

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE ON GLOBAL OPPORTUNITIES
AND CREATIVE/INNOVATIVE ECONOMY

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Monday, May 14, 2012
10:10 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILMAN DAVID OH, CHAIR
COUNCILMAN W. WILSON GOODE, JR.
COUNCILMAN KENYATTA JOHNSON
COUNCILMAN CURTIS JONES, JR.
COUNCILMAN DENNIS O'BRIEN
COUNCILMAN BRIAN J. O'NEILL
COUNCILWOMAN MARIAN B. TASCO

RESOLUTION 120096 - Resolution authorizing
Council's Committee on Global Opportunities
and Creative/Innovative Economy to hold
hearings to investigate the establishment of a
tax credit and veterans' assistance program
that will allow employers to be eligible for a
local tax credit upon hiring Veterans...

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COUNCILMAN OH: If I could have your attention, we are about to begin our hearing on the resolution concerning employer tax credits for veterans. And first I wanted to thank everyone who took time out to come today to testify or to observe or to make comments for this matter.

To let you know, we have in Council, of course, very many different things going on simultaneously. Councilman Goode has just come back from a jobs hearing, and there's something else going on in the Caucus Room, so we'll have people coming in and out. But the way this works is, we will have a hearing on this resolution. Your testimony is being recorded and will be submitted forward should this come out with a favorable recommendation, and based on that, it will go then to the Finance Committee and we will have some final testimony at that point in time. And that's a process that we will go

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2 through. So it is very important that
3 you're here today and very much
4 appreciated.

5 I will begin this process and
6 we will try to do this as quickly as
7 possible. As I said, we have written
8 testimony. You're always welcome to
9 submit something in writing. And we do
10 have some limitations in time, because
11 you're all here and busy, that we could
12 get your comments and try to get as many
13 as possible.

14 My name is Councilman David Oh.
15 I'm the Chair of the Council's Committee
16 on Global Opportunities and the
17 Creative/Innovative Economy and we have a
18 hearing here. So I'll call to order the
19 hearing on Resolution 120096, and I'll
20 ask the Clerk to please read the title of
21 the resolution.

22 THE CLERK: Resolution 120096,
23 authorizing Council's Committee on Global
24 Opportunities and the Creative/Innovative
25 Economy to hold hearings to investigate

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2 the establishment of a tax credit and
3 veterans' assistance program that will
4 allow employers to be eligible for local
5 tax credits upon hiring Veterans of the
6 United States military thereby increasing
7 the profile of a ready workforce in
8 Philadelphia.

9 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
10 much. And would you please call the
11 first witness for testimony.

12 THE CLERK: Tilahun Afessa from
13 the Revenue Department.

14 (Witness approached witness
15 table.)

16 COUNCILMAN OH: Good morning,
17 Deputy Commissioner. Thank you for
18 attending. If you please identify
19 yourself by stating your name and then
20 give us your testimony.

21 MR. AFESSA: My name is Tilahun
22 Afessa. Good morning, Councilman Oh and
23 members of the Committee on Global
24 Opportunities and Creative/Innovative
25 Economy. My name is Tilahun Afessa and

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2 I'm the Director of Policy, Planning and
3 Outreach for the Department of Revenue.

4 I am here today to testify regarding
5 Resolution No. 120096, which authorizes
6 this Committee to investigate the
7 establishment of a tax credit and
8 veterans' assistance program that will
9 allow employers to be eligible for a
10 local tax credit upon hiring Veterans of
11 the United States military.

12 As stated in the resolution, in
13 November 2011, President Obama signed
14 into law the Vow to Hire Heroes Act. The
15 Act provides tax credits up to 2,400 for
16 employers who hire veterans who have been
17 unemployed at least four weeks, up to
18 5,600 for hiring veterans who have been
19 unemployed longer than six months and up
20 to 9,600 for businesses that hire
21 veterans who have service-related
22 disabilities and have been unemployed
23 longer than six months.

24 Locally, the Department of
25 Revenue administers all tax credit

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2 programs authorized and approved by the
3 City Council. Since 2002, City Council
4 has established six tax credit programs
5 that may be claimed by eligible
6 businesses against the Business Income
7 and Receipts Tax, BIRT, formally known as
8 the Business Privilege Tax. If a tax
9 credit program is approved by City
10 Council for employers who hire veterans,
11 the Department of Revenue would most
12 likely administer this program too.

13 The Department of Revenue is
14 willing to work with Councilman Oh in
15 formulating the actual provisions of an
16 ordinance that would give a local tax
17 credit to employers who hire veterans.
18 We would also be able to provide guidance
19 in establishing a veterans' assistance
20 program.

21 I want to thank Councilman Oh
22 for inviting the Department of Revenue to
23 discuss this topic prior to the hearing.
24 We learned much about Councilman Oh's
25 admirable commitment to promote the

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2 welfare of veterans of the United States
3 military while desiring to create job
4 opportunities for them. Providing a tax
5 incentive to local employers who hire
6 veterans would be beneficial to both
7 employers and veterans. We look forward
8 to participating in further discussions.

9 Thank you for the opportunity
10 to testify. I will respond to any
11 questions at this time.

12 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
13 much.

14 At this time I will ask if any
15 of the Committee members -- and let me
16 recognize Councilman Goode to my left,
17 Councilman and Majority Leader Curtis
18 Jones, Jr. to my immediate left, and to
19 my immediate right, Councilwoman Marian
20 Tasco.

21 Are there any questions from
22 the Committee?

23 (No response.)

24 COUNCILMAN OH: There being
25 none, thank you very much for your

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2 testimony.

3 MR. AFESSA: Thank you.

4 COUNCILMAN OH: Clerk, would
5 you please let us know who the next
6 witness is.

7 THE CLERK: Joe Mahoney, Denise
8 Earley and Anselm Sauter from the Greater
9 Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce.

10 (Witnesses approached witness
11 table.)

12 MS. EARLEY: Good morning,
13 Chairman Oh.

14 COUNCILMAN OH: Good morning.

15 MS. EARLEY: Good morning,
16 Chairman Oh and members of the Committee.
17 My name is Denise Earley and this morning
18 I'm going to give the microphone to my
19 colleague, Anselm Sauter, to present our
20 testimony on behalf of the resolution.

21 Thank you.

22 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
23 much.

24 Please identify yourself for
25 the record and proceed with your

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2 testimony.

3 MR. SAUTER: Good morning. My
4 name is Anselm Sauter. I work in the
5 Public Policy Department at the Greater
6 Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce and also
7 manage an initiative we have called
8 Vetwork Your Business.

9 Good morning, Chairman Oh and
10 members of the Committee on Global
11 Opportunities and Creative/Innovative
12 Economy. For the record, I am Anselm
13 Sauter, Manager of Public Policy for the
14 Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce,
15 and I come before you today in support of
16 Resolution 120096, authorizing this
17 Committee to hold hearings to investigate
18 the establishment of a tax credit and
19 veterans' assistance program, which will
20 provide a local tax credit for employers
21 upon hiring veterans of the United States
22 military.

23 The Greater Philadelphia
24 Chamber of Commerce has long supported
25 efforts that recognize our veterans for

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2 their service and sacrifice to this
3 country. Since 2005, our Chamber has
4 proudly run an initiative called Vetwork
5 Your Business. The program provides
6 veteran-owned business and
7 service-disabled veteran-owned business
8 vendors with comprehensive training to
9 help them capitalize on their unique
10 classification. It also provides
11 networking opportunities to connect with
12 regional corporations and government
13 agencies looking to satisfy supplier
14 diversity goals.

15 The Vetwork mission works at
16 many different levels. First, it seeks
17 to build awareness within the veteran and
18 general communities of contract
19 opportunities available to veteran-owned
20 businesses that are enrolled in the
21 Central Contracting Registry.

22 Second, it provides
23 participating veteran businesses with the
24 educational training, thereby
25 establishing a pipeline of qualified,

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2 industry and clearance segmented
3 veteran-owned and service-disabled
4 veteran-owned businesses for corporate
5 partners and government agencies.

6 Next, it organizes network
7 opportunities for veteran-owned
8 businesses at prime contractor locations,
9 giving them exclusive access to
10 procurement officers and other veteran
11 businessowners.

12 Last, it champions legislation
13 and policy that cultivates and grows
14 veteran-owned businesses.

15 Through the leadership of
16 Pennsylvania Senator Robert "Tommy"
17 Tomlinson, our Chamber has worked hard to
18 help craft and advance Senate Bill 623,
19 which would set an annual goal of 5
20 percent participation by veteran-owned
21 businesses in all contracts awarded by
22 Commonwealth purchasing agencies. Such
23 targets currently exist for businesses
24 owned by women and minorities. However,
25 no such goal is in place for businesses

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2 owned by veterans.

3 Under the measure, the
4 Department of General Services would
5 promote and assist veteran-owned
6 businesses in learning how to do business
7 with the state and other large corporate
8 entities. I am pleased to report that
9 this bill unanimously passed the
10 Pennsylvania Senate and currently waits
11 motion in the House Veteran Affairs and
12 Emergency Preparedness Committee.

13 Through the support and
14 participation of Lockheed Martin, Johnson
15 & Johnson and other prime contractors, we
16 have been able to offer the Vetwork
17 program. These large companies show
18 tremendous commitment to supplier
19 diversity, but they also realize the
20 importance of veterans as employees.
21 Johnson & Johnson continues to place a
22 high priority on hiring veterans, seen
23 best in their announcing a former Army
24 Captain as their new CEO. Approximately
25 23 percent of Lockheed Martin's 123,000

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2 employees are U.S. military veterans, and
3 in the last five years alone, the
4 corporation has hired nearly 18,000
5 veterans.

6 Most employers understand the
7 value of hiring veterans. Military
8 veterans have already been tested under
9 very high-pressure situations. They
10 demonstrate a commitment to mission and
11 an ability to work on a team, which are
12 incredible assets to any employer.
13 However, still much can be done to
14 educate employers on the tax advantages
15 of hiring veterans and to clear the
16 negative perceptions that these
17 jobseekers unfairly face.

18 In October 2007, the Chamber
19 testified in support of a tax credit for
20 employers that hire ex-offenders under
21 the Philadelphia Reentry Employment
22 Program. The PREP program -- PREP allows
23 ex-offenders to compete for jobs by
24 incentivizing the prospective employment.
25 In a similar regard, a local tax credit

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2 for employers that hire veterans would
3 create a win-win for both veteran
4 jobseeker and employer. A tax credit
5 would alleviate the tax burden on
6 employers while allowing a qualified
7 veteran to collect a paycheck.

8 Jobs are scarce and veterans
9 find themselves competing amongst many
10 for few available positions. The Chamber
11 has stood before this elected body many
12 times while touting the positive effects
13 of a competitive tax structure on
14 businesses. As employers continue to
15 struggle in our current economy,
16 lawmakers must structure tax policy that
17 makes it easier for employers to create
18 jobs and for veteran jobseekers to find
19 them. Our veterans bravely served our
20 country and are afforded not nearly
21 enough in return. The establishment of a
22 local tax credit for employers that hire
23 veterans would go a long way towards
24 growing our regional economy but, more
25 importantly, thanking veterans.

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2 Again, thank you for this
3 opportunity. We are happy to support
4 this resolution.

5 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
6 much.

7 Is there any additional
8 testimony from the table before I ask if
9 there are any questions from the
10 Committee?

11 (No response.)

12 COUNCILMAN OH: Okay. Are
13 there any questions from anyone on this
14 Committee?

15 (No response.)

16 COUNCILMAN OH: All right.
17 There being no questions, thank you very
18 much for your testimony and for coming in
19 today. Thank you.

20 MS. EARLEY: Thank you,
21 Councilman.

22 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Let me ask
23 a question, please.

24 COUNCILMAN OH: We do have a
25 question.

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2 Councilwoman Tasco.

3 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: I was

4 looking at the testimony of the gentleman

5 from the Department of Revenue and he

6 talked about President Obama signing into

7 law Vow to Hire Heroes Act and that the

8 Act provides tax credits up to 2,400 for

9 employers who hire veterans who have been

10 unemployed at least four weeks and other

11 benefits. Now, that's a federal credit.

12 So we're talking about doing a local?

13 COUNCILMAN OH: A Philadelphia.

14 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: A

15 Philadelphia credit.

16 I forgot my question.

17 Do you have any notion how many

18 employers have taken advantage of the

19 federal credit?

20 MR. SAUTER: I do not know who

21 within our membership or employers here

22 in the region that take advantage of it.

23 It passed in, I think, November, the end

24 of November. So I don't know if the

25 statistics have come out yet to show what

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2 employers have taken advantage of it. I
3 do not know.

4 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: All right.

5 MS. EARLEY: We have other
6 members with us today that may have
7 information.

8 MR. SAUTER: If the information
9 is available, we can get that to your
10 office.

11 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: I just
12 thought about that, just to get a sense
13 of how many veterans are covered.

14 These are basically unemployed
15 veterans, what you're talking about.
16 Okay. Thank you.

17 MR. SAUTER: Thank you.

18 COUNCILMAN OH: Well, thank you
19 very much. I'll just make a note of
20 information that the Executive Order is
21 fairly recent, and after the law has come
22 out, really a bipartisan effort from both
23 the House and the Senate in the U.S.
24 government, that I believe they have just
25 recently completed some of the processes

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2 or mechanics for putting this into
3 effect. So we might not have those
4 statistics yet, but we'd like to dovetail
5 as best we can into that law.

6 So thank you very much.

7 And, Clerk, would you please
8 call the next witness.

9 THE CLERK: Alex Archawski,
10 Greater Philadelphia Veterans Network.
11 (Witness approached witness
12 table.)

13 COUNCILMAN OH: Good morning,
14 sir. Would you please identify yourself
15 for the record and begin your testimony.

16 MR. ARCHAWSKI: Sure. Alex
17 Archawski, Founder, Director, Greater
18 Philadelphia Veterans Network.

19 Councilman David Oh, thank you
20 for inviting me, and the Committee
21 members, thank you for having me here
22 today.

23 I want to first answer your
24 question, what you asked, before I get
25 into what we do and the importance of

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2 hiring vets. If you look at it, it's
3 more of an accounting issue than anything
4 else. The accountants need to be trained
5 on the paperwork process. The companies,
6 we get so much feedback from employers
7 that if we're not educated, we're not
8 going to do it. And that's I think what
9 it is. It's just a problem of
10 everybody's busy and if the accountants
11 bring it up and they train them properly,
12 then they will do it. But right now it's
13 the fear of paperwork. That's what they
14 say.

15 But I just wanted to answer
16 that based on the feedback we've
17 received. They're excited about it, but
18 the paperwork process, it's just an
19 add-on for them.

20 So Greater Philadelphia
21 Veterans Network is a 501(c)(3)
22 non-profit organization. I transitioned
23 twice out of the military, got called
24 back up to active duty, lost my job and
25 had to look for another job. What I

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2 realized, it was solely on the veteran
3 and not on the employer of why the job
4 search was not effective.

5 What happens, just to let you
6 know, is, veterans get a generic resume
7 when they get out of the military. And I
8 was a search and rescue swimmer, so as
9 you can imagine, I wasn't going to swim
10 in the Schuylkill or Delaware River when
11 I got out of the military. So why that's
12 important is, a lot of the veterans are
13 frustrated because they're going in with
14 a very generic resume. So the employers
15 get even more frustrated.

16 So our mission is to really
17 define the career objective for them
18 before we even connect them with all
19 professional vets. We have an enormous
20 amount. We're not a membership
21 organization, but we're called "network"
22 because of the fact it's all about
23 seeking networking for the job.
24 Seventy-five percent of the jobs are done
25 by networking. So we polish them up and

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2 then we get them introduced to a variety
3 of different industries with other
4 veterans. We do programs and initiatives
5 like Take a Vet to Work, which is similar
6 to like Take Your Daughter to Work. So
7 the frustration is, does a veteran know
8 what sales does? Absolutely not. Do
9 they know what marketing does?

10 Absolutely not. So engaging with the
11 employers on that level gets them the
12 confidence to participate more, get them
13 involved. Employers want to do that, and
14 sometimes it's a crawl, walk, run type of
15 mentality.

16 So another one we do is the
17 Student-Veteran Internship Initiative,
18 and if you can imagine, companies want to
19 hire student vets. They're using their
20 GI bill. The biggest challenge -- and
21 this is not all institutions, but if you
22 go to the Career Services Department,
23 they say that if you come in, you have to
24 hire everybody equally within the career
25 services and students. They can't just

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2 point out vets. So that's when we come
3 in to fill that gap. So all we're doing
4 is trying to fill in gaps of accelerating
5 the process.

6 So let's circle back to
7 employers. So employers are really
8 excited about vets. Now, they can be
9 educated even more if they have time on
10 the business sense, and that's the other
11 half of what we do. For those that have
12 time, there's a 5,000 foot view, 10,000
13 foot view, 50,000 foot view. So let's
14 take the large institutions. They have
15 the most difficulty because it's all
16 about process. Ten conference calls,
17 five meetings, what are you doing, what's
18 the priority in HR, so on and so forth.
19 That's very difficult for them to start.

20 Our concept is, let's do it by
21 a department. So we do a department for
22 large firms. It works much easier. They
23 tell HR what they're going to do and it
24 works. So medium-sized companies, they
25 typically are on board, because usually

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2 the VPs are involved in that. Small
3 companies, they're the easiest. They
4 know it. They want to do it. They would
5 jump on board to do this.

6 Now, the education is really a
7 key factor for this, for them to
8 understand how much time does it take for
9 us to do this. And also we would be
10 willing to help as well because we can
11 calculate possibly the benefit of hiring
12 a veteran because of the values they
13 have, their leadership, teamwork,
14 diversity, accelerated learning curve.
15 And if you tell that to a company to hire
16 vets, if they look about the employees,
17 it costs \$20,000 to hire an employee. So
18 if they're hiring vets and they're
19 getting a tax break, their return is
20 going to happen over two years. They
21 really are. So they have to be trained
22 in the -- what we can do is go through
23 the training, tell them whoever wants to
24 learn to understand the business sense of
25 hiring vets.

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2 And I would thank you again for
3 inviting me today.

4 COUNCILMAN OH: Well, thank you
5 very much for your testimony and for your
6 service.

7 I will ask if anyone on the
8 Committee has any questions.

9 (No response.)

10 COUNCILMAN OH: There being
11 none, thank you very much.

12 And I'll ask the Clerk to call
13 up the next witness.

14 And let me just excuse us for
15 just a second to recognize that we have
16 Councilman Brian O'Neill with us now, as
17 well as Councilman and former Speaker of
18 the House, Dennis O'Brien.

19 THE CLERK: Dan Slavin, Fresh
20 Start.

21 (Witness approached witness
22 table.)

23 MR. SLAVIN: Good morning,
24 Chairman, and thank you, Council, for
25 having me here today.

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2 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
3 much for coming in.

4 MR. SLAVIN: I am Dan Slavin.
5 I'm the Vice President of Government and
6 Community Affairs for Fresh Start and
7 Fresh Start Foundation. Fresh Start has
8 been in business for the last 22 years
9 helping the chronically disadvantaged.

10 Over the past 12 years, we
11 started to develop a program with the VA.
12 Through the course of the years, we've
13 discovered quite a few interesting facts,
14 and most of them are known here by people
15 such as yourself, that the veterans that
16 we have been treating, the people that
17 have come through our program, really fit
18 the bill for the workforce. They are
19 used to a regimentation. They are used
20 to following direction and also, you
21 know, they are also trained to, as you
22 know, adapt and overcome, and we find
23 these very interesting qualities for
24 employers to look at.

25 Another thing that we've also

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2 really been pretty proud of, we are
3 serving at this point presently 150
4 veterans, which is approximately half of
5 our population for the chronically
6 disadvantaged and homeless. What we do
7 and what we've been doing is working with
8 the Department of Corrections to initiate
9 a veterans program where we have our
10 staff go to the prison system and
11 interview not only veterans but also
12 other people that are involved and see if
13 they are candidates for Fresh Start.

14 Through the process -- and our
15 goal has been through the years, which is
16 usually a nine-month to one-year stay,
17 and through that process, we like to have
18 everyone develop a working ethic. We
19 like to see them once they've
20 reestablished themselves and been
21 grounded to pursue jobs and housing.
22 Specifically with our veterans, we've had
23 a lot of help with the HUD VASH. That's
24 been helping. But we need more aspects
25 in training, and my personal feeling is

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2 that our veterans -- when we have our
3 veterans submit for training and grants,
4 that they need to follow the path of
5 what's coming in the future instead of
6 trades or education that has gone by the
7 wayside or is floundering or changing as
8 time goes on. My thoughts on this is
9 that we can develop a system, and the
10 system I think -- you know, briefly and
11 just to compact it, not only can the
12 City's Human Resources develop something,
13 but maybe the Veterans Affairs, although
14 that is a very taxed program at this
15 point, which -- I guess that's a bad
16 word, taxed. And another thing is that
17 we can work in conjunction with the
18 Chamber and with their Veterans Select
19 program, and we can maybe find a way of
20 bringing everyone together at a table and
21 maybe have a couple meetings on how we
22 can better include our veterans in this
23 workforce and with, you know, the
24 training.

25 Alex has a wonderful program,

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2 and I think that can be a good start,
3 good starting point for us. We also have
4 Marsha Four here from the VA, who is very
5 influential in their programs, and I
6 would be remiss to not recognize her and
7 her efforts on behalf of the VA.

8 Like I said, we've been here 12
9 years with them and we've really come a
10 long way with certain aspects. We found
11 that our SMI unit, which is severely
12 mentally ill, has created wonderful
13 numbers as far as stabilization, job
14 placement and housing, doing this on
15 their own. It's remarkable.

16 So what I say is that this is
17 not something that can't be overcome.
18 What's important is that we develop the
19 proper program going in. And I feel that
20 with communication -- and I'd be more
21 than happy to help. I've served on the
22 Board for the Forensic Task Force and
23 helped develop the program for Veterans
24 Court. And so there's a lot of aspects
25 to this that we know about and that we

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2 can work together and maybe finalize
3 something that will really be proactive
4 as far as our veterans go and their
5 futures.

6 Thank you for letting me share.

7 COUNCILMAN OH: Well, thank you
8 very much.

9 And I'll ask the Committee if
10 anyone has any questions?

11 Councilwoman Marian Tasco.

12 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you
13 very much, all of you, for coming in to
14 testify. And I appreciate Councilman Oh
15 taking on this responsibility as a
16 Councilmember to focus in on the needs of
17 our veterans in this country. And I just
18 wanted to ask you -- and maybe some other
19 people might respond when they testify.
20 I find it painful to see our veterans,
21 our young men, go to war and serve and
22 many of them give their lives, but when
23 they come home, there's sort of like a
24 disconnect.

25 Is there anything being done to

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2 kind of focus in on what these returning
3 veterans need and the financial support
4 we need to give them to provide the
5 services and programs they need to sort
6 of like -- not reenter, because it's just
7 kind of like get services, employment,
8 healthcare, all of the things that they
9 need for having given up their time and
10 effort to serve us in the military?

11 When you see the stories about
12 how veterans, some of them are homeless
13 and some of them have addiction, but then
14 a lot of them fall prey to predatory
15 lending and all the other kinds of
16 things, ills that befall people, I don't
17 see the real support there from the
18 government to give them the resources
19 they need to make it.

20 MR. SLAVIN: I will make you
21 aware of this, that at the end of a tour
22 or when someone comes home, there is a
23 program in place that will allow them --
24 there's a brief evaluation, and they're
25 also given packets of information as to

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2 what services they may need or all the
3 services, you know, in general that they
4 will have access to.

5 The problem is that I found in
6 the past is that -- and I'm sure most
7 service people will agree with me -- that
8 they just want to get home. So what we
9 found out through the years is that
10 people get home -- and the government has
11 been doing a much, much better job than
12 in years past in giving and allowing them
13 to have resources, but it's mostly
14 focused on when they get home. They just
15 want to get home first. Then when things
16 start to present themselves, they do have
17 that access to information, but it's such
18 a behemoth that it is difficult to catch
19 everything, you know. But, yeah, there
20 are resources available for everyone.

21 By the time they get to us,
22 they're down the road a bit. But I know
23 that the VA has been doing a pretty good
24 job as far as evaluating men as they
25 leave and getting information to them for

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2 them and their families.

3 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Okay.

4 Thank you.

5 COUNCILMAN OH: Are there any

6 other questions from the Committee?

7 (No response.)

8 COUNCILMAN OH: There being

9 none, thank you very much for your

10 testimony.

11 MR. SLAVIN: Thank you,

12 Councilman Oh.

13 COUNCILMAN OH: I'll ask the

14 Clerk to call the next witness.

15 THE CLERK: Laura Reddick from

16 Temple University.

17 (Witness approached witness

18 table.)

19 MS. REDDICK: Good morning.

20 COUNCILMAN OH: Good morning.

21 MS. REDDICK: Thank you for

22 this opportunity. I just come to observe

23 and make a statement in reference to

24 being an administrator in higher

25 education and the impact this resolution

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2 will have for institutions of higher
3 education. I applaud you for putting
4 together this resolution. I think this
5 is a great opportunity, for veterans who
6 are returning to school and opportunity,
7 for collaboration, for institutions of
8 higher education to work with the Chamber
9 of Commerce and other organizations that
10 are serving veterans to make sure they
11 get the proper training so that they can
12 take advantage of this opportunity.

13 I have worked -- I am in the
14 process of working with the Philadelphia
15 Chamber of Commerce. We had discussions
16 about an awareness campaign for
17 businesses, because one of the things
18 I've realized is that the businesses do
19 not -- they're not aware of this law.

20 The PA law was recently passed,
21 and I was asked to participate in a
22 roundtable with Senator Anthony Williams,
23 and we talked about how we can make the
24 businesses aware of this law. So if this
25 resolution is passed as well, the two

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2 together will make it a very -- will be a
3 great thing for our veterans and for
4 businesses in terms of the tax credit.

5 So I thank you for taking on
6 this challenge to make the connection to
7 pass this law from the City point, and
8 together I would hope that you will work
9 with the legislators who have passed the
10 Pennsylvania law and then also work in
11 conjunction with creating an awareness
12 campaign for businesses to know that
13 these laws are in place. Because that is
14 one of the things that I see, is that
15 there is not enough information out there
16 for businesses knowing about these
17 opportunities to help our veterans.

18 Thank you very much.

19 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
20 much. And you may have done this, but
21 I've been asked to have you state your
22 name for the record.

23 MS. REDDICK: I'm sorry. My
24 name is Laura Reddick. I'm the Associate
25 Director for Adult and Veteran Student

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2 Recruitment at Temple University.

3 COUNCILMAN OH: All right.

4 Thank you very much. If you give me just

5 a second, I'd like to ask if any

6 Committee members have any questions.

7 (No response.)

8 COUNCILMAN OH: There being

9 none, thank you very much.

10 MS. REDDICK: Thank you.

11 COUNCILMAN OH: Clerk, would

12 you call the next witness, please.

13 MR. MASS: Dick Mass from

14 Allcell Rentals.

15 (Witness approached witness

16 table.)

17 COUNCILMAN OH: Good morning,

18 sir. If you'd kindly tell us your name

19 and begin your testimony.

20 MR. MASS: Good morning. My

21 name is Dick Mass. I'm a long-time

22 Philadelphia resident. I am a

23 businessman here in town. I own a

24 business called Allcell Rentals. We rent

25 wireless communications equipment around

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2 the world. I'm also a Marine Corps
3 veteran. My son is a Marine Corps
4 veteran. I am a member of the Greater
5 Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce group
6 called Vetworks.

7 I came here today to support
8 Councilman Oh's Resolution 120096, which
9 is to establish a tax credit for
10 businesses that will provide training and
11 employment benefits for returning
12 veterans.

13 I don't think I have to explain
14 to you what our veterans have done for
15 this nation in the past 236 years. The
16 sacrifices are immeasurable.

17 Today's veterans face quite a
18 different world than their predecessors.
19 Their predecessors served a fixed period
20 of time, return home and hopefully resume
21 their lives. Today's veterans serve,
22 come home, serve, come home, serve and so
23 forth.

24 Aside from the dangers and
25 hardships of military life, their

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2 families have been just wrecked. Their
3 future is on hold. It's quite a
4 different situation than in years past.

5 Since the founding of our
6 country, our veterans, both combat and
7 non-combat, are a unique part of our
8 fiber. They pass through a crucible in
9 which they're transformed into these
10 unique citizens. Without exception, they
11 learn responsibility and assume it in
12 their lives. They learn accountability,
13 something which is sorely lacking in
14 today's world, and they become
15 accountable. They know what
16 dependability means, and they are
17 dependable. They've been trained to be
18 the most desirable employees that a
19 business might want.

20 I believe that virtually all
21 the businesses in Philadelphia are in
22 favor of offering opportunities and
23 employment to returning veterans, and in
24 the current economic climate, a tax
25 incentive certainly will move them more

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2 to action.

3 As citizens grateful for the
4 veterans' sacrifice and service,
5 providing incentives for businesses to
6 offer employment and training
7 opportunities for returning veterans is a
8 way to say thank you, well done.

9 We can all remember tax
10 incentives we provided for far less
11 deserving business ventures and personal
12 benefits. We can certainly do no less
13 for our returning veterans.

14 Councilman Oh's resolution
15 deserves serious consideration,
16 overwhelming approval and swift
17 implementation by City Council. It's a
18 way to show the gratitude of
19 Philadelphians for the sacrifices being
20 made daily by our fellow citizens.

21 COUNCILMAN OH: Well, thank you
22 very much, sir, and thank you for you and
23 your family's service.

24 I will recognize Kenyatta
25 Johnson, who has joined us. Thank you

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2 very much. And ask the Committee members
3 if they have any questions.

4 (No response.)

5 COUNCILMAN OH: There being
6 none, thank you very much.

7 MR. MASS: Thank you.

8 COUNCILMAN OH: And I'll ask
9 the Clerk to call the next witness.

10 THE CLERK: Ed Grose, Greater
11 Philadelphia Hotel Association.

12 (Witness approached witness
13 table.)

14 COUNCILMAN OH: Good morning.

15 MR. GROSE: Good morning.

16 COUNCILMAN OH: Kindly state
17 your name for the record and begin your
18 testimony.

19 MR. GROSE: Good morning. My
20 name is Ed Grose, last name spelled
21 G-R-O-S-E. I'm the Executive Director of
22 the Greater Philadelphia Hotel
23 Association.

24 Good morning, Councilman Oh and
25 members of the Committee on Global

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2 Opportunities. My name is Ed Grose, as I
3 just said. I'm the Executive Director of
4 the Greater Philadelphia Hotel
5 Association, which represents 87 hotels
6 around the region, including all of the
7 hotels in Center City and over 160 Allied
8 members. I am here to testify in support
9 of Resolution No. 120096, which gives
10 this Committee the ability to hold
11 hearings on establishing a local tax
12 credit for employers who hire veterans of
13 the United States Armed Forces.

14 First, let me thank Councilman
15 Oh for introducing this legislation. We
16 owe it to the men and women who have made
17 many sacrifices for our freedom to help
18 them find employment upon their
19 separation from the U.S. military. While
20 most employers would benefit from the
21 training and life skills learned during
22 their service, it is also a tough time to
23 be looking for work because of the
24 economy. I know my own members are not
25 projected to return to pre-recession

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2 levels until 2013. However, a tax credit
3 may be enough of an incentive for an
4 employer to create additional jobs.
5 Employers would benefit by hiring a
6 disciplined individual who would be a
7 productive employee.

8 Philadelphia has a reputation
9 for being a difficult environment for
10 businesses. In fact, we have not been
11 able to attract new Fortune 500 companies
12 to relocate to our city. While this bill
13 will not be reason enough for businesses
14 to move to Philadelphia, it will attract
15 more veterans to move to Philadelphia and
16 improve our labor talent pool. The
17 incentives will also increase our tax
18 base by creating higher-paying jobs and
19 have a positive impact on our great city.

20 I'd like to thank you for your
21 consideration and the opportunity to
22 testify this morning.

23 COUNCILMAN OH: All right.

24 Thank you very much.

25 And I'll ask the Committee if

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2 anyone has any questions.

3 (No response.)

4 COUNCILMAN OH: There being

5 none --

6 MR. GROSE: Thank you.

7 COUNCILMAN OH: -- thank you
8 very much.

9 MR. GROSE: I have copies of
10 this. I don't know. Do you need copies?

11 COUNCILMAN OH: Yes, please.

12 If we could have someone,
13 Kimberly, would you get copies of
14 whatever documents are there.

15 And you'll hand it to the
16 Sergeant-of-Arms. Thank you very much.

17 I would ask the Clerk to call
18 the next witness.

19 THE CLERK: Rhak Favors from
20 Impact Services Corporation.

21 (Witness approached witness
22 table.)

23 MR. FAVORS: Good morning,
24 everyone. Good morning, Councilman Oh.

25 COUNCILMAN OH: Kindly state

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2 your name and position and then begin
3 your testimony.

4 MR. FAVORS: My name is Rhak
5 Favors. I'm the Employment Coordinator
6 for the Vets Department at Impact
7 Services. I would like to thank you for
8 allowing me to share my thoughts about
9 this important issue. As many of you may
10 know or not, Impact Services has been
11 providing needs to the Philadelphia
12 neighborhoods for almost 40 years. It
13 has been specifically serving the needs
14 of local veterans for the last 20.

15 For the past nine years, I have
16 been engaged in helping veterans find
17 jobs. During this period, I have
18 assessed over 6,500 veterans and have
19 helped 3,500 become employed.

20 The lack of jobs is one of the
21 key factors in homelessness. In my
22 understanding, the Committee is
23 considering recommending legislation to
24 City Council which would provide local
25 employers to hire vets by offering tax

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2 credits to such employers. On behalf of
3 Impact Services, we strongly support this
4 goal and your efforts in the regard.

5 Veterans face numerous
6 obstacles to long-term employment. For
7 many of them, their entire
8 post-educational career has been spent
9 serving our country. Many of our clients
10 lack any meaningful work experience. On
11 a daily basis, we may help veterans
12 assess their talents. We offer them
13 training, as well as enhance the working
14 skills that they do have.

15 At Impact, we also provide life
16 counseling skills to assist them get
17 employed. Also, job retention is a
18 critical measure of our success, and it's
19 not just getting them a job.

20 As the Committee considers the
21 details of how the proposed legislation
22 can accomplish the goal of sustaining and
23 reducing veterans' unemployment, I would
24 ask that you also consider the importance
25 of including job retention as a factor to

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2 consider in qualifying for tax
3 incentives.

4 Also, I would like to add the
5 process can be made much easier for the
6 employer. Right now the federal one, I
7 get calls from, I would say, 85 percent
8 of my employers and they say, What's next
9 or What do I do. You know, a lot of
10 problems come when they have to know
11 exactly what the vet's discharge is and
12 whether it's service connected. And you
13 have some veterans who feel as though
14 they don't want to divulge that
15 information because it might, you know,
16 hurt them as far as being employed. So a
17 lot of guys don't want to even tell them
18 that they're a veteran, because they
19 might look at them or shun them.

20 Thank you.

21 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
22 much.

23 I'll ask if anyone has any
24 questions for this witness.

25 (No response.)

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2 COUNCILMAN OH: There being
3 none, thank you very much, sir.

4 MR. FAVORS: Thank you.

5 COUNCILMAN OH: The next
6 witness.

7 THE CLERK: Ari Merretazon,
8 Pointman Soldiers Heart Ministry.

9 (Witness approached witness
10 table.)

11 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
12 much, sir. If you'd identify yourself
13 for the record and begin your testimony.

14 MR. MERRETAZON: For the
15 record, I am Minister Ari Sesu
16 Merretazon, the Executive Director of
17 Pointman Soldiers Heart Ministry.

18 I am a decorated, honorably
19 discharged Vietnam veteran 1967 to 1968.
20 I served in the 25th Infantry and the 4th
21 Infantry Division, 3rd Brigade, 1st/35th
22 Battalion, Headquarters Recon. I'm here
23 to lift up this resolution and, of
24 course, Pointman Soldiers Heart Ministry.

25 Basically what we do, we go

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2 after the vulnerable veterans coming back
3 to vulnerable neighborhoods, and we
4 outreach. We go, we search and save.
5 And so I really want to preface my
6 testimony with that.

7 (Witness approached witness
8 table.)

9 MR. MERRETAZON: Let me also
10 say good morning, and to my right is our
11 Founding President, Deacon James Abrams.
12 And Pointman Soldier Heart Ministry has
13 been in existence for about 19 years.
14 We've subsequently been a chartered
15 veteran service organization since 2009.

16 Essentially, my testimony makes
17 two recommendations.

18 I'm without my glasses this
19 morning, so I'm going to look troubling
20 through this reading, but bear with me.

21 Essentially, my testimony makes
22 two recommendations. As we know,
23 President Barack Obama signed into law a
24 measure called Vow to Hire Heroes Act of
25 2011 that provides tax credits to

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2 companies that hire unemployed veterans.

3 While many of the City's businesses will

4 say they will support this law, we

5 recommend the City of Philadelphia

6 provide local businesses the opportunity

7 to let their say be so by initiating a

8 Hire a Veteran Pledge Campaign.

9 There's ten points to this bill

10 passed by President Barack Obama.

11 Section 261 of the Act, the Returning

12 Heroes and Wounded Warriors Work

13 Opportunity Tax Credits, amends and

14 expands the definition of veteran target

15 groups, which is the Work Opportunity Tax

16 Credit veterans target group. The

17 changes and new provision in this Act

18 apply to individuals who begin to work

19 for an employer the day after its

20 enactment, November 22nd, 2011, and

21 before January 1st, 2013. The Vow to

22 Hire Heroes Act of 2011 includes the

23 following provisions:

24 It extends the current target

25 group for veterans receiving Supplemental

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2 Nutrition Assistance Program benefits
3 with the same qualified wages cap of
4 \$6,000 and a maximum tax credit of
5 \$2,400.

6 It extends the current target
7 group for veterans with a
8 service-connected disability with the
9 same qualified wages cap \$12,000 and
10 maximum tax credit of \$4,800.

11 It extends the current target
12 group for veterans with a
13 service-connected disability unemployed
14 for at least six months with the
15 qualified wages cap increased to \$2,400
16 and the maximum tax credit increased to
17 \$9,600.

18 It establishes a new target
19 group for unemployed veterans, similar to
20 the Recovery Act of 2009, unemployed
21 veteran group that expired on December
22 31st, 2010.

23 Veterans unemployed for at
24 least four weeks with a qualified wages
25 cap of \$6,000 and a maximum tax credit of

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2 \$2,400.

3 It also extends veterans
4 unemployed for at least six months with a
5 qualified wages cap of 14,000 and a
6 maximum tax credit of 5,600.

7 State workforce agencies will
8 certify veterans as meeting the required
9 periods of unemployment based on receipt
10 of unemployment insurance compensation.

11 Qualified tax exemption; i.e.,
12 501(c)(3) organizations, can now
13 participate by hiring qualified veterans
14 and are now eligible to claim the WOTC.

15 These provisions became
16 effective the day after the President
17 signed the Vow to Hire Heroes Act into
18 law, November 22nd, 2011, through
19 December 31st, 2012.

20 The Vow to Hire Heroes Act does
21 not extend any of the other non-veteran
22 WOTC target groups, which currently
23 expire on December 31st, 2011.

24 So it gives a little preference
25 to veterans, and I really appreciate the

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2 President for doing that.

3 Since there is a public record
4 of bad actors in higher education who
5 aggressively market substandard education
6 plans to veterans and service members
7 with valuable GI benefits and to issue
8 assistance dollars, we recommend that the
9 City Council of Philadelphia to establish
10 a "principles of excellence" for
11 educational institutions to strengthen
12 oversight, enforcement and
13 accountability.

14 Now, before I continue with
15 this rational for these two
16 recommendations, it is important that I
17 contextualize my testimony with a little
18 relevant history, in the absence of
19 public relations by the City of
20 Philadelphia, in respect to veterans
21 preference for hiring veterans and their
22 spouses at a time of sacrifice and
23 economic hardship by our soldiers and
24 their families.

25 Veterans preference, as it

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2 exists today, derives from the Veterans
3 Preference Act of 1944. This Act, to a
4 large extent, resulted from the veterans
5 organizations' desire to elevate the
6 existing executive and regulatory orders
7 governing preference to the level of
8 national policy. With a victorious end
9 to World War II clearly in sight, both
10 Congress and the Administration were
11 sympathetic to the veterans
12 organizations' objective. In his
13 endorsement of the legislation, I go back
14 and quote President Roosevelt. He wrote,
15 "I believe that the federal government,
16 functioning in its capacity as an
17 employer, should take the lead in
18 assuring those who are in the armed
19 forces that when they return, special
20 consideration will be given to them in
21 their efforts to obtain employment. It
22 is absolutely impossible to take millions
23 of our young men out of their normal
24 pursuits for the purpose of fighting to
25 preserve the nation and then expect them

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2 to resume their normal activities without
3 having any special consideration shown
4 them." Surely these words apply today.

5 The Act, in essence, was a
6 consolidation of the various preference
7 provisions already in effect by the
8 various Executive Orders and regulations.
9 It went a step further by broadening and
10 strengthening existing veterans
11 preference rules by giving them
12 legislative sanction.

13 Now, a little bit more about
14 those two recommendations I mentioned.
15 In reference to the first recommendation
16 regarding the Philadelphia Chamber of
17 Commerce, I encourage the City to engage
18 the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce in
19 an agreement setting forth a reasonable
20 goal to hire veterans and their spouses
21 and be a leading voice in this campaign
22 by encouraging its members to make
23 written pledges to hire eligible and
24 qualified veterans pursuant to Resolution
25 No. 120096.

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2 Additionally, some outcome
3 measures must be developed for this
4 campaign. This recommendation augments
5 efforts by the President and the First
6 Lady, Michelle Obama, to win pledges from
7 businesses to hire 100,000 veterans and
8 their spouses in agreement with the
9 United States Chamber of Commerce and the
10 International Franchise Association that
11 has led to agreements by the United
12 States Chamber of Commerce and the
13 International Franchise Association to
14 hire 100,000 veterans and military
15 spouses by 2014.

16 In reference to the second
17 recommendation regarding the bad actors
18 in higher education, the City of
19 Philadelphia has, as stated in Resolution
20 120096, numerous colleges and
21 universities that would be able to
22 provide necessary training for returning
23 and unemployed veterans to increase their
24 visibility to employers who would benefit
25 from their talent and tax credit for

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2 hiring them. President Obama, with his
3 concern for making the return of our war
4 veterans seamless, noted in a recent
5 Executive Order that some schools have
6 recruited veterans with serious brain
7 injuries or emotional vulnerabilities
8 without providing academic support or
9 counseling. Some have pushed veterans
10 into costly institutional loans rather
11 than cheaper federal loans. Others
12 refuse to disclose performance data such
13 as graduation rates.

14 To address these issues,
15 Pointman Soldier Heart Ministry insists
16 on more transparency than what now
17 exists. That is to say, our numerous
18 colleges, universities and schools should
19 provide applicants, veterans applicants,
20 with completed, quote/unquote, know
21 before you owe financial aid forms
22 developed by the Consumer Financial
23 Protection Board and the Department of
24 Education. The forms show tuition and
25 fees, availability of federal financial

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2 aid, estimated student loan debt upon
3 graduation and outcome measures like
4 graduation rates. The VA will post on
5 its website a list of schools receiving
6 GI Bill benefits that agree to adhere to
7 these requirements. New legislation
8 would be needed to punish non-compliant
9 schools more effectively. The City must
10 protect our veterans from these bad
11 actors.

12 These bad actors often say to
13 our veterans, quote/unquote, You don't
14 have to pay a dime for your degree. But
15 once you register, they'll suddenly make
16 you sign up for a high-interest student
17 loan. They'll say that if you transfer
18 schools, you can transfer your credits.
19 But when you try to actually do that, you
20 suddenly find out that you can't.
21 They're trying to swindle and hoodwink
22 you, and the City must put an end to it.

23 In closing, I remind the City
24 to look at its own hiring policies to
25 publicly communicate a veterans

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2 preference accommodation to the returning
3 veterans of the City. These changes
4 would be a public demonstration of your
5 honoring the concept of veterans
6 preference in accordance with current
7 law.

8 This would also demonstrate the
9 City of Philadelphia has our veterans
10 six, which means the City of Philadelphia
11 must show veterans that they have their
12 backs.

13 Thank you much for the
14 opportunity, and I hope my stumbling
15 through this reading did not do anything
16 from the importance of some of the
17 recommendations that we've shared with
18 you today.

19 COUNCILMAN OH: We have your
20 testimony in writing. We've heard your
21 testimony, and thank you for your
22 testimony and your service.

23 And, sir, I understand you
24 would like to say a few words.

25 MR. ABRAM: Yes, I would.

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2 COUNCILMAN OH: Would you
3 please identify yourself for the record.

4 MR. ABRAM: My name is James
5 Abram. I am President and CEO and
6 founder of Pointman Soldiers Heart
7 Ministry in Philadelphia.

8 As Brother Ari stated so
9 marvelous, we are in a crisis. With
10 those unemployed veterans that are coming
11 home, we have also all sort of
12 unemployable because of drugs and PTSD.

13 I served with the First Calvary
14 in the Army, Vietnam, 1966-'67, and
15 through my service there in Vietnam, I
16 came home with several problems, alcohol
17 and finally post-traumatic stress
18 disorder. And after I received my 100
19 percent, I said I would do my best to
20 help veterans get their just dues. And
21 I'm in agreement with President Obama
22 about within the next five years, we
23 would have no homeless veterans here in
24 the United States.

25 But I just want to thank

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2 Councilman Ho -- Oh.

3 COUNCILMAN OH: Oh.

4 MR. MERRETAZON: Hoorah.

5 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
6 much, sir.

7 MR. ABRAMS: And the rest of
8 the Council, Councilman Clarke and
9 Councilman Jones and all of the
10 Councilmen. I can't call all their
11 names. But just thank you for the
12 privilege of letting us speak, because
13 we're speaking on behalf of those
14 veterans who are vulnerable. We thank
15 God for the DAV and the rest of the
16 veterans organizations, but we go in the
17 community. We go out to those veterans,
18 because a lot of them won't come to the
19 VA, so we go to them.

20 And thank you so much, Brother
21 Oh, for allowing us to speak this
22 morning. God bless you, man.

23 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
24 much for coming in and sharing your
25 testimony.

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2 Are there any questions?

3 (No response.)

4 COUNCILMAN OH: There being
5 none, thank you very much.

6 And I believe we have one more
7 listed witness, and I'll ask the Clerk to
8 call that testimony.

9 THE CLERK: Ken Wong, CIG Asia
10 LTD.

11 (Witness approached witness
12 table.)

13 COUNCILMAN OH: Good morning,
14 Ken. I do know Ken quite well, and
15 congratulations on your appointment as
16 Chair of the Governor's Commission on
17 Asian American Affairs. Thank you for
18 coming in.

19 Would you please state your
20 name for the record and give us your
21 testimony.

22 MR. WONG: Yes. Good morning.
23 My name is Ken Wong and I'm the President
24 of CIG Asia here in Philadelphia, and I
25 want to thank Councilman Oh and the

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2 members of the Committee for allowing me
3 to come today to testify on behalf of the
4 City tax credit, Resolution 120096, for
5 businesses in Philadelphia that hire
6 returning military veterans.

7 The military is one of the most
8 educated workforces in the United States.
9 The military expects their soldiers,
10 sailors, marines and airmen to be in
11 constant mode of education. Whether it's
12 a military education degree program,
13 Associate or four-year college degree, a
14 Master's or even a Ph.D., the military
15 expects their personnel to be educated.

16 The military jobs training
17 program is one of the best in the world.
18 Just in the United States Army, there are
19 155 different non-military jobs that they
20 train soldiers in. Just about any job
21 that you find in the civilian world, the
22 Army trains their soldiers in those
23 particular areas.

24 And the military culture, for
25 the most part, produces very disciplined

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2 and motivated individuals that learn and
3 live values that make people around them
4 trust them.

5 Based on what I have mentioned,
6 having a valuable tax credit can benefit
7 the City of Philadelphia in so many ways.

8 A tax benefit such as the one
9 we're speaking about can attract
10 businesses to Philadelphia instead of
11 having businesses situated just on the
12 other side of the border. The more
13 companies can be wooed back to
14 Philadelphia can only enhance the growth
15 of the overall tax base of the City.
16 Philadelphia will be the first city in
17 the United States with such a tax credit
18 bill in place. While other cities in the
19 United States talk about doing the right
20 thing for our veterans, Philadelphia will
21 actually be doing the right thing. The
22 leadership of Philadelphia legislating a
23 tax bill of this nature will only brand
24 Philadelphia as a positive employment
25 environment for veterans. Hopefully this

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2 would attract veterans to want to live,
3 work and play in Philadelphia.

4 Attracting and establishing a
5 well-trained, disciplined and educated
6 workforce in Philadelphia is one of the
7 main reasons why companies will want to
8 be in Philadelphia.

9 The types of jobs that highly
10 skilled and educated veterans can qualify
11 for are jobs that command excellent
12 wages, therefore creating more money to
13 be spent in the local economy. What the
14 City may give up in tax credits can
15 certainly be made back in the wage taxes
16 of many more jobs at higher wages.

17 A healthier local economy will
18 only attract more businesses to want to
19 establish themselves in Philadelphia and
20 create even more jobs.

21 As many of our communities in
22 Philadelphia are deteriorating due to the
23 lack of moral character and fiber, I
24 would hope to think that if Philadelphia
25 had an environment that was attractive

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2 for veterans, many more veterans would
3 want to consider living in Philadelphia.
4 Having veterans in Philadelphia could
5 only help communities with the
6 possibility of positive role models and
7 mentors that can build the positive moral
8 character back into our city.

9 So I come here today to
10 encourage City Council to consider this
11 tax credit bill for companies in
12 Philadelphia that hire returning
13 veterans. Not only is it the right thing
14 to do for our returning military veterans
15 who have served our nation, but it is the
16 right thing to do to help build back the
17 economy of the City of Philadelphia by
18 attracting both a great workforce and
19 companies.

20 Thank you very much.

21 COUNCILMAN OH: All right.

22 Thank you very much.

23 I will ask if there's any
24 questions from the Committee or any
25 Councilmembers in the room.

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2 (No response.)

3 COUNCILMAN OH: There being
4 none, thank you very much for your
5 testimony.

6 MR. WONG: Great. Thank you.

7 COUNCILMAN OH: I will ask
8 now -- we have people who are here who
9 are not on our witness list, but if
10 anybody would like to make a public
11 comment, this is your opportunity to do
12 so.

13 And I'm sorry, ma'am, why don't
14 you step up and sit at the table while
15 Councilman Johnson makes his comment.

16 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you,
17 Mr. Chair. Good morning. I just wanted
18 to thank you for hosting this hearing.
19 My dad was a veteran. I used to receive
20 veteran benefits when I was young that
21 pretty much helped my mom take care of me
22 as a young man. It also enabled us to
23 kind of improve our quality of life. And
24 so now that I'm older, my pop passed away
25 in '87, but my commitment to veterans

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2 beyond him serving our country but just
3 being a son of a veteran and receiving
4 the veterans benefits just increased my
5 commitment to those that serve our
6 country.

7 So I just want to commend you
8 on introducing this resolution. You have
9 my 110 percent full support of it, and I
10 think this is something that the
11 Administration should strongly take a
12 look at enacting, because those who serve
13 our country deserve to receive all the
14 rights and benefits that this country has
15 to offer, just for the simple fact of the
16 work that they do.

17 So I commend you for your
18 efforts. Thank you.

19 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
20 much, Councilman.

21 And, ma'am, would you please
22 identify yourself for the record.

23 MS. FOUR: Yes, sir. My name
24 is Martha Four. I'm the Executive
25 Director of the Philadelphia Veterans

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2 Multi-Service and Education Center, and
3 as such, this agency has been around for
4 over 32 years. We were birthed on the
5 employment and training of veterans after
6 Vietnam, and we continue that service
7 through today.

8 I think that what I would like
9 to give reference to to begin with is
10 Mr. Wong, his comments about the great
11 advantage that some of the veterans that
12 would be able to have great opportunity
13 from this resolution, from this bill.
14 They also can provide great advantage to
15 other veterans whom they can assist. I
16 think in remarking about the peer
17 approach to veterans who do in fact need
18 greater assistance, because there are
19 many, and I think the thing that we have
20 to remember is that while many of those
21 men and women who are returning are very
22 valuable, employable candidates and as we
23 all know, the training and the pride and
24 the service that they've given to this
25 country has far outweighed some of the

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2 challenges that we feel they have had to
3 endure, but I think it's to remember that
4 with these redeployments over and over,
5 this is a new situation that this country
6 has never seen, and we have guard and
7 reserve who didn't sign up for this, and
8 we use them up. And the ability for them
9 to come home from a war -- and anyone who
10 has been in war knows what that is. I
11 served with the Army Nurse Corps in
12 Vietnam.

13 Anyone who has been in war
14 knows what separation can mean, and for
15 these troops today, the reintegration
16 back into their family alone, let alone
17 their community, their neighbors, their
18 friends, they are different. They will,
19 quite frankly, never be quite the same
20 person they were before they left. And
21 they need support. They need to be able
22 to find a place that they can sit down
23 and talk to others who have -- and I'll
24 use the quote -- been there, done that.
25 They need that support. They need

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2 support of their own peers. They need to
3 have someone talk to them about where do
4 they want to go, how do they want to get
5 there, how can we help them along the
6 way, the support they need in finding a
7 way to the other side so that they can be
8 successful too.

9 It's an enduring relationship
10 that often is engaged in through case
11 management, but also it's one that allows
12 us to help them restructure how they live
13 day to day. Many of them have not been
14 out in the corporate world. They have
15 not really had to take care of finances,
16 helping them work with the budgets they
17 have to live within until they can make
18 the money to help them get on their way.

19 And so I would encourage you,
20 City Council, the Committee, to look to
21 also those non-profits that you have
22 right in front of you, who can offer
23 great assistance to you, and helping with
24 the ultimate goal of getting those
25 veterans back in employment of real

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2 career jobs, not just a few bucks in
3 their pocket.

4 I would say also that most
5 recently, over about a little over a year
6 ago, in working with the City, there were
7 a number of agencies, non-profit
8 agencies, that came together, and I chair
9 a committee known as the Philadelphia
10 Homeless Veterans Coalition. And so we
11 are also working within the City
12 structure through OSH to help in that
13 arena.

14 I think that if we're looking
15 at employers, let's make sure their HR
16 departments know how to get the
17 resources, how to give those resources to
18 the veterans that will be employed.

19 I thank you very much for this
20 opportunity to address you, sir.

21 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
22 much for your service in a couple areas,
23 especially your service to our country.

24 Are there any questions for
25 this witness?

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2 (No response.)

3 COUNCILMAN OH: No. Thank you
4 very much for coming in to testify.

5 And I will ask finally, are
6 there any other witnesses that would like
7 to testify?

8 Sure. Come up, because we are
9 an official hearing and we will need you
10 to identify yourself again for the
11 record, and we are transcribing what you
12 say.

13 (Witness approached witness
14 table.)

15 MR. ARCHAWSKI: Alex Archawski,
16 Greater Philadelphia Veterans Network.

17 I apologize if I didn't mention
18 this before. It's Monday morning, so I
19 do have an excuse.

20 One of the most important
21 things is really to understand the
22 veterans and understanding how the news
23 and media picks up their stories. So
24 employers ask us the same questions as
25 the media puts out. So I guess our

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2 effort is, when we do pass this -- I'm
3 hopeful -- and we pass the legislation,
4 the resolution, it's also educating the
5 media. It's understanding that there is
6 support mechanisms for veterans. Media
7 does sell to share the stories of
8 unfortunate circumstances, but also our
9 mission for Greater Philadelphia Veterans
10 Network is spending time and training
11 them for highlighting success stories.
12 And we're really on a mission this year
13 to do that, because unfortunately the
14 employers pick up any story that's out
15 there, and that's the reflection of what
16 they think the veteran is. And I just
17 wanted to state that as part of the whole
18 holistic mission, is we got to do that as
19 well.

20 Thank you very much.

21 COUNCILMAN OH: All right.

22 Thank you very much.

23 Councilwoman Tasco.

24 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Since you
25 came back, let me ask you a question.

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2 You talked about earlier training the
3 businessowners about the tax credit.
4 Would they not be excited about getting a
5 tax credit if they hired -- if they were
6 looking for someone to hire and they
7 hired a veteran and they received a tax
8 credit?

9 MR. ARCHAWSKI: I will answer
10 that question. Let me just first state
11 by -- if you ever ask a businessowner in
12 this area to hire a veteran, they have
13 one thing to say: I have no idea where
14 to find them. Small to medium-sized
15 companies typically don't have the money
16 to pay a recruiter and they don't know
17 where to find vets. That's what we're
18 told all the time.

19 So when I ask them, if you
20 don't have time to look for a vet, what
21 else don't you have time for? And they
22 say paperwork.

23 So what we're saying is that we
24 have to educate the process. So we're
25 trying to cure that process of saying

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2 let's get the accountants, let's get the
3 management, let's get the CPA involved in
4 the whole process to make it easier for
5 them so the businessowners are totally on
6 board. If we tell them how easy it is,
7 then they will -- all they think about is
8 their business, and we're trying to
9 educate them of saying it's a very easy
10 process with Obama's Vow Hiring Act. And
11 right now, it's just up to individuals to
12 really make sure that they're educated
13 properly. And hopefully that answers
14 your question.

15 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Thank you.

16 COUNCILMAN OH: There being no
17 other questions, I will conclude this
18 meeting, but I will thank the Director of
19 the Revenue Department for staying here
20 this entire time, and conversations with
21 him and the Deputy Commissioner -- the
22 Commissioner and his Deputy Commissioners
23 have been very helpful in addressing just
24 that issue; in other words, how not to
25 legislate something that is very arduous

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2 for employers to deal with, but something
3 that would be simple and effective.

4 So this concludes the hearing
5 of the Committee concerning this
6 Resolution 120096, and I thank everyone
7 for their participation. And we will
8 adjourn to the call of the Chair.

9 Thank you very much.

10 (Committee on Global
11 Opportunities and Creative/Innovative
12 Economy adjourned at 11:20 a.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the
proceedings, evidence and objections are
contained fully and accurately in the
stenographic notes taken by me upon the
foregoing matter on May 14, 2012, and that
this is a true and correct transcript of same.

MICHELE L. MURPHY
RPR-Notary Public

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