asked Orlando, who is sitting  
8           over there, if we could make this part of  
9           his agenda for next week. He's invited  
10          some state officials and yourself to come  
11          to a meeting around schools, could we put  
12          this on the agenda, and he's agreed to do  
13          that.

14                   And in closing, Councilwoman, I  
15          wanted to say to you that the  
16          Superintendent has agreed to come to the  
17          Johnson Playground on Thursday this week.  
18          I didn't know if you knew that or not, at  
19          6 o'clock. So I wanted to make you aware  
20          of that.

21                   Thank you.

22                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
23          you. And we thank you for hanging in  
24          there. I know after all these years, it  
25          gets frustrating when one has struggled

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2           as long as you, but we appreciate you  
3           hanging in there.

4                   MR. JOHNSON: Thank you,  
5           Councilwoman.

6                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
7           you.

8                   (Applause.)

9                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Rich  
10          Migliore, Democracy in Action; S. Nabila  
11          Baker-Bey from N'COBRA. Mama Gail I see.  
12          Orlando Acosta I see, and Pastor Pam  
13          Williams from Ark of Refuge Tabernacle.  
14          In that order, please come forward. And  
15          if there is someone else who wants to  
16          testify after that, please step to the  
17          side and see Ben Brock on that side and  
18          you'll be able to come.

19                   (Witnesses approached witness  
20          table.)

21                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
22          you. This is the last of our list. So  
23          if there's someone else here, let us know  
24          that you want to testify.

25                   MS. MARTIN: I've never done

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2           this before. I'm a little nervous.

3                   I just want to applaud what  
4           you're doing, City Council and Education  
5           Committee and Councilwoman Blackwell, for  
6           raising this issue of returning the  
7           School District to the people of  
8           Philadelphia.

9                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
10          you. Give us your name.

11                  MS. MARTIN: I'm Denise Martin.

12                  This is long overdue. The SRC  
13          we know can't raise money through bonds.  
14          They're not answerable to voters.  
15          There's a lot of reasons it's  
16          problematic, and it is time for an  
17          accountable, transparent School District.

18                  But I want to make sure that  
19          this isn't a detractor, that we don't  
20          make the issue of making the school board  
21          accountable as a detractor from the issue  
22          that's showing up in like three short  
23          months. I want to quote from Ronnie  
24          Polanczky in the Inquirer. The budget  
25          just passed by the School Reform



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2           Commission doesn't just have gaps. It  
3           has canyons that not even the most  
4           resourceful parents can cross. When  
5           schools open in September, our kids won't  
6           have counselors, librarians, assistant  
7           principals or secretaries. Are we  
8           parents supposed to quit our jobs so we  
9           can guide children, maintain library  
10          catalogues, administer the staff, answer  
11          the phones, and maintain student records?  
12          Gone will be the aides to monitor school  
13          yards and lunchrooms. Are we supposed to  
14          carve out time for those functions too?  
15          Classroom sizes will be bigger, and there  
16          will be teacher layoffs. So maybe we're  
17          supposed to fill in at the front of  
18          class, as if the skills of a veteran  
19          teacher mean nothing to a child's  
20          education.

21                 So today I ask that the process  
22          of returning the School District to local  
23          control not become a distraction, an  
24          excuse to spend hours and weeks working  
25          on this project and being able to say,

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2           well, the City Council is doing the right  
3           thing for Philadelphia education, and yet  
4           ignore the issue at hand today.

5                       So far, this Council, including  
6           the Chair of the Education Committee,  
7           Ms. Blackwell, have been opposed to a lot  
8           of the measures that we've been trying to  
9           push to get the \$60 million from the City  
10          of Philadelphia. I applaud the efforts  
11          of some of our other Councilmembers like  
12          Councilwoman Quinones-Sanchez who has  
13          raised the issue of using the U&O tax. I  
14          know that Councilwoman Blackwell and some  
15          others have been in favor of some of the  
16          other -- the cigarette and liquor, other  
17          taxes. There have been ideas to raise  
18          money by going after delinquents, but we  
19          need that \$60 million in September. We  
20          can't wait for a new school board to be  
21          elected and then for some other things to  
22          happen. We need that money, well,  
23          yesterday.

24                      So I do have deep concerns that  
25          the City Council could use this proposal

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2           as just a detractor from doing the hard  
3           work of standing up to well-healed  
4           lobbyists who don't believe the citizens  
5           of Philadelphia owe anything to the  
6           future of their city.

7           Thank you.

8           COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
9           you. Who is "we"? Excuse me,  
10          Ms. Martin.

11          MS. MARTIN: We?

12          COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Yes.

13          MS. MARTIN: I'm with a group  
14          of parents at my son's school Powel  
15          Elementary, and a group of concerned  
16          parents. We've thrown together a group  
17          we call Imagine a School, and we're  
18          trying to make sure that the  
19          Councilmembers are all working towards  
20          getting the \$60 million and that the  
21          State Legislature is working on the \$120  
22          million. And I don't know what -- I  
23          don't think we'll have much say in what  
24          happens with the union for the \$133  
25          million ask, but this is important right

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2           now. This is urgent.

3                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Do you  
4           have a statement on elected school board?

5                   MS. MARTIN: Do I have a  
6           statement on the school board?

7                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I  
8           mean, do you have a position? That's  
9           what this hearing is about.

10                   MS. MARTIN: Yes, yes, yes. I  
11          think it's wonderful and important that  
12          the school board be turned to local  
13          control. I just don't want that to be a  
14          distractor from doing the work that we  
15          have to do right now that's really  
16          urgent.

17                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
18          you.

19                   COUNCILMAN OH: I'll just make  
20          a brief statement to assure you that it  
21          will not be a detractor or a distractor,  
22          that the hearing is here because  
23          unfortunately while we have this  
24          immediate crisis that you are right to  
25          point out we are working on, we had it

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2           last year and the year before that and  
3           we'll probably have it again next year  
4           and the year after that unless we fix  
5           what is the core of the problem. But the  
6           important issues of funding the schools  
7           are definitely front and center.

8                       Thank you.

9                       COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Nor  
10          could we do all of that between now and  
11          June 20th when school lets out. We  
12          couldn't engage the state, pass  
13          legislation, you know. But I thank my  
14          colleague Councilman Oh for his response.  
15          Thank you.

16                      MS. BEY: Yes. Good afternoon,  
17          and thank you for this opportunity. My  
18          name is Nabila Bey. I am a  
19          Co-Chairperson of the Philadelphia  
20          Chapter of N'COBRA. N'COBRA is the  
21          National Coalition of Blacks for  
22          Reparations in America. So on my way  
23          here, I forgot to put on my N'COBRA  
24          button, and I said, Well, this really  
25          doesn't apply to blacks and reparations

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2           for the mistreatment that we have  
3           received as descendents of Africans. And  
4           then I walk in here and Attorney Leon  
5           Williams is giving us a detailed history  
6           on how this does indeed affect the  
7           descendents of Africans and that he  
8           stated and proved that we've never had  
9           the opportunity, the legal opportunity,  
10          to vote for a school board.

11                        So I am here in favor of having  
12          an elected school board. I do hope that  
13          there's going to be significant  
14          parameters around that, that it's not  
15          just a political election of the normal  
16          type, but that there's -- actually, the  
17          Pennsylvania Department of Education  
18          allows for appointed school boards also.  
19          So maybe it can be some type of a  
20          combination between a certain amount of  
21          people being able to apply as their  
22          interest in serving on the school board  
23          and then maybe the Mayor or some office  
24          has to select out of that pool of  
25          qualified and interested parties and

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2           citizens to be able to serve on the  
3           School District.

4                   I'm also a state licensed  
5           counselor, professional counselor. I'm  
6           also a retired school counselor from the  
7           School District of Philadelphia. I'm  
8           certified K to 12. And I'm also in a  
9           school program at Drexel too. And I  
10          spoke here two years ago when they first  
11          started pounding on us and raising our  
12          income taxes for the School District, and  
13          I'm like, Well, I work for the School  
14          District, I don't mind if they take my  
15          money. It's like circular. It's going  
16          right back into my job and so-and-so and  
17          so-and-so, but it's really gotten out of  
18          hand with this just constantly raising  
19          our taxes over and over again. And when  
20          all of our -- and I've also worked for  
21          OESS, which is the City of Philadelphia's  
22          homeless services, adult services.

23                   When we don't -- when the  
24          people don't have their homes anymore  
25          because they've been taxed out of them,

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2           where are they going to go? Because we  
3           sure don't have any shelter services set  
4           up in order to take this great influx,  
5           nor do we want to see our citizens have  
6           to go into any kind of shelter  
7           arrangement.

8                        So basically I think it's time,  
9           because the School District has like  
10          seriously fallen all apart. So it is  
11          time while we're making the adjustments  
12          into a new -- let's have a new brighter  
13          vision of education, of public education,  
14          and also have a new brighter viewpoint of  
15          the administration of this exciting, new,  
16          and profitable form of education.  
17          Because the way the system is operating  
18          now is taxation without representation.

19                        (Applause.)

20                       MS. BEY: I would hope that,  
21          like the young lady who was just here,  
22          that we don't lose sight of -- oh, and  
23          also Representative Louis Williams Bishop  
24          handed in a very excellent -- she wasn't  
25          able to attend, but she talked about



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2           being concerned about once we do have our  
3           own control over the School District, not  
4           just accepting all the problems. And  
5           somebody here spoke about that also.  
6           Make the state pay for their mistakes.  
7           Make them repair the damage that has been  
8           done, and then let us start on our way.

9                       And also I thought Reverend --  
10          the reverend from the Villages  
11          organization, I think he was excellent.  
12          I think he was excellent.

13                      So let us just be concerned --  
14          and the grand-mom that was just here when  
15          she talked about the administrator having  
16          to give medicine. Counselors are not  
17          allowed to be counselors. Counselors are  
18          being used by the School District of  
19          Philadelphia until -- now they don't have  
20          jobs at all, but prior to that, they were  
21          being used as substitute teachers and  
22          they were written into the budgets as  
23          substitute teachers, and I experienced  
24          that myself.

25                      Also, we need unstressed

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2       nurses. Then grand-mom wouldn't have to  
3       be worrying about her son being given the  
4       wrong medication. We need to be  
5       concerned about arts and letters, music  
6       education, technical curriculums, OJT and  
7       apprenticeships, and accurate and  
8       relevant history for our students in the  
9       Philadelphia School District.

10                   Thank you.

11                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
12       you so much. And we will read State  
13       Representative Louise Williams Bishop's  
14       statement into the record as if it had  
15       been read in the entirety. I'll read two  
16       sentences of it only as we ask one of the  
17       others to come forward. I guess Mr. Rich  
18       Migliore wasn't here. I see Mama Gail, I  
19       see Orlando Acosta, and I see Pam  
20       Williams, Ark of the Refuge Tabernacle.  
21       Then Desiree Whitfield and Ms. Bazemore.  
22       They are the last of us. Is that it?  
23       Thank you.

24                   Louise Williams Bishop I'll  
25       only read two sentences. Quote, "In my

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2           opinion, I cannot see how the City can  
3           afford to run the School District after  
4           the state has made such a mess.

5           Therefore, my suggestion would be, if  
6           there were just cause, that the City of  
7           Philadelphia should file a suit against  
8           the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for the  
9           proper education equal to the surrounding  
10          counties such as Bala Cynwyd, Montgomery  
11          County, Lower Merion and the rest."

12                        So that's just only two  
13          sentences to show you how powerful and  
14          strong her statement was in supporting an  
15          elected school board. But it will be  
16          added to the record as if it had been  
17          read in entirety. Thank you.

18                       MR. MIGLIORE: I am Rich  
19          Migliore. I am a retired 34-year veteran  
20          of the School District. I taught at my  
21          beloved Uni for 20 years and then I was  
22          an assistant principal for 14 years and a  
23          summer school principal for ten of those  
24          14 years. I am also an attorney and I am  
25          now a civil rights attorney who advocates

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2           for the best practices in school  
3           governance.

4                   I am also the author of the  
5           book "Whose School Is It? The Democratic  
6           Imperative for Our Schools," which talks  
7           about the law of school governance, and  
8           they research on the best practices in  
9           school governance and leadership.

10                   What I did from the inception  
11           of the school takeover, I lived within  
12           the School District community for those  
13           years. I studied the takeover from its  
14           beginnings. I wrote this book. I  
15           studied it very intensively from the  
16           first School Reform Commission. I worked  
17           under Paul Vallas. I worked under Dr.  
18           Ackerman, and I am very much in favor of  
19           an elected school board.

20                   (Applause.)

21                   MR. MIGLIORE: I am not going  
22           to speak much about the book. I am not  
23           here to sell copies of my books.  
24           Actually, I lost money, and after I wrote  
25           it and presented it to the School Reform

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2           Commission, I was ushered out of the  
3           School District by the powers-to-be who  
4           did not hear like the word "democracy" in  
5           education. But I don't mind. When you  
6           are a leader in our city, in our School  
7           District, you face personal adversity at  
8           some time in your career.

9                     Councilwoman Blackwell, I came  
10          to Philadelphia. I grew up during the  
11          civil rights era in the '60s. I came to  
12          Philadelphia during the civil rights era.  
13          I taught at Uni. I read the books about  
14          how Frederick Douglass with the children  
15          struggled to learn how to read. I read  
16          the books about our great black Americans  
17          from the Underground Railroad who  
18          struggled for democracy. I've just  
19          recently went to see the movie "Lincoln"  
20          about he gave up his life so black  
21          Americans would not only be free but they  
22          would have 14th Amendment rights to due  
23          process, and part of that due process is  
24          the right for self-governance of our  
25          community and our schools.

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2                   I find it quite ironic that in  
3           the birthplace of American democracy, we  
4           have one of the least democratically  
5           governed school systems in America. I  
6           think it's time for all of us to think  
7           deeply about what is going on here and  
8           what it means to a democracy.

9                   I submit that when you take  
10          democracy out of the governance of our  
11          public schools, they are no longer public  
12          schools at all. When we take democracy  
13          out of education, we are no longer  
14          running our public schools for the public  
15          good for the common good, which was the  
16          original aims of public education, and we  
17          are no longer governing our schools for  
18          the best interest of our children and  
19          their communities. A prime example of  
20          that is the mess that our School District  
21          is in today.

22                  The privatization of the  
23          American schoolhouse is a major civil  
24          rights issue of our day.

25                  (Applause.)

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2                   MR. MIGLIORE: When we allow  
3 private corporations to be the  
4 decision-makers for what happens to the  
5 citizens of Philadelphia and their  
6 children, to me it is a disgrace. As  
7 some of our speakers alluded to and spoke  
8 about before me, we have a side  
9 organization of the Philadelphia School  
10 Partnership mastery who are operating and  
11 making the decisions, unelected people,  
12 people who are not even appointed by  
13 elected representatives, making the  
14 decisions behind closed doors, which are  
15 being rolled out to us by the SRC without  
16 fair opportunity to comment, as one of  
17 our commenters said.

18                  COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
19 you.

20                  MR. MIGLIORE: We don't even  
21 get the resolutions until the last  
22 minute. I'm not going to belabor the  
23 point, but there's a question about  
24 vision. I entitled this book "A Book  
25 About School Governance, Leadership, and

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2           'the American Vision.'" I went to the  
3           democratic House Policy Committee meeting  
4           last week on the funding of our schools,  
5           and the Superintendent of Upper Darby  
6           said at that meeting that he asked  
7           Tomalis, the Secretary of Education, what  
8           is your vision for public education in  
9           the Commonwealth. And you know what he  
10          said? Phoenix University. You know what  
11          they are? Online courses.

12                   What is the vision we have?  
13          What is your vision? What is our  
14          collective vision for America? I told  
15          Vernard Johnson just before this,  
16          Vernard, I don't always agree with what  
17          you say, but I'll die for defending your  
18          right to say it and for our right to  
19          publicly govern our schools. And without  
20          democracy, without elected school boards,  
21          we have no democracy in our education.

22                   I believe we should have an  
23          elected school board, and I believe we  
24          should follow Senator Dinniman's  
25          recommendation to have non-partisan



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2           school board elections. And I also want  
3           to point out that we can also have a  
4           combination of elected school boards and  
5           appointed members.

6                     For instance, a member of the  
7           school board could be elected by City  
8           Council to represent City Council. An  
9           elected school board could have one  
10          appointed member appointed by the Mayor  
11          of Philadelphia and one appointed member  
12          appointed by the Governor of the State of  
13          Pennsylvania.

14                    I call on you to take this  
15          devastation within our School District  
16          and turn it into an opportunity to live  
17          by the ideals that our Constitution  
18          represents and what our children die for  
19          today throughout the world.

20                    I want to thank you.

21                    COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
22          you. Thank you as well.

23                    (Applause.)

24                    MR. MIGLIORE: Here's copies of  
25          my book.

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2                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
3                   you. Thank you very much. Thank you.

4                   Mr. Acosta.

5                   MR. ACOSTA: Hello. To  
6                   everyone on the City Council members, let  
7                   me say this first before I even start  
8                   speaking. I want to thank Councilwoman  
9                   Blackwell for everything that she has  
10                  done across this city as far as with  
11                  schools, Councilman Oh, because you asked  
12                  really pointed questions to the District  
13                  on several different issues about how the  
14                  money is going to be spent, what services  
15                  are going to be provided for the  
16                  children. You've done the same thing,  
17                  Jannie. So I commend you immensely, and  
18                  I thank you very much for everyone around  
19                  the City.

20                  Let me say this: School  
21                  District, they got to go. They have to  
22                  go. It's appalling. It's really  
23                  appalling that you can go to an SRC  
24                  meeting and you could lay out on the  
25                  table issue after issue after issue about

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2       a child getting injured violently,  
3       teachers disrespecting parents, children,  
4       some teachers -- let me clear that up.  
5       Some teachers, not all, not all, because  
6       some teachers are there truly for the  
7       children, then some teachers are there  
8       just for the check. Okay. So let's put  
9       that out there.

10                   And I'm for an elected board.  
11       Immensely I'm for it, but it has to be  
12       done whereas the community -- it doesn't  
13       get lost. So it has to stand the  
14       framework of the community has to come  
15       first with any elected board that gets  
16       put forth. And, you know, and when you  
17       go to the SRC, you're speaking, but at  
18       the end of the day, it's like you're not  
19       being heard. And it's real irritating  
20       and real frustrating when you're sitting  
21       up there telling them about different  
22       issues about kids, about -- I mean, the  
23       curriculum, special services for kids  
24       with special needs and everything like  
25       that, but when you asking what's the

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2       plan, there is none. They have no idea  
3       why. But they're going to come in front  
4       of City Council and ask y'all as a  
5       governing body, Oh, by the way, can we  
6       get \$60 million. Then you want to go to  
7       the state and ask for 120 million? Are  
8       you kidding? Because they can't even  
9       financially keep track of the money that  
10      they have already got. What about the 40  
11      million that they already got? Where did  
12      that go? Nobody has no answers for that.  
13      At the end of the day, where is the  
14      answers when people ask questions? If  
15      they can't even provide y'all with  
16      information that y'all have asked them  
17      repeatedly over every single time to  
18      submit and they still haven't done it,  
19      they need to be sued. They need to be  
20      sued and done away with. Anybody that  
21      can't put forth that documentation that  
22      y'all as a governing body is asking them  
23      for and they can't respect y'all as well  
24      as the community, they need to go. They  
25      need to go. Because at the end of the

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2           day, my child, as a parent, my child  
3           again, again got abused again over and  
4           over. It has to go. Because at the end  
5           of the day, one of these children are  
6           going to die if it doesn't stop. And  
7           they act like they don't hear what people  
8           say, and it has to stop.

9                       Thank you.

10                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
11           you, Mr. Acosta.

12                   (Applause.)

13                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
14           you very much, Mr. Orlando Acosta.

15                   Mama Gail or Mama Gail Clouden.  
16           Welcome. Identify yourself for the  
17           record.

18                   MS. CLOUDEN: I am Gail  
19           Clouden. I am Mama Gail. I'm an  
20           advocate for parents and children and  
21           staff as well. I'm a community activist.  
22           And I'm sitting here listening, and I  
23           talked about history the last time I was  
24           here. I love history and I'm an avid  
25           reader, and to sit here and hear what I'm

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2           hearing concerns me and also sitting at  
3           end SRC meetings on a monthly basis  
4           concerns me immensely.

5                       I am in favor of an elected  
6           school board. I think that it's very,  
7           very necessary, because we have a serious  
8           issue in our community where people  
9           aren't being heard. They're not being  
10          listened to. And for years, I've sat and  
11          I've said to Dr. Ackerman, God bless her  
12          soul, that we have people in our  
13          community that can deal and fix the  
14          issues that we have. No one knows our  
15          communities better than we do, the people  
16          that live in them. And so as I watch the  
17          numbers drop in enrollment, I think back  
18          and as I was sitting here listening to  
19          testimony, I thought of all those parents  
20          that sat in front of -- as the school  
21          board has changed, all those different  
22          people that were in front of them, to  
23          know avail. I watched parents sit and  
24          beg for some kind of solution to issues  
25          that they were having. And I recently

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2           said to the SRC members, You have been  
3           successful in putting people against one  
4           another.

5                       As I hear parents and children  
6           talking and people are talking about the  
7           charter schools and they're talking and  
8           saying, Well, the public schools, and I'm  
9           saying the issues are the same. I don't  
10          care what school you're in. The issues  
11          are the same, and we need to stop putting  
12          one against one another.

13                     About the numbers dropping,  
14          it's unbelievable that I heard the last  
15          number -- and I'm not talking about  
16          today, but I heard the last number was  
17          168,000 in the District, and I was at a  
18          meeting recently and I heard about a  
19          cyber school that had 7,000 students and  
20          it was recently closed and that the  
21          School District was making provisions to  
22          create a cyber school where they could  
23          take in some of those students.

24                     I'm concerned about a lot of  
25          things, but I know that we have the

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2           answers, and for me coming together,  
3           sitting down, and I mean really sitting  
4           down listening to one another, will make  
5           a difference.

6                       I'm concerned about the schools  
7           and how there's a lack of taking care of  
8           the schools that are open. There is not  
9           the work that's going into the schools  
10          that need to be there to maintain the  
11          schools. As my husband says repeatedly,  
12          as engineers they have become trash men  
13          and women. They're cleaning up rather  
14          than maintaining the buildings. So as  
15          people are talking about schools closings  
16          because of deplorable conditions, it was  
17          allowed to get that way, and people are  
18          not talking about that on a day-to-day  
19          basis, that the mechanics -- that's not  
20          something I want to go into, but the  
21          mechanics and the over -- I'm going  
22          there. Overtime, overtime that's about  
23          to happen for mechanics as a result of  
24          schools closing. Money that's going to  
25          be given, and not across the board but



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2           money that's going to be put out. And  
3           I'm not trying to go one against the  
4           other, but I have to say it, because  
5           there's so much wasted money. There's  
6           schools that are being closed. There are  
7           mergers that shouldn't take place. I  
8           want to talk about Sadie Alexander, and I  
9           want to talk about Sadie Alexander  
10          because when I think about this beautiful  
11          woman that I read about in history, when  
12          I hear about the school, I hear Penn more  
13          than Sadie Alexander, and I have a  
14          concern about that, because this was a  
15          black woman. And here I hear stories  
16          about how you get in, and this is  
17          supposed to be a public school. I sit  
18          and I listen to the inequity across the  
19          board. Last week, the week before, we  
20          heard from some beautiful children as  
21          they talked about -- they talked about --  
22          have one in particular, because I spoke  
23          about this at the SRC, six counselors for  
24          2,500 students, where I was with a  
25          counselor, who was one counselor, for 900

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2           students.

3                   When I hear people talking the  
4           cuts, our communities have been cut over  
5           and over and over. It has never been  
6           across the board like it is now. And  
7           even because it is across the board, now  
8           we're hearing about things that these  
9           young people, these beautiful young  
10          people have in their schools and the  
11          other ones don't.

12                   As we sit in the SRC meeting,  
13          I've had children sitting behind me, and  
14          I'm listening to them talking. They had  
15          no idea that every month, children were  
16          given awards at 440. One child sat  
17          behind me from Robeson, Paul Robeson, and  
18          I heard her say, We've got somebody at  
19          our school that should be getting that  
20          award. She said, Not me, but somebody in  
21          our school should be getting that award.

22                   We hear over and over about  
23          Masterman and Central and Girls High and  
24          Science Leadership Academy. There needs  
25          to be equity across the board. All of

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2           these children deserve the same benefit.

3           So.

4                       (Applause.)

5                       MS. CLOUDEN: -- as we sit and  
6           we listen, we have to remember that all  
7           children deserve the same opportunities.  
8           And as I sit and think about the classism  
9           that I see going on in the District, and  
10          I asked about the hole, the money being  
11          thrown into the hole. When you talk  
12          about contracts -- and I get contracts  
13          from the District, not a lot, and this  
14          has been since Dr. Ackerman was there. I  
15          had three or four contracts as a result  
16          of her being there. I'm telling you,  
17          I've helped to raise up the numbers of  
18          minority businesses getting contracts.  
19          When you sit an SRC meeting and the place  
20          is full in the beginning of the  
21          meeting -- and they've shifted it, but  
22          the room would be full at the beginning  
23          of the meeting, and by the time everybody  
24          has given testimony, they're gone. And  
25          then you look around and the room is full

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2           of Caucasian males usually. You know  
3           it's contract time. This is wrong.

4                       How do we talk about policy and  
5           procedure where when they're taking money  
6           from the academics from the education  
7           piece where the contracts are concerned,  
8           money -- why can't money be taken from  
9           the contracts? There are crazy amounts  
10          of money being paid for services. A lot  
11          of times only one company was up for a  
12          bid. That's ridiculous. And I said  
13          recently why are we getting somebody from  
14          London for a contract? Why are we going  
15          to Arkansas for somebody for a contract?  
16          Don't we have people in Pennsylvania, in  
17          Philadelphia that can fulfill these  
18          needs? And I sat with Dr. Clayton. I  
19          sat in front of Dr. Clayton. God bless  
20          Ruth Hayre and all of them. I sat in  
21          front of all of those beautiful people as  
22          they asked questions years ago about  
23          contracts. What about contracts? Here  
24          we are in 2013 still talking about the  
25          same inequity.

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2                   That's all I want to say.

3                   Thank you.

4                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
5                   you, Mama Gail, and thank you to your  
6                   husband, who wrote a District-wide  
7                   curriculum to try to help, and we thank  
8                   him and you and your daughter for that  
9                   commitment.

10                  MS. CLOUDEN: Thank you so  
11                  much. God bless.

12                  COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
13                  you.

14                  PASTOR WILLIAMS: Greetings.  
15                  God bless you. To Councilwoman Chair  
16                  Jannie Blackwell, I am Pastor Pamela K.  
17                  Williams, the Pastor of Ark of Refuge  
18                  Tabernacle and also a representative of  
19                  the Kim Denise Williams, Health and  
20                  Education Foundation, whose founder and  
21                  President is Ms. Novella Williams.

22                  I first want to commend you on  
23                  the fortitude and the courage to step out  
24                  and call and convene a hearing of this  
25                  magnitude. For many years Philadelphia

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2           has been challenged by not having the  
3           voice of the public heard. Our voice in  
4           our communities have been silenced, and  
5           my mother and I sat down, and we agreed  
6           that we would encourage the citizenry of  
7           Philadelphia to get their voice back,  
8           because it's been quiet for too long.  
9           And you doing this, you putting this in  
10          the forefront of what City Council should  
11          do as representatives of the City of  
12          Philadelphia, you should be overly  
13          commended for the courage that you have  
14          exhibited today.

15                               (Applause.)

16                   PASTOR WILLIAMS: So thank you.

17                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
18          you.

19                   PASTOR WILLIAMS: And I thank  
20          you, Councilman Oh, for being here. I've  
21          been knowing you for a long time, and I  
22          appreciate you being here and staying  
23          here and listening to these citizens, who  
24          considered it necessary to stay and have  
25          their voice heard.

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2                   I am in total unequivocal  
3                   agreement with the process of an elected  
4                   school board for the City of  
5                   Philadelphia. I today extend to you  
6                   every ounce of energy that I have in my  
7                   body to fight that it is completely and  
8                   totally fulfilled for the citizenry of  
9                   this great city.

10                  I have lived in this city for  
11                  49 years, and it is the best city that  
12                  I -- I've traveled much across this  
13                  country. Philadelphia is far more the  
14                  best city that I have ever been in, but  
15                  it is corrupt. It has policies and  
16                  procedures that do not reflect the needs  
17                  and the desires of the citizens of which  
18                  it is to represent. Therefore, I  
19                  establish right now and I say this to  
20                  every City Council member, as the School  
21                  District, the SRC, Dr. Hite come before  
22                  you and asks for money or comes before  
23                  the state and require money, don't give  
24                  this School District nothing. Not a  
25                  single dime.

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2                   (Applause.)

3                   PASTOR WILLIAMS: I petitioned  
4 the neighbors, my neighbor, the  
5 residents, the citizenry of Philadelphia  
6 to shut the Philadelphia School District  
7 down, because it's a disgrace.

8                   I requested in March a copy of  
9 every contract over \$50,000 from the SRC  
10 and the School District representative of  
11 all the money that is going out of the  
12 School District in reference to  
13 contracts, \$86.4 million, and only 3  
14 percent of what I gather as a citizen  
15 looks like it is minority contractors.  
16 And when I talk about minority  
17 contractors, I'm talking about people who  
18 look like me. I'm not talking about  
19 women who are put on the top of a  
20 letterhead and say that they are the CEO  
21 just so we can get contracts. The  
22 contracts that the School District gives  
23 out that are measurably considerably  
24 related to politicians and persons who  
25 sit on the SRC is an atrocity in this



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2           city.

3                   I believe that every person on  
4           that SRC right now -- and I respect them  
5           and I love them for their service and  
6           their committed public servant, but they  
7           have a relationship, every single one of  
8           them, with a political entity, with the  
9           University of Pennsylvania and with all  
10          entities, law firms in this city who have  
11          contracts with the Philadelphia School  
12          District, and that is a disgrace. That  
13          is a total disgrace.

14                   There is more money going into  
15          people who are friends, people who know  
16          people, people who sit on that SRC, and  
17          it's ridiculous. There is a total  
18          conflict of interest with the attorney  
19          that represents the SRC and almost every  
20          member that represents the SRC, and it  
21          has to stop. It's been going on for  
22          years. It's been going on since the  
23          12-year establishment of the SRC, and  
24          it's time for somebody to stand up and  
25          say we're not going to take it anymore.

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2           So whoever is looking, whoever is  
3           listening, every state legislator, every  
4           state Senator, every Councilperson,  
5           anybody that has power to do a change in  
6           this city, it's wrong and it needs to  
7           stop. Don't give this School District a  
8           dime until they make good on their  
9           commitment to educate children.

10                   I advocate for African American  
11           children because that's the minority that  
12           I come -- that's the majority that I come  
13           from. So those are the only people I can  
14           speak of.

15                   Closing schools, relinquishing  
16           us of an individual who had the fortitude  
17           and the vision to change Philadelphia  
18           schools in the late Dr. Arlene Ackerman.  
19           When I say everybody better step down,  
20           that's what I meant, and in 2011, most of  
21           them stepped down because they knew they  
22           had done an injustice to the citizen and  
23           the children of this city.

24                   Now, if we sit by as City  
25           Council members and allow this to

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2           continue, it is horrific. What they are  
3           doing as far as the budget, cutting  
4           school nurses, cutting counselors,  
5           cutting advocates for children, it's  
6           wrong and it must stop, because you know  
7           where those kids are going to end up?  
8           They're going to end up in the  
9           Philadelphia Prison System. They're  
10          going to end up in the first judicial  
11          justice system, and it's wrong and we  
12          must stop it.

13                 Our kids are dying in the  
14                 street, and nobody is paying attention.  
15                 Our kids are killing each other. Our  
16                 kids are being sexually exploited.  
17                 Things are happening in our community  
18                 that some of you don't even know, but we  
19                 know because we live there.

20                 So I ask you today, just as  
21                 Councilwoman Blackwell said, we need an  
22                 elected school board. When Richardson  
23                 Dilworth took it to the people and wanted  
24                 to change things and they didn't want to  
25                 do what we did -- Brother, you said

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2           something about 1966. That was my momma  
3           at the School District. She was there  
4           when they turned over cars and they shut  
5           this District down, because they wasn't  
6           teaching African American studies,  
7           because they was doing things in West  
8           Philadelphia High School they wasn't  
9           supposed to be doing and they was doing  
10          things at Sayre Junior High School.

11                 Now, today is the day. Today  
12          is the day, Councilwoman. I live in your  
13          district. I support you. It's on. And  
14          we need to turn this city out and tell  
15          them that we demand right now an elected  
16          school board.

17                 Now, I don't come without  
18          facts. I don't come without facts.  
19          Section 969 of the Public School Code  
20          says something very important that we let  
21          it get away from us. Under Section  
22          14(j), this is what it says. I come with  
23          my paperwork now. I'm going to do some  
24          research.

25                 Section 14, Section (j), The

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2           Board of School Directors shall perform  
3           any duties delegated to it by the  
4           Commission. The establishment of the  
5           School Reform Commission shall not  
6           interfere with the regular selection of  
7           school directors for the school district  
8           of the first class.

9                       We are supposed to have a board  
10          of directors. We are supposed to have it  
11          under the Pennsylvania Public School  
12          Code. Now, you tell me why doesn't it  
13          exist. Somebody better answer that  
14          question. And I send it to you,  
15          Councilwoman. I send it to you,  
16          Councilman David Oh. It's in Section 696  
17          of the Public School Code of the State of  
18          Pennsylvania. The board of directors is  
19          supposed to be in place even when the SRC  
20          is in place. So let's get it done.  
21          Let's get it done today, because it's  
22          right here in ink. And let's research  
23          it, and if we have to, Councilwoman,  
24          let's sue the whole State of Pennsylvania  
25          and take them on the town. We coming to

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2           kick behind, and we ain't taking no  
3           prisoners.

4                        (Applause.)

5                        PASTOR WILLIAMS: And thank you  
6           for your time.

7                        COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
8           you, Pastor Williams. Thank you.

9                        MS. HALL: I'm not prepared  
10          today, but I had to come up here and say  
11          something before I leave, because I  
12          didn't know that you had to, you know,  
13          request to speak.

14                       COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: It's  
15          okay. Just give us your name.

16                       MS. HALL: My name is Shirley  
17          Hall. I'm also known a/k/a as Oyetti,  
18          and I'm also an activist and I'm also for  
19          unfairness. I'm out there with  
20          supporting anything that's going on in  
21          the City when there's unfairness. And  
22          I've been here -- I was born and raised  
23          in South Philadelphia and I've been here  
24          for a long time. Only thing that I can  
25          say today, because I'm really getting

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2           worked up even thinking about it, nothing  
3           has changed since I was a child with this  
4           school system. There were people even  
5           today -- I mean, I say about the past  
6           maybe 10, 15 years -- who are vying to go  
7           to what they call better schools. You  
8           had the lower class and you had the ones  
9           like Derm and so many that I can  
10          number -- to name, but I can't do it at  
11          this time. But people were vying to get  
12          in these schools, the children in the  
13          schools I should say, and they would used  
14          someone else's address in order for  
15          them -- maybe a grandmother's or fathers  
16          or mothers living in the another  
17          neighborhood, in order for them to get in  
18          a better school. Now I guess it's been  
19          since Mayor Nutter is in. I think that  
20          thing has really been phased out.

21                    I remember back in the '70s,  
22           Widener Junior High School. They were  
23           classes that didn't even have enough  
24           chairs in the room.

25                    And the other thing is, I'd

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2           like to thank you too, Councilman, and  
3           also -- I forgot to talk about Leon  
4           Williams. I love Leon Williams. I've  
5           been following him for years, and I'd  
6           like to thank him also for holding this  
7           session today. But if we can't have our  
8           history in the schools -- this is what  
9           really bothers me more than anything.  
10          Our children are coming up without  
11          learning their culture, their history.  
12          We have to do it, and this is an  
13          abomination. That's why so many of them  
14          are out there doing what they're doing  
15          today. They're dissatisfied. They don't  
16          even know who they are. That should be  
17          incorporated.

18                        I was out in front of the  
19          school board with Dr. Ed Robinson last  
20          year -- year before last, and he was  
21          getting ready to sue the City for our  
22          history not being infused in the school's  
23          curriculum, but he was also going to sue  
24          too, and I think we need to get together  
25          and continue all these things, and I



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2           agree with everything that everyone has  
3           said in here today.

4                   What else was I going to say?  
5           I'm for the elected board. And I can go  
6           on and on, but like I said, there's a  
7           time to take care of the necessary, so I  
8           got to run.

9                   Thanks so much for hearing me.

10                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
11           you very much. Unfortunately we've taken  
12           a little longer than we thought. We're  
13           going to have to give the stenographer a  
14           break for ten minutes. We'll be back in  
15           just ten minutes and we'll conclude. I  
16           see Madeline Shikomba is back, Ruth  
17           Bazemore, and Cyé Sheppard. That is it,  
18           and that will be it for today. Am I  
19           correct? And you. What's your name?

20                   MS. WHITFIELD: Desiree  
21           Whitfield.

22                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:  
23           Desiree Whitfield, yes. You can -- yeah.  
24           So that will be it, but we've got to give  
25           the stenographer a ten-minute break. And

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2                   that will be it. Thank you.

3                   (Short recess.)

4                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
5                   you. We will resume our hearings. Thank  
6                   you very much. Thank you all for your  
7                   patience.

8                   Please identify -- you're Ms.  
9                   Whitfield.

10                  MS. WHITFIELD: Hi. I'm  
11                  Desiree A. Whitfield, the proud parent of  
12                  a student of the Philadelphia School  
13                  District. Good afternoon, Councilwoman  
14                  Blackwell and Councilman Oh.

15                  First, I'd like to give honor  
16                  to God.

17                  Secondly, it breaks my heart to  
18                  sit here in 2013 knowing that we are  
19                  standing on the shoulders of our  
20                  ancestors who have fought for our  
21                  education. My great-grandparents on back  
22                  have slaved and died so that I can have  
23                  the right to education and my children.  
24                  But we sit here in 2013 with a black  
25                  President fighting for education.

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2           There's a problem with that. When you  
3           talk about Martin Luther King, Jr. and  
4           the rest of them, Mama Gail and Sister  
5           Williams who have fought for education  
6           for years, when is this going to stop?

7                     I want to say one thing, and  
8           I'm going to go on camera saying it. I  
9           support the letter of Louise Williams  
10          Bishop going to the state, but it starts  
11          right here. The last time we sat in this  
12          room I felt like I was a slave and  
13          supposed to say yes, sir, master, because  
14          that was the atmosphere that we were in.

15                    When we were sold by John  
16          Street to the state, it was a setup.  
17          They never did want to educate our  
18          children. This just didn't start. No  
19          one cared about the School District of  
20          Philadelphia. So a couple years ago when  
21          they forced out Dr. Ackerman, five  
22          senators came and they was going to ask  
23          for -- they told us -- this did a press  
24          conference, and they were going to ask  
25          for the SRC to go out and the board to

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2       come in. What happened to that? They  
3       had a big press conference with all of  
4       the news media what they were going to do  
5       for Philadelphia. We haven't heard  
6       anything else about that. And that's the  
7       people that we elect to put into office  
8       that came to us and promised that. What  
9       happened to that?

10               As I sit here, my heart mourns,  
11       because what are our children going to  
12       do? What are our children going to do?  
13       The SRC, you know what it is? You know  
14       what they are? They're the KKK. You  
15       know what that is? The Tea Party.

16               This is against our children.  
17       The Mayor of this city, Mayor Nutter,  
18       ought to be ashamed of himself. He has  
19       never supported the Philadelphia School  
20       District. Maybe now because he's begging  
21       for a job because this is his last year,  
22       is that what it is? He has never  
23       supported us. Half of this City Council  
24       right around here, where are they now?  
25       Where are they now? If they were

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2           interested in us, although they're not  
3           sitting right there, they should be right  
4           here. They're not interested in the  
5           Philadelphia School District.

6                        So I applaud you for sitting  
7           here, taking the heat, but first of all,  
8           before we go to the State, we need to go  
9           to the City because the City of  
10          Philadelphia is corrupt. Lori Shorr and  
11          the rest of the Mayor's people, they're  
12          all -- you know what, we don't have to go  
13          to the state. Go to them hotels where  
14          they be sitting in those meetings up on  
15          the 34th floor behind closed doors making  
16          decisions about the City of Philadelphia.  
17          That's who you need to go to, the big  
18          business people. That's who you need to  
19          go to, because that's who is making the  
20          decisions of the Philadelphia School  
21          District.

22                       This just didn't start. Did it  
23          take them to have a rally for the unions  
24          to all the sudden come in and now  
25          everybody wants to be interested?

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2                   When Dr. Ackerman first came,  
3                   her first three weeks, she had three  
4                   questions: about contracts, about  
5                   accountability of teachers, and about the  
6                   money. Show me the money. And when she  
7                   asked those three questions, they were  
8                   after her from day one. When they forced  
9                   her out and they said that the Attorney  
10                  General, remember that, was supposed to  
11                  be investigating the SRC, Archie that  
12                  slid out, what happened to that? If they  
13                  can do what they did to a superintendent  
14                  who was here to love our children and  
15                  still be allowed to be the SRC, who are  
16                  they accountable for?

17                  In this world, you got to be  
18                  accountable to somebody. They're not  
19                  accountable to anybody. We go to those  
20                  meetings, meeting after meeting, getting  
21                  no answers. Who are they? Please tell  
22                  me. How can you give somebody that much  
23                  power over our children?

24                  You have not only failed the  
25                  parents, but you have failed generation

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2           after generation after generation. You  
3           know why? Because it's going to take a  
4           long time to get us out of this mess.  
5           It's going to affect my  
6           great-grandchildren.

7                   So what are you going to do as  
8           the City of Philadelphia? We're yours  
9           first before we're the state's. Let's  
10          fix the corruption in Philadelphia,  
11          starting with the Mayor and the Council  
12          and everybody else who is a friend of a  
13          friend of a friend making money off of  
14          our children. You go into those schools  
15          and supposed to do plumbing work and all.  
16          They're taking the money, but look at  
17          them schools falling down. Dr. Ackerman  
18          always said one thing: Follow the money.  
19          When you follow the money, you'll see  
20          who's who. Parent Power has never been  
21          for the School District, but now she's an  
22          SRC person.

23                   It's a setup for our children,  
24          and it's time for the City of  
25          Philadelphia to wake up and do something

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2                   to our children before it's too late.

3                   Thank you.

4                   (Applause.)

5                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
6                   you very much.

7                   Ms. Bazemore, you want to come  
8                   next. Thank you, Ms. Ruth Bazemore.  
9                   Ms. Bazemore is a leader out in West  
10                  Philly, and we thank her for her  
11                  leadership and for being here.

12                  MS. BAZEMORE: Thank you,  
13                  Councilwoman Blackwell.

14                  COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
15                  you, Ms. Bazemore.

16                  MS. BAZEMORE: And other  
17                  people. I guess it's an honor, because I  
18                  want to thank you basically because I'm a  
19                  part of the group that wants to be an  
20                  elected official, but Philadelphia really  
21                  had just lost its way. And I have been  
22                  born and breed in Philadelphia, and we  
23                  have been a product of the Philadelphia  
24                  schools, the community, and actually  
25                  basically volunteered in the schools. So



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2           I have a pretty good idea about what's  
3           going on. But understanding that  
4           Philadelphia no longer is the City of  
5           Brotherly Love, it's no longer about  
6           democracy, and it's definitely not about  
7           neighborhoods and the people. And when  
8           we look at how the things are going in  
9           the City, it's basically self-entrance,  
10          privatization, and basically corruption,  
11          and you continue to name it. But one  
12          thing is accountability, and if people  
13          understood exactly what is happening in  
14          our city and with -- we no longer are  
15          able to even have a voice, and when we  
16          see how the things are going in our  
17          city -- first it was the RCO with the  
18          zoning, and the zoning has taken our  
19          first -- made up helpless in fairness.  
20          Then it came the AVI. Then it came the  
21          SAR. And it all goes down to get rid of  
22          the people in Philadelphia, because the  
23          plan for Philadelphia is not about the  
24          people who basically made Philadelphia  
25          the City that it was. It's about the

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2           colleges, special interests, you want to  
3           have this tourism and name it, and when  
4           you look at the way the City is going,  
5           we're all surrounded by universities, and  
6           the few of us left is in a little bubble.  
7           And so what has happened is that if we  
8           knew the history of the City, in the '60s  
9           the universities condemned the best part  
10          of our city for their own interest and  
11          let it sit, our houses, and they took  
12          West Philly and North Philly and even  
13          Ellwood, and they condemned those houses  
14          and let them sit and it brought down  
15          decay. There hasn't been any real money  
16          given to Philadelphia.

17                 Then basically the last ten  
18          years -- and it's a little longer -- has  
19          been the El construction in West  
20          Philadelphia, which was a viable  
21          neighborhood. It's been destroyed, and  
22          people have been put out of businesses  
23          and they haven't even been paid or made  
24          restitution. Our houses have suffered,  
25          but now it's our children?

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2                   I have basically worked in Huey  
3           School, Daroff School and lately Barry  
4           School, and I would suggest that if  
5           everybody -- and most of it is our fault,  
6           because we all was becoming one-sided  
7           because we wanted the best for our  
8           children. So we kind of forgot our roots  
9           and just kept moving out of the City into  
10          other neighborhoods for our kids to have  
11          a best interest of schools and a quality  
12          of life, but we forgot that wherever you  
13          go, you still always going to be black.  
14          And as long as you are black and  
15          minority, it's still never going to be  
16          fair. And we really looked at our  
17          churches and we looked at our churches to  
18          guide us, and they have not done their  
19          job. They have basically also became  
20          business people. And the whole thing now  
21          is about a business and self-interest,  
22          and we have to go back. But if we all  
23          look at what is really going on and been  
24          a part, if we looked at our neighborhood  
25          schools, it didn't just deter. It's been

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2           a whole long deterioration, and it's been  
3           a long list of how you play the game.

4           And years ago when we were fighting the  
5           state for equal money for our children,  
6           what did they do? John Street gave the  
7           state our schools. We got SAR and all of  
8           this other thing and we lost control.

9           And each time we have given up on what we  
10          wanted for our schools. They brought in  
11          CEOs, and each one was a failure to our  
12          city. Our kids regressed instead of  
13          progressed. And how we're ranked now,  
14          you talk about schools and you bringing  
15          in other people, even just with the farm  
16          labor, you're talking about you have to  
17          bring in farms, farm laborer, because  
18          nobody knows how to do farming. And we  
19          are nothing but farmers. And then you  
20          have to bring in other people to handle  
21          different aspects when you don't even  
22          teach our children. You need to be  
23          ashamed.

24                       We are -- third countries are  
25          better educated than we are. And so what

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2 happens is its design. Privatization has  
3 taken over our country. And not only  
4 that, religion and states and all are in  
5 bed together. You cannot have certain  
6 charter schools taking money from public  
7 schools. You can't have schools that are  
8 deteriorating and you building new  
9 schools out of the same money. You have  
10 to basically make people accountable.  
11 And for some things to be equal, they  
12 have to be the same. You can't give one  
13 group all these things in your school and  
14 the other schools don't have anything.

15           Just the last month I've been  
16 working with Barry School at 59th and  
17 Race, brand new school. After four  
18 years, that was a total disgrace. What  
19 did they do? They built a brand new  
20 school on the same plan, the same area as  
21 the old school, because you didn't expend  
22 it and you only went up one building -- I  
23 mean, one floor high. And in that  
24 school, they got 828 kids as of last  
25 week, one counselor. You have a

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2           principal that four years -- it's not  
3           even four years. Three and a half years  
4           after you built the school, you had six  
5           different principals because it's just so  
6           deplorable. New school, but it's  
7           deplorable, because you have a library  
8           with no librarian. You have a counselor  
9           that's on the fourth floor and you have  
10          to walk through the libraries to get to  
11          the counselor office. You don't have any  
12          security.

13                 We just got finished with the  
14          school where a kid was kidnapped in West  
15          Philadelphia, and I went there at 1  
16          o'clock to meet with one of the -- it  
17          wasn't even a counselor. One of the  
18          aides to do a trip for the school because  
19          they have no resources, and so we were  
20          working a trip to take them to West  
21          Point. And 1 o'clock, nobody is at the  
22          desk, no security. There's nothing in  
23          the school. And the person that I was  
24          working with the trip is there only three  
25          days a week. The other two she's there

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2           only at another school.

3                   The elevator that they have --  
4           another day I went and the parent was  
5           upset because her kid was bullied and she  
6           wanted to talk to someone. They told her  
7           the school was closed, and there was no  
8           police there, and I told them call the  
9           19th District.

10                   People need to actually not  
11           listen but go to these schools. Some of  
12           them got it all going, but they take the  
13           money from the people who can least  
14           afford it, take them to the other  
15           schools. They giving them art and  
16           whatnot, and our kids who can't afford it  
17           have nothing, get nothing.

18                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
19           you, Ms. Bazemore.

20                   MS. BAZEMORE: It's unfair. It  
21           all needs to be put out, and things have  
22           to change, and it has to change by how  
23           the people understand what the system is.  
24           And the system is not friendly to the  
25           people in Philadelphia.

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2                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
3                   you.

4                   MS. BAZEMORE: Thank you.

5                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
6                   you, Ms. Bazemore.

7                   (Applause.)

8                   MS. BAXTER: Good afternoon. I  
9                   think I'm the last speaker.

10                  Philadelphia --

11                  COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Excuse  
12                  me. Give us your name, please.

13                  MS. BAXTER: Pardon me?

14                  COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: May we  
15                  have your name.

16                  MS. BAXTER: My name is Helen  
17                  Baxter, Mom Baxter.

18                  COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
19                  you.

20                  MS. BAXTER: I just want to  
21                  say, Philadelphia, hear this. The seed  
22                  you sew, so shall you reap. What goes  
23                  around come around. And the unjust shall  
24                  never prosper.

25                  That's it.



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2                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
3 you very much. Thank you, Ms. Baxter.

4                   (Applause.)

5                   MS. SHIKOMBA: Hi. I was  
6 waiting to be called and I thought -- I  
7 didn't hear the announcement. My name is  
8 Madeline Shikomba. I have spoken to you  
9 before. Councilwoman Blackwell,  
10 Councilman Oh, I'm here to represent  
11 Philadelphia taxpayers, Philadelphia  
12 Neighbors for Tax Action and North of  
13 Washington Avenue Coalition.

14                   I've talked to you before about  
15 the SRC when I spoke to you about the  
16 Actual Value Initiative. I told you then  
17 that they need to be gotten rid of and  
18 elected school board put in its place. I  
19 haven't changed my mind.

20                   The SRC has failed to  
21 accomplish its mission, which was to  
22 improve the education of our students and  
23 to force (unintelligible) to academic  
24 achievement. They have failed to do  
25 this. They have squandered billions of

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2           dollars for little to show for it. Now  
3           they're asking for more money, with no  
4           promise of reopening a single school that  
5           has been closed or will lead to  
6           improvement in academic development of  
7           our students. Do not give them a dime.  
8           I said this before and I'll tell you it  
9           again. I'm not going to give them money  
10          to be squandered.

11                   The SRC is spending an  
12          inordinate amount of money on charter  
13          schools. That's one thing I want to talk  
14          to you about, charter schools. Each year  
15          the SRC has been increasing amount per  
16          child to these charter schools, which is  
17          affecting the amount of money available  
18          for public schools. Why? Is this their  
19          way of trying to privatize the public  
20          school system? I think so.

21                   MR. SHEPPARD: That's it right  
22          there.

23                   MS. SHIKOMBA: They're using  
24          more and more public money to open more  
25          and more charter schools. And these

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2       charter schools are not even being held  
3       accountable like the SRC for our money  
4       that they are being given. Who is  
5       watching what is going on?

6           The heads of some of these  
7       schools are being paid a salary  
8       commensurate to somebody who is a head of  
9       a public school system such as the  
10      superintendent. How is that? Most of  
11      these public school superintendents are  
12      responsible for thousands of kids. On  
13      the average, these charter schools have,  
14      what, between 300 and 500 kids?

15           Also, you need to check out  
16      their staff. Some of them are not even  
17      paying the City wage tax. Now, how is  
18      that going on? Getting public money to  
19      run a charter school and you not even  
20      paying City wage tax? I'd like to know  
21      how that's going on.

22           Why are some of the offices  
23      located outside the City limits? I want  
24      to know why that too. Is the SRC and the  
25      state auditing these schools? I don't

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2           think so. There are complaints by  
3           parents about charter schools concerning  
4           lottery system and how students are  
5           chosen. They seem to be ignoring these  
6           complaints.

7                       How come some charter schools  
8           have been successful in limiting the  
9           number of special or challenged students  
10          being admitted to their schools? Know  
11          why? I don't know why. But I know why  
12          they don't want them. Because it costs  
13          too much money.

14                     Where are these charter schools  
15          getting money to refurbish buildings like  
16          GlaxoSmith and Kline? I mean, that's a  
17          huge building. Where are they getting  
18          the money to refurbish that for a charter  
19          school? And really who owns these  
20          buildings, and what is the relationship  
21          between the owner of these buildings and  
22          these charter schools? There are a lot  
23          of questions that need to be answered  
24          that I don't have the answers for, and  
25          I'm hoping they will find them out.

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2                   The rest of the country is  
3           looking at Philadelphia and these charter  
4           schools. If they succeed here in  
5           privatizing these schools through charter  
6           schools, the other cities will gladly  
7           follow. To me the SRC is following a  
8           script designed to achieve privatization  
9           of public schools and to end what we know  
10          of as public schools. We have -- we got  
11          to stop the SRC from doing this.

12                  The SRC is telling us, Oh, we  
13          got to close schools because the  
14          population is down. Now, according to  
15          them, you have to believe that everybody  
16          is moving out of Philadelphia or people  
17          deciding not to have any more kids. Now,  
18          you know that ain't the truth. Why they  
19          have a decline in school population?  
20          They are finding them all through charter  
21          schools. That's why there's a decrease.  
22          And there will continue to be a decrease  
23          every time they create a new charter  
24          school. This has got to be stopped.

25                  There are some cities in this

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2           state that don't even have a charter  
3           school. Don't want them. And  
4           Philadelphia has got to cease creating  
5           these charter schools. They are not  
6           achieving anything more --

7                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Do you  
8           have a position on elected school board?

9                   MS. SHIKOMBA: Yeah, I'm  
10          getting to it. You know what my position  
11          is. Get rid of them. Anyway, but I have  
12          to talk about this first.

13                 We need -- you made me lose my  
14          train of thought.

15                 Anyway, like I said, I'm tired  
16          of these charter schools being created.  
17          I'm tired of nobody looking at what's  
18          happening with this money, and I'm tired  
19          of our money being squandered.

20                 The SRC is not answerable to  
21          the people. They're appointed by the  
22          state and the Mayor. They are holding  
23          the parents and the people of this city  
24          hostage. They are paying us like an  
25          accordion. They open it up to get the

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2           parents a beat-up path down to City  
3           Council and cry out for more money in the  
4           name of their children and to save the  
5           schools. Then they turn around and shut  
6           the accordion off when the parents come  
7           before them crying about not to close  
8           down their schools and provide the basic  
9           needs for our schools. This must be  
10          stopped. We're not an accordion. And  
11          you have got to stop letting them use you  
12          as a hostage to play you an accordion.

13                   We need a school board that  
14          will be answerable to the people they  
15          serve. The SRC has got to be rid of. We  
16          need to get rid of them before they  
17          destroy our public school system as we  
18          know it, and we need an elected school  
19          board.

20                   Thank you.

21                   (Applause.)

22                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
23          you very much.

24                   Mr. Sheppard.

25                   MR. SHEPPARD: Thank you,

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2           Councilwoman. Thank you, Councilman.

3           And this is on behalf of my two

4           grand-nephews.

5                     My nephew Elijah White and

6           Arnell White, one of his schools doesn't

7           have sports. So fortunately he plays out

8           of Enon Tabernacle's sports teams for the

9           last few years and so does his brother,

10          Arnell. And he wants to change schools

11          because there's no sports, and they're

12          both very good. And with sports, you

13          know, they learn conflict resolution,

14          team building, how to take direction from

15          the coaches. The cheerleaders are there.

16          The parents are their cheerleaders. And

17          the players are there, and they travel.

18          They go on in the school systems. Like

19          when I went to West Philly High, I stayed

20          for the gym meets and basketball games,

21          and then we meet students and parents and

22          coaches from other schools. And then if

23          you're fortunate enough, you go to the

24          City championships and then the State

25          championships and then on to the national



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2       championships, so you get that travel  
3       experience. And then you meet other  
4       students from across town. So when you  
5       go across town, you know, in a bad area,  
6       Oh, we played against you last week,  
7       you're good. You know, so it's that  
8       feeling.

9                   They have no music. So if the  
10       parents don't have means or the child  
11       doesn't have the resources to go to  
12       after-school music lessons or go on  
13       Saturdays, how are they ever going to  
14       learn to read music? How are they going  
15       to learn the exposure to one of the homes  
16       of jazz? So if they don't get all A's  
17       and B's and probably all A's, they  
18       haven't been introduced, so they can't  
19       get that music scholarship. They can't  
20       get that basketball scholarship. They  
21       can't get that football scholarship. She  
22       can't get that lacrosse scholarship. She  
23       can't get that gymnastics scholarship.  
24       He or she can't get that swimming  
25       scholarship if they aren't in the top 5

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2           percentile of their schools. And what  
3           happens to the arts, you know, that our  
4           school where my other son left Conwell  
5           was a magnet school down in Kensington  
6           and went on to Chestnut Hill Academy. So  
7           if they're not exposed to the arts, to  
8           the music, to home economics, why not the  
9           courses in financial literacy, in civics,  
10          so when they graduate, they know how to  
11          vote, they know the elected officials,  
12          for financial literacy they know how to  
13          do a checking account, a banking account,  
14          how to negotiate their own salaries,  
15          learn how to -- parenting class, home  
16          economics, you know, having children  
17          young. Let's teach them in these schools  
18          how to be parents.

19                 So he was also asking about  
20          languages. He was concerned about  
21          languages. My niece took them out to the  
22          charter schools where a lot of those  
23          things are in place.

24                         COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
25          you. Are you almost --

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2                   MR. SHEPPARD: My last wrap-up  
3 was that the SRC gave Vallas a big bonus  
4 and the next month he was gone, but  
5 Ackerman was crucified for unemployment  
6 and her richly deserved pensions. The  
7 higher administration that should be  
8 indicted for corruption of minors  
9 continue to get their bonuses. They  
10 should be indicted and they should be in  
11 jail. If I did half the job that they  
12 do, I'd have been fired so long ago and  
13 dismissed. But they continue to get  
14 bonus, and this is social engineering at  
15 its worse to facilitate the pipeline to  
16 the prison industrial college right from  
17 elementary school.

18                   Thank you for listening.

19                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
20 you very much.

21                   And last, but not least, is  
22 Mother Bertha Simmons. We'll have her  
23 come forward, and while she's coming, let  
24 me say that I'm a charter school  
25 supporter. So those who are anti-charter

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2       schools, charter schools are public  
3       schools, and certainly many of them --  
4       most charter schools were founded by  
5       people who were superintendents,  
6       teachers, leaders in public school and  
7       thought that they wanted to -- they had a  
8       passion to try to do something to make  
9       kids -- to help our youngsters succeed.  
10      They can be judged as all other schools  
11      are, and should be. Some are good and  
12      some are not good. That's how life is.  
13      But I'm for every opportunity to educate  
14      our youngsters, no matter what they are,  
15      and we're for all public schools, just  
16      for the record.

17                   (Applause.)

18                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: And  
19      now certainly last, but not least, Mother  
20      Bertha Simmons.

21                   MS. SIMMONS: Hello, everybody.

22                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Hello.

23                   MS. SIMMONS: I've been out  
24      this morning buying clocks for the kids  
25      that had to go back to school. I buy all

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2           colors and all kind. I find out what  
3           school they're going to and I go to the  
4           parents, I go to the senior citizen  
5           places and buy the big clocks to put in  
6           their room. They tell me, grand-mom,  
7           mom, we got to watch -- everybody calls  
8           me mom and grand-mom, but I love it. I  
9           say, A watch is not going to help you.  
10          And they have been being on time for the  
11          last four years, all colors and all kind,  
12          because I make the parents -- I go with  
13          them and put them in their room.

14                 And the kids are our future.  
15          We got to support our kids, because we  
16          are all given down. They're going to  
17          step up and do what's right if we do  
18          what's right. So I want to let all of  
19          you know, everybody needs a prayer. I  
20          don't care how you pray. Everybody prays  
21          different. When I was going to school,  
22          we would sing "God Bless America" and go  
23          in our classroom. But kids nowadays tell  
24          me, Grand-mom, we don't have nothing to  
25          say in school now. They don't let us

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2           even say good morning to one another. We  
3           don't even greet each other.

4                   I said, Well, that's got to  
5           stop, because everybody needs a little  
6           bit of coalition, education, and a little  
7           direction to go the right way.

8                   So let us jump up and start  
9           right now. And don't forget all of you  
10          all in here, you all think you are grown  
11          anyway. So you got to step up and say  
12          your prayers at night and teach your kids  
13          or your grand-kids to say their prayers  
14          at night, and wake up the next morning,  
15          go about your business, but let the Lord  
16          know that you were there and thank him  
17          for waking you up, because you did not  
18          wake up by yourself. If it wasn't for  
19          God on your side, where would you be?  
20          Because you pray, and if you do the right  
21          thing, he will keep you here. And I know  
22          about it. He'll make you do the right  
23          thing. Because my boy sitting over  
24          there, he know he better do the right  
25          thing, because he know I watch him. And

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2           I got a belt for everybody who cannot do  
3           the right thing. Because we are living  
4           on this earth. The kids tell me, they  
5           pass by some of the people and they be  
6           cursing. Why are they saying bad words?  
7           Why are they cursing?

8                     I say, Well, why were you  
9           listening?

10                    They said, Because they stand  
11           beside us and curse. How are we going to  
12           walk away?

13                    But I want you all to know,  
14           stop using your bad words in front of  
15           kids. In fact, you don't need to use no  
16           bad words.

17                    When I was growing up, when my  
18           momma called me, she'd tell me to bring  
19           my behind in the house. All I knew I had  
20           was a behind. And you'd better show it  
21           and get in there. You know what I mean?

22                    So all of you old folks who  
23           think you grown and think you know it  
24           all, you don't know the right thing.  
25           Don't curse in front of kids. Don't

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2           curse in front of nobody. You don't need  
3           cursing at all. Just say good morning.  
4           How are you? Good-bye. Good to see you.  
5           Open up nice words, you know, because the  
6           kids come and tell me. I meet them down  
7           here. I just met one last week, Italian  
8           girl. She said, I haven't seen you a  
9           couple of weeks. I've been looking for  
10          you.

11                    I said, Well, I was probably  
12          down City Hall or somewhere down there  
13          talking to my daughter, Jannie, or  
14          somewhere.

15                    Well, I'm going to come down to  
16          Jannie's office and see if I can catch  
17          you in Jannie's office.

18                    I said, Well, come on down  
19          there. I might be there in there.

20                    She said, Because I need you to  
21          come into the school and tell the teacher  
22          what to do with us. She don't half teach  
23          us. She tells us a little this and a  
24          little that. It's nothing that we can  
25          really learn. So how are we going to



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2           learn, she said, going to school? She  
3           said, I learn from people in the street  
4           or people at church. They tell me how to  
5           read and how to write.

6                   And I go and buy books and  
7           things for them. I do what I can. When  
8           I get my once-a-month check, I buy for  
9           the kids and the old folks. I just went  
10          last year. A white family called me up  
11          and said meet them at a funeral home.

12                   I said, Funeral home for what?

13                   He said, Come.

14                   He had to plan his funeral for  
15          he and his wife. He could not trust his  
16          kids to plan their funeral.

17                   So I want to let you know, we  
18          got to step up. Do the right thing for  
19          the kids. You think the kids are stupid,  
20          but we are stupid. You got to let the  
21          kids know what to do and do the right  
22          thing, because you think they don't talk  
23          about you and don't say what you say.  
24          They tell me a whole lot, all colors and  
25          all kind. And I want you all to know,

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2           step up, walk up, talk to the kids, say  
3           how are you? You don't have to have a  
4           conversation. Just say hello, how are  
5           you? They appreciate you even waving at  
6           them sometimes, because they said nobody  
7           never recognize them.

8                        So let us jump up and shout and  
9           jump up or say something or wave your  
10          hand. Don't forget about the youth. The  
11          youth is our future. So we got to  
12          support the youth. And don't forget  
13          tonight to say your prayers and thank the  
14          Lord for bringing you in here today and  
15          wake you up in the morning and start you  
16          on another day. Because I tell you, my  
17          daughter there, I taught her when she was  
18          coming up, say your prayers. I would  
19          want to take her across the street to go  
20          to school. She'd be jigging and jumping.  
21          I said, Wait until the light change and  
22          we'll go across the street, and she would  
23          wait until the light change and we'd go  
24          across the street. And she know that she  
25          know what to do if she still know what to

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2           do. If she's doing people right in here,  
3           she's doing good by everybody. I pray  
4           for her, and I'm going to pray for all of  
5           you. But I want to pray for that man who  
6           want to get the prayer back in school. I  
7           need him right now. And I want to find  
8           out do he have children or how was he  
9           brought up? How was he brought up? How  
10          he think he going to continue to live  
11          without some type of a prayer?

12                 So I want you all to get on top  
13          of him right away. Right away. I need  
14          him. Because I want to tell him what to  
15          do for his life, his family, and his  
16          self. And I want y'all to go home  
17          tonight, and if you got a wife or a  
18          family or a girlfriend or whoever that  
19          you care about, speak to them real nice.  
20          Say I still love you, God is good all the  
21          time, and go to bed and say your prayers.

22                 Thank you.

23                 (Applause.)

24                 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
25          you, Mother Simmons.

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2                   I think that is the final word.

3                   And certainly we thank you all for being  
4                   here, and this hearing will be recessed  
5                   subject to the call of the Chair.

6                   Thank you all. God bless you,  
7                   Mother Simmons. We love you.

8                   Thank you all.

9                   (Committee on Education  
10                  concluded at 3:20 p.m.)

11                  - - -

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CERTIFICATE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the  
proceedings, evidence and objections are  
contained fully and accurately in the  
stenographic notes taken by me upon the  
foregoing matter, and that this is a true and  
correct transcript of same.

-----  
MICHELE L. MURPHY  
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| <b>\$1.1</b> 42:19                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>\$1.35</b> 176:10                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>\$115</b> 42:17                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>\$120</b> 211:21                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>\$133</b> 211:24                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>\$180</b> 90:22                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>\$2</b> 42:21 200:18                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>\$2.3</b> 186:12                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>\$2.5</b> 164:23                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>\$2.50</b> 201:2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>\$200</b> 75:13                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>\$26,000</b> 112:13                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>\$28,000</b> 112:13                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>\$3.5</b> 164:23                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>\$4</b> 176:11                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>\$50,000</b> 240:9                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>\$60</b> 91:25 210:9<br>210:19 211:20<br>228:6                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>\$700</b> 42:13                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>\$73</b> 42:11                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>\$75,000</b> 167:19                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>\$86.4</b> 240:13                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                             |
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