

Committee on Legislative Oversight

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Wednesday, August 5, 2026
10:17 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILMAN ISAIAH THOMAS, CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN RUE LANDAU, VICE-CHAIR
COUNCILMAN ANTHONY PHILLIPS
COUNCILWOMAN MARK F. SQUILLA

ALSO PRESENT:

COUNCILWOMAN NINA AHMAD

RESOLUTION: 260650

2 COUNCILMAN THOMAS:

3 Today is Wednesday, August 5, 2026
4 for the Committee on Legislative
5 Oversight. I now note that the
6 hour has come.

7 Before we get started, I
8 want to start by acknowledging the
9 presence of our Council President,
10 Council President Kenyatta Johnson.
11 Thank you for being here with us,
12 sir, and good morning.

13 I now note that the hour
14 has come. Ms. Hartman, will you
15 please call the roll to take
16 attendance. Members that are in
17 attendance will please indicate you
18 are present when your name is
19 called.

20 THE CLERK: Chair
21 Thomas.

22 COUNCILMAN THOMAS:
23 Present.

24 THE CLERK: Vice-Chair

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 Landau.

2 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:

3 Present.

4 THE CLERK: Councilmember

5 Lozada.

6 (No response.)

7 THE CLERK:

8 Councilmember Phillips.

9 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

10 Present.

11 THE CLERK:

12 Councilmember Squilla.

13 (No response.)

14 THE CLERK:

15 Councilmember Young.

16 (No response.)

17 THE CLERK:

18 Councilmember Ahmad.

19 COUNCILWOMAN AHMAD:

20 Present.

21 COUNCILMAN THOMAS:

22 Thank you. I note for the record

23 that a quorum of the committee is

24 present and the hearing is now

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 called to order. Again, thank you,
2 Council President Johnson, for
3 appointing Councilmember Ahmad to
4 the committee today. This is a
5 public hearing on the Committee of
6 Legislative Oversight considering
7 testimony on Resolution No. 260650.

8 Ms. Hartman, will you
9 please read the title of the
10 resolution.

11 THE CLERK: Resolution
12 No. 260650, authorizing the City
13 Council Committee on Legislative
14 Oversight to hold hearings
15 examining the strategy and tactics
16 deployed by the City of
17 Philadelphia for crowd control
18 during and following public events
19 as a result of reports of overly
20 aggressive tactics used by the
21 Philadelphia Police Department
22 following the 2026 LGBTQ Pride
23 festivities.

24 COUNCILMAN THOMAS:

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 Thank you. And I also want to say
2 thank you to Vice-Chair and the
3 sponsor of today's resolution,
4 Councilmember Rue Landau. I would
5 like to pass it to Councilmember
6 Rue Landau for any opening remarks
7 before we start today's hearing.

8 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:

9 Thank you, Chair Thomas.
10 Appreciate that.

11 Good morning, everybody.
12 I want to begin by thanking my
13 colleagues, the members of the
14 public who are here today and
15 everyone who has come forward to
16 share what they experienced during
17 Philadelphia's Pride celebrations
18 on June 7th.

19 I also want to thank the
20 representatives from the Parker
21 Administration, including Police
22 Commissioner Bethel, for testifying
23 at this hearing and for staying to
24 hear from the community panel and

1 the public comment because it is
2 essential that we hear from those
3 who are directly impacted, impacted
4 by interactions with the police
5 department in the Gayborhood.

6 Finally, I want to thank
7 my staff who worked diligently and
8 thoughtfully to put this hearing
9 together. We are holding this
10 hearing because the people of
11 Philadelphia, specifically the
12 LGBTQ+ community demanded answers.
13 In the hours and days following
14 Pride, my office heard from an
15 extraordinary number of residents,
16 community leaders, advocates and
17 people who they represent and who
18 were present in the Gayborhood that
19 evening.

20 They sent us videos,
21 shared photographs and described
22 what they saw and what happened to
23 them. We heard from people who
24 were angry that there was such an

1 aggressive show of force on what
2 was supposed to be a day filled
3 with joy. We heard from people who
4 were frightened and who have said
5 they don't feel safe going to the
6 Gayborhood since Pride. And many
7 told us the experience reopened a
8 deep and painful wound in the
9 relationship between law
10 enforcement and Philadelphia's
11 LGBTQ+ community, particularly
12 Black and Brown, queer and
13 transgender Philadelphians.

14 The volume and
15 seriousness of that outreach made
16 one thing clear: City Council had
17 an obligation to act so that this
18 never happens again. I want to be
19 clear: Today's hearing is not
20 being held to unfairly demonize law
21 enforcement or to downplay the
22 importance of public safety at
23 large public events.

24 Public safety matters

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 enormously when streets are crowded
2 and when conditions become unsafe.
3 The city has a responsibility to
4 respond, to maintain order. But
5 the existence of a public safety
6 challenge, like the one Pride
7 presents, does not excuse every
8 response made in its name. A
9 responsive government like the one
10 I know Philadelphia aspires to be,
11 must be able to explain why certain
12 tactics were chosen, who authorized
13 them, whether they were necessary
14 and proportionate and what
15 safeguards were in place to protect
16 the public.

17 That is particularly
18 true when the tactics documented
19 include mounted horses and
20 motorcycle officers, mounted horses
21 and motorcycle officers moving
22 through dense crowds, people being
23 pushed or taken to the ground,
24 streets barricaded with little

1 apparent means of exit and officers
2 concealing their faces while
3 exercising government authority.
4 Those are not minor questions of
5 optics. They are questions of the
6 true nature of accountability.

7 The Philadelphia Police
8 Department has said that officers
9 encountered fights, blocked
10 roadways and other public safety
11 concerns. We will examine those
12 claims fairly and seriously today,
13 but we will also ask why a
14 situation involving celebrations in
15 the neighborhood escalated into the
16 deployment of these particular
17 tactics, when it is well-known in
18 advance that crowds would gather in
19 the Gayborhood as they have for
20 decades before. Was the response
21 designed to protect the people
22 gathered in the Gayborhood or
23 simply to remove them at the cost
24 of civil liberties?

1 In addition to the
2 police department, other parts of
3 the Mayor's Administration bear
4 responsibility for the coordination
5 and conduct of its departments.
6 The public was promised a public
7 review and appropriate
8 accountability. Nearly two months
9 have passed. Today, the
10 Administration must explain what it
11 has learned and what it intends to
12 change.

13 The Office of LGBT
14 Affairs also has a responsibility
15 to this community, not only during
16 celebrations and ceremonies, but
17 when LGBTQ+ people are failed by
18 their government. We need to
19 understand what role that office
20 played in planning for Pride.
21 Whether it was consulted as
22 conditions developed, how it
23 responded afterwards and whether it
24 effectively carried the concerns of

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 LGBTQ+ residents into the highest
2 levels of administration.

3 In advance of today's
4 hearing, my office distributed a
5 public response via email and
6 social media, inviting anyone with
7 an experience to share their story.
8 We received dozens of responses.
9 While not everyone was able to
10 attend today or wanted to attend
11 today, it is important that their
12 voices are part of this record.

13 In the spirit of making
14 this a true people's hearing, I
15 want to share a few of those
16 accounts. One constituent wrote
17 that "The event felt more like a
18 space for cops to show off and
19 invade than a place for LGBTQ+
20 people to exist. It felt like they
21 were trying to intimidate me with
22 how heavy the police presence was."
23 That was a quote.

24 Another described the

1 conditions that evening writing,
2 "The sidewalks were packed to the
3 point it was clearly unsafe and
4 there was visible agitation because
5 of it. I felt unsafe. My group
6 felt unsafe. This should not have
7 happened." Some would describe
8 what they witnessed as crowd
9 controlled methods escalated,
10 recalling that an officer "started
11 using her taser, which sent people
12 running southbound into traffic on
13 Locust." These are not unusual
14 stories.

15 In the days following
16 Pride, my office heard from
17 countless residents. As a member
18 of the LGBTQ+ community myself, I
19 also heard these stories personally
20 from friends, neighbors and
21 community members. I saw
22 photographs and videos and heard
23 firsthand accounts that painted a
24 deeply troubling picture, one that

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 I have not seen in my adult queer
2 lifetime as an LGBTQ+ elected
3 official.

4 I want to bring this
5 conversation to the forefront and
6 get to the bottom of it. As a
7 queer person in Philly's queer
8 community, I want to give space to
9 those stories today. I also want
10 to pause and say, I have seen these
11 tactics many, many years ago in the
12 early '90s, and they were rectified
13 and I was horrified to see them
14 come back again.

15 My hope is that the
16 stories we hear become lessons we
17 learn, and that this challenges the
18 police department to take a hard
19 look at what equity and community
20 policing actually entails. Because
21 Pride cannot end on the first day
22 of July, allyship cannot end when
23 it is no longer top of mind. This
24 event traumatized those who visited

1 the Gayborhood for a celebration.

2 And for some of us, it
3 is a reminder of the police
4 brutality that the queer community
5 already endured for decades before.
6 This Pride grew out of a resistance
7 to police harassment and brutality.
8 Philadelphia's own LGBTQ+ history
9 includes generations of people who
10 demanded the right to gather
11 without being targeted or
12 intimidated by law enforcement.
13 That history does not mean police
14 have no role in keeping today's
15 celebrations safe. It means that
16 role must be carried out with that
17 history in mind and with particular
18 care.

19 What happened on June
20 7th damaged trust, and this hearing
21 alone will not restore it. Our
22 purpose today is to establish the
23 facts and identify where the city's
24 planning and response failed, that

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 we can determine what must change
2 for the next large public
3 gathering, whether it is Pride, a
4 protest, a championship celebration
5 or any other event that brings
6 Philadelphians into our streets.

7 Public safety and civil
8 rights are not competing
9 obligations. A competent
10 government must protect both. That
11 is the standard against which the
12 events of June 7th must be
13 measured, and that is the standard
14 to which we hold the city's
15 response today. Thank you.

16 And now, before we hear
17 from my colleagues and the
18 panelists, I'd like us to take a
19 look at this presentation which
20 features some of the police
21 aggression and intimidation that
22 spurred this hearing today.
23 Michael, can you please start the
24 PowerPoint?

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 (Video playing.)

2 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU: I

3 don't know if everybody saw the

4 first slide which had the trigger

5 warning of what you were about to

6 see, I probably should have

7 verbalized it as well. I know that

8 was very traumatic and difficult to

9 see and our apologies, but it's

10 important to put it on the record.

11 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank

12 you, colleague, for the disclaimer.

13 And more importantly, thank you for

14 your leadership on this issue.

15 Before we call up the first panel,

16 I would also like to announce the

17 presence of Councilmember Kendra

18 Brooks.

19 So with that being said,

20 Ms. Har -- Chair recognizes

21 Councilmember Brooks.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS:

23 Thank you, Chair Thomas and

24 Councilmember Landau, for putting

1 this hearing together. I want to
2 reiterate why today's hearing and
3 the answers I expect to come from
4 it are so important. Pride is
5 about free expression of identity.
6 Pride celebrations are a political
7 protest specifically against
8 violence, fear and intimidation
9 that have been used against queer
10 people.

11 I was deeply disturbed
12 by the actions of the Philadelphia
13 Police Department in the
14 neighborhood that took place in
15 June and the lack of city
16 preparation. The Administration
17 and the Police Department must
18 provide answers to Philadelphia's
19 queer community about how this
20 could possibly happen.

21 To begin with, I expect
22 answers today about what happened
23 and why the masks were worn. Masks
24 were used to hide the identity of

1 these officers as a part of my ICE
2 Out package. I had direct
3 conversations with the police
4 department about masking policies,
5 and I was told that their dress
6 code policy has specific language
7 banning masks and that this was not
8 an issue.

9 The Police Department
10 and the Administration must now
11 produce that dress code policy
12 because it's clear words and
13 promises are not enough. It was
14 also not lost on me that most of
15 the disturbing images from that day
16 showed primarily Black
17 Philadelphians once again being
18 overpoliced.

19 Just last week, there
20 were reports of more targeted
21 harassment in a predominantly Black
22 bar in the Gayborhood and it's
23 clear that the Pride incident was
24 not just a one-off, but a pattern

1 of harmful police conduct in the
2 Gayborhood. Queer leaders,
3 particularly Black and Brown queer
4 leaders in Philadelphia, have led
5 efforts for social change in the
6 city for decades.

7 Philadelphia is more
8 free, more vibrant and more fair
9 because of their work, specifically
10 through events like Pride that
11 center community building. That's
12 why we need transparency and
13 accountability for this deeply
14 harmful incident. That's my
15 expectation for today and I need to
16 understand why this happened and
17 understand how the city is moving
18 to right these wrongs and leave
19 reassured that it will never happen
20 again. Philadelphia cannot be a
21 world-class city if the images the
22 world is seeing are masked officers
23 harassing Black and Brown queer
24 folks. Thank you so much for

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 giving me those moments.

2 COUNCILMAN THOMAS:

3 Thank you, Madam Leader. Chair
4 also recognizes the presence of
5 Councilmember Squilla. Good
6 morning. Thank you, sir.

7 Chair recognizes
8 Councilmember Ahmad for brief
9 remarks, followed by our first
10 panel for today's hearing.

11 COUNCILWOMAN AHMAD:

12 Thank you, Chair, and thank you,
13 Councilmember Landau, for bringing
14 this important hearing forward.

15 I just also want to make
16 a quick note, an apology that I
17 have to leave soon after this. I
18 have a webinar on workplace
19 accommodations coming up, but we
20 will be monitoring, watching and
21 reviewing everything that is said
22 and done in this committee.

23 I want to just start by
24 saying something very simple.

1 Every person who works for this
2 city, appointed or elected, is a
3 public servant here to serve you.
4 And we have to remember that at all
5 times, not just when we are having
6 a wonderful time at FIFA, because
7 we know we can do it. We just had
8 an example of how to do it right.
9 We should be able to do it all the
10 time for everybody regardless of
11 how you present yourself. And so,
12 we need to remind ourselves of
13 that.

14 As the Chair of Public
15 Health and Human Services, I see
16 public safety through a lens of
17 public health, and the impact of
18 what happened is going to have a
19 lasting effect. The trauma that
20 people faced and felt and those
21 even just watching the video can
22 feel is something we have to
23 grapple with, because that is going
24 to impact other things we do in our

1 life.

2 So public safety and how
3 we do our public safety in our city
4 has to always use an intersectional
5 lens of how it's impacting other
6 parts of our society. And so, I
7 want to just make sure we also
8 don't overlook what Councilmember
9 Kendra Brooks alluded to about race
10 being a factor.

11 We have weaponized race
12 in this country, and there has been
13 generations of doing this, hundreds
14 of years of doing this. We have to
15 dismantle that. And in order to do
16 that, we have to look at our
17 structures, including policing and
18 looking at the implicit bias that
19 is built into these structures.
20 And so, what we saw on that day was
21 a result of structural norms that
22 have come along.

23 And so, if we're going
24 to really unpack this, not just for

1 this event, but we have to unpack
2 it for everything we do in our
3 city, whether it's maternal health
4 care, whether it's watching and
5 making an event safe, all of those
6 spaces. But we have to acknowledge
7 that we have weaponized race to
8 such an extent in this country, not
9 just this city, in this country and
10 in this globe.

11 There's race and then
12 there's colorism that pervades
13 society across the board. But if
14 we are going to be that beacon on
15 the hill that Philadelphia should
16 be, we should be able to address
17 that and take that under
18 consideration very seriously.

19 I have all the faith in
20 Commissioner Bethel. He
21 understands what it means to
22 deconstruct these systems. I want
23 to be able to support him. I hope
24 we can work collectively, but we

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 cannot ignore that. We have to put
2 it front and center to say, how do
3 we address that, how do we address
4 what it looked like to have police
5 in this event versus the police I
6 saw when I went to a FIFA game.
7 Why was there a difference? What
8 was the mental makeup plus the
9 preparation that was made for this
10 event versus the other or was there
11 a preparation done?

12 Two months ahead you
13 knew where this was going to be,
14 that there was a venue change,
15 right. We had enough time
16 practically to get all our police
17 officers and everybody who were
18 going to be at that event to
19 understand what they might be
20 encountering, right? So if you
21 didn't prepare, that means you
22 don't care about the community you
23 were going to be serving.

24 So those are the

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 implicit messages I'm getting when
2 I look at how much effort went into
3 welcoming tourists from all over
4 the world versus our own people
5 right here in Philadelphia. So I
6 want to again thank Councilmember
7 Rue Landau and everybody and I'm
8 happy to work with all of you. I'm
9 sorry I can't stay, but I will be
10 looking at all of this to see from
11 a public health lens how we can
12 support, how we can bring
13 behavioral health into the police
14 department in a real way, not just
15 lip service but actual training,
16 starting with cadets, right.

17 This has to be
18 deconstructed at the very base of
19 it, right. So I thank you all for
20 being here. I am so sorry that the
21 LGBTQ community faced that. I am
22 so sorry that people, Black
23 Philadelphians face the brunt of
24 it. Being a non-Black person of

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 color, coming from someone who's
2 lived through a terrible war, I
3 know what oppression looks like,
4 like death can face you. Anything
5 could have gone wrong that day.

6 So I want to tell you
7 not only do you have an ally
8 because of being an LGBTQ
9 community, but you have an ally in
10 Council who will understand and
11 work with all of you to come up
12 with real solutions. So thank you
13 so very much to all of you for
14 being here.

15 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: I
16 would also like to acknowledge the
17 presence of Councilmember O'Rourke.

18 I'll pass it to
19 Dr. Phillips for brief remarks.
20 And then after that, I promise
21 we'll get to the first panel.

22 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: I
23 just want to say thank you so much
24 to Chairman Isaiah Thomas for

1 helping convene this hearing. And
2 also thank you, Councilmember Rue
3 Landau, for crafting the
4 legislation that led to this
5 important hearing.

6 I do want to begin just
7 by saying really quickly that today
8 we're going to have the opportunity
9 to look at what are the biggest
10 lessons we learned from this
11 transition and opportunity to learn
12 about how we can ensure that there
13 is better planning processes for
14 major city events of this nature
15 and to ensure that next year's
16 Pride Festival is going to be even
17 greater than any years before as a
18 result of these processes becoming
19 better.

20 I also want to say that
21 I have full confidence that, you
22 know, I know the heart of our
23 Commissioner and he really cares,
24 and he really understands the

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 importance of what happened. And
2 he understands -- he's also thought
3 through how things can be better.
4 So I really believe that next year
5 will be better as a result of us
6 doing what we're supposed to be
7 doing, listening and then figuring
8 out how this doesn't happen again.

9 So the facts don't lie.
10 Violent crime has gone down in the
11 City of Philadelphia by 26%. But
12 we also have to continue to make
13 sure that events like this are
14 superb. And I know the
15 Commissioner is going to do a good
16 job going forward to make sure that
17 doesn't happen. So I just want to
18 commend Commissioner Bethel for
19 what's going to happen going
20 forward. Thank you.

21 COUNCILMAN THOMAS:

22 Thank you, Dr. Phillips.

23 With that being said,

24 Ms. Hartman, will you please call

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 the first panel we have to testify
2 this morning on Resolution No.
3 260650.

4 THE CLERK: Kevin J.
5 Bethel, Police Commissioner,
6 Philadelphia Police Department;
7 Jazelle Jones, City Representative
8 and Director of Special Events;
9 Tito Valdes, Executive Director of
10 LGBTQ Affairs.

11 (Witnesses approached
12 witness table.)

13 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Good
14 morning, Commissioner and the
15 entire team. Thank you for being
16 here. Thank you to you, thank you
17 for your service to the City of
18 Philadelphia. If you could please
19 state your name for the record and
20 begin with your testimony.

21 COMMISSIONER BETHEL:
22 It's Kevin Bethel, Philadelphia
23 Police Commissioner. And so, good
24 morning, Chairperson Thomas.

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 First, let me back up. I didn't do
2 the President. President, how are
3 you? Good morning, sir, to you
4 and Vice-Chair Landau, to all the
5 committee members here who I know.

6 So today we're going to
7 talk about the many of the things
8 that you just described. And we'll
9 unpack them, slow them down a
10 little bit and kind of share with
11 you. So we'll go through the
12 background. Talk about what
13 changed that day. We'll talk about
14 how we responded that day. And
15 then we want to talk about, I think
16 it was captured here as well, what
17 the steps are to move forward.

18 But before I start, I do
19 want to have kind of a brief
20 conversation. I've always told my
21 story. You know, I started down
22 here in Center City in 1986. It
23 wasn't a Gayborhood then. And so,
24 I don't do this revisionist

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 history. I talked about how -- and
2 when I say that for me, that
3 conversation never came up.

4 I knew what we did in
5 the community as a cop. I knew how
6 we treated the community. I'm a
7 young, 20-something-year-old kid
8 and you walk into this space, I
9 know the lack of pronoun uses, the
10 conversations that would be had
11 behind the scenes. So I don't sit
12 here as an individual who sit
13 here -- I know the history. I know
14 the trauma that has been inflicted
15 on this community.

16 And then early in 2000,
17 when Commissioner Ramsey would come
18 to the floor of the police
19 department, I would make the
20 decision because there was a lot of
21 conversation around how we were
22 treating our LGBTQ+ community and
23 what we were doing in the
24 community. So at that time, I told

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 Commissioner Ramsey that I would be
2 the liaison for the police
3 department to the community, and I
4 would do that for eight years.

5 I tell people it was one
6 of the most incredible experiences
7 I've ever had in my life. I'll let
8 that sit for a minute. It was the
9 first time I was in a space where I
10 saw true discrimination, right. I
11 sit in a room with individuals who
12 we were calling them out of their
13 names and not understanding any of
14 the community.

15 And so, there would be
16 this drive now to try to change
17 that. We would drive to -- we
18 didn't even have a policy, ladies
19 and gentlemen. No one knew the
20 names, and I don't use -- I didn't
21 use the word queer because that
22 word was like using the N word for
23 me as a cop, right, because we knew
24 it was disrespectful, and how it is

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 being reclaimed now.

2 And so, we would embark
3 on creating a policy for the first
4 time, which would guide the
5 department on how we would treat --
6 now, policies we know are not
7 perfect, Councilwoman, but we would
8 create a policy to do that. We
9 would enhance our liaison
10 community. And some members are
11 here who were on that committee at
12 that time, and we recognize we have
13 a lot of work to do to expand that
14 committee because there's not a lot
15 of -- different representation
16 needs to be on that committee now.

17 Commissioner Massey is
18 here from my team who serves as
19 Deputy Commissioner who's the
20 liaison for that. I said we also
21 would create a goal chapter within
22 our department, you know, I mean
23 the Gay Officers Alliance, because
24 I also identified at the time I

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 needed to address the men and women
2 within the department, where do
3 they go, who do they talk to. And
4 we just met with them recently to
5 really work.

6 I understood and I
7 understand what Pride represents on
8 that day and what it's rooted in
9 and rooted in protest and rooted in
10 what happened. And so, I don't
11 come into this space being
12 defensive or making excuses, but I
13 do come into this space to share
14 with you what happened that day,
15 you know. And I hope at the end we
16 do what we should be doing, behind
17 the scenes having those constant
18 conversations around what needs to
19 change.

20 It was not a perfect
21 day. It's often the days after
22 when we did our After Action
23 Review, we can look back and talk
24 about the barricades and those

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 things. So let me walk you through
2 what that day was for us. I have
3 Commissioner Stanford here, my
4 First Deputy who leads the work. I
5 have Commissioner Fran Healy here
6 with me as well, Commissioner Dales
7 from our Internal Affairs,
8 Commissioner Massey. And who did I
9 miss. I think I got -- who? Why
10 are you back there, man?
11 Commissioner Cram, come up here and
12 find a chair because this is your
13 people from patrol. So they'll
14 join me up here. So we can work
15 and start on the first slide.

16 So you'll see I'll go
17 through the history of the event.
18 We'll talk about the safety
19 planning. I think that came up in
20 your conversations. We'll talk
21 about how the day started, ladies
22 and gentlemen, and what would cause
23 this shift in that day. We'll talk
24 about our response. There's a lot

1 of conversations about our
2 response. Many of the videos you
3 have, I have the same videos, but I
4 have a few more that would give you
5 some of the insights into why we
6 had to activate the way we did.

7 We'll talk about the
8 complaints. The cost, this is
9 something that comes out of my
10 budget to police and what the cost
11 will look like looking ahead. So
12 we go to the first slide. As I
13 shared, we have a storied history
14 with the Pride. We very rarely,
15 very rarely have had an event at
16 the Pride event. Many of the men
17 and women will volunteer to work
18 this event. Many of the men and
19 women are from the community who
20 are part of the event. And so, we
21 have worked hard to make sure that
22 we maintain that history.

23 It has been at Penn's
24 Landing. We had the festival at

1 Penn's Landing. We are not
2 surprised and everyone knows that
3 Pride after the events have gone
4 back to the Gayborhood. But as
5 you'll see as we go through our
6 presentation, that will change.

7 This next slide. Part
8 of the process was it would move to
9 the Parkway. Folks need to
10 remember this: We have been in the
11 Gayborhood since I can ever
12 remember. For the first time, the
13 event is going to be moving the
14 festival to the Parkway. There's
15 multiple reasons for that. It
16 gives a larger footprint for people
17 to attend. It offers a stronger
18 infrastructure in expanding the
19 programs. It creates more
20 opportunities for community
21 engagement and participation,
22 increased Pride's visibility and
23 supports long-term growth in that
24 space. So we agreed with the new

1 movement of the location. And we
2 do take the approach we did -- and
3 why we took the approach we did.

4 One of the key things,
5 next slide, is around safety. And
6 I know people just kind of brushed
7 across that. Next slide. Part of
8 2016 during Bastille Day in Nice,
9 France, a truck drove through a
10 crowd, killed 86 people during
11 that. At that point and leading up
12 to that process, the police
13 departments across the nation would
14 shift. We have a problem now,
15 ladies and gentlemen. We have a
16 problem because we know that people
17 can get in a car and drive down the
18 street and kill people.

19 We know we have a number
20 of soft targets that can impact
21 that. And so, you'll see that in
22 many of our deployments on the
23 Parkway, we're using the big
24 trucks, the sanitation vehicles,

1 multiple-ton trucks because it's
2 not just a car coming down, a
3 tractor trailer can come down. We
4 use Meridian barriers to be able to
5 block the sidewalks or a car
6 coming. So those things are in the
7 backdrop of when we plan these
8 types of festivities.

9 Next slide. When it
10 specifically comes to Pride, there
11 are specific targets as it becomes
12 the Pride. Individuals have now
13 decided that Pride events are going
14 to be a target of where we're going
15 to go. You just saw recently in
16 Berlin just in July, last month, a
17 woman was killed and 29 injured.
18 Those are the things that are in
19 our mind when we're planning. So I
20 want people to understand that. I
21 don't brush across that. It is
22 important because we have a duty to
23 make sure that when this event
24 happens, particularly Pride, that

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 we are protecting those who are
2 attending, and we're doing the same
3 thing we do for July 4th. Any big
4 event, if you come to a big event
5 on the Parkway, I don't care who
6 you are, we're putting in those
7 levels of protection because we
8 know there's a good chance that
9 someone can defeat that.

10 Next slide. So there is
11 planning that goes into this
12 process. It is relegated to our
13 men and women in the Central
14 Division. And I'll talk about
15 later how we make some adjustments.
16 Commissioner Stafford is doing
17 that. We did have a complete new
18 leadership in Center City. We
19 acknowledge that the inspector is
20 new. The two captains are new. So
21 we don't have some of the
22 historical relationships that we
23 customarily have. I know the
24 Gayborhood. I worked in the

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 Gayborhood as a cop. I also knew
2 it as a deputy commissioner. So we
3 do have some adjustments. But I
4 still am confident and despite
5 that -- and yes, we made some
6 missteps -- full confidence in my
7 leadership in Central and how they
8 operated.

9 So again, next slide.

10 So this is Pride and the march. We
11 will start in the Gayborhood. As
12 you can see, the Pride will proceed
13 north to Market Street, going west
14 on Market Street, around City Hall,
15 down north on 16th Street, and then
16 over and out the Parkway. That is
17 the Pride event. That is where
18 we're moving our men and women into
19 that process. It takes a large
20 number of people and officers to
21 contain that area. Some folks will
22 sit there and say, why do you have
23 so many officers. Because we have
24 to protect the entire blueprint.

1 We can't just rely just solely on
2 someone blocking a vehicle. We're
3 also looking for people and
4 entities, someone coming in there
5 with a satchel. All those things
6 are important. And the more
7 officers we have out there, the
8 greater we have of seeing what's
9 going on and being that deterrent.

10 Next slide. This is the
11 blocking setup that goes into the
12 Parkway. Those circles, the green
13 ones, and you will see are Meridian
14 barriers. The yellows are where we
15 block. So no truck, no car can
16 come into that space while the
17 Pride event is happening or any
18 event is happening. We put an
19 insulated barrier around that
20 space. It takes a lot of work to
21 get that done. It is not me. I do
22 not drive sanitation trucks, so
23 we're coordinating and planning
24 with our team to make sure that

1 happens and make sure that happens
2 successfully. You will
3 constantly -- anyone that comes
4 down the Parkway will see that
5 deployment.

6 The next slide. This is
7 the setup, ladies and gentlemen, in
8 the Parkway. This is the festival.
9 I want everyone to take a hard look
10 at what is there. There is event
11 space. There is activation space.
12 There's vendors. There's
13 courtyards. And you'll see some
14 pictures later on. There are
15 security staff in there. There are
16 volunteers in there. There are
17 people. I don't own that event.
18 What we're doing now is protecting
19 that event. And there is obviously
20 the organizers. I think it's -- I
21 saw it coming. They do a great job
22 of setting that up.

23 Next slide. This is
24 last year for Pride in the

1 Gayborhood. Very similar setup. I
2 have blocking vehicles on 12th
3 Street, 13th and Walnut Street. I
4 have men and women who are
5 stationed outside of there. There
6 are things for people to do. This
7 is a planned and organized event.
8 This is what was in the Pride for
9 last year in the Gayborhood that
10 has now moved, now moved to the
11 Parkway.

12 I highlight that and
13 you'll hear me highlight that
14 again. That's not there, ladies
15 and gentlemen. There is nothing
16 there in the Gayborhood at this
17 point. Just want to make sure
18 we're clear, because that has not
19 been distinguished between the two
20 events. We know people are going
21 to come back to there. But coming
22 back to what is the conversation
23 we'll have.

24 Next slide. In the

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 Gayborhood, we block the Gayborhood
2 because of the same things that I
3 told you before. We don't want
4 people in the streets to be run
5 over by a vehicle. So you will see
6 the same last year, sanitation
7 trucks are blocking the vehicles so
8 we can keep that area safe. It's
9 similar that we did at the Pride
10 this year. That is part of the
11 makeup. Often times folks don't
12 see it because we are doing it so
13 often. It gets blended into the
14 process. But our goal is to keep
15 the Gayborhood and keep those
16 attending safe.

17 Next slide. So the
18 planning timeline. There is ten
19 scheduled inperson virtual meetings
20 that are held prior to the Pride
21 events and the events that are
22 going to happen on the Parkway.
23 Early meetings focus on the
24 relocation of the Parkway, planning

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 discussions, logistics, traffic
2 management, control, fencing,
3 public safety discussions are had
4 about the vehicle-ramming threats
5 that I described, and there are
6 numerous additional calls that are
7 occurring with our team, with
8 Jazelle's team and with others,
9 organizers as we move forward.

10 So let's talk about the
11 next slide, how the day started. I
12 mean, the day starts. This is
13 going off extremely well. I
14 actually pulled a photo of you,
15 Councilmember Rue Landau who's
16 leading out, because you were on
17 the Parkway. You saw the Parkway.
18 The Parkway is going --

19 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:
20 Point of clarification. That's a
21 2025 picture.

22 COMMISSIONER BETHEL:
23 2025, okay.

24 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU: I

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 was on the float this year, and
2 you'll hear about what happened
3 when we tried to get off the float.

4 COMMISSIONER BETHEL:

5 Okay. Well, I apologize for that.
6 I mean, I thought that was for this
7 year. That's my mistake. But
8 overall, the Pride event, the
9 pictures, we're moving on the
10 Parkway and things are going well.
11 Next slide. Down on the Parkway
12 things again are going well. To
13 the right, I'll show you a clip
14 that's in the backdrop of how
15 things are going well on the
16 Parkway.

17 (Video playing.)

18 COMMISSIONER BETHEL:

19 Again, just sharing with you for
20 those who were not there.
21 Obviously again, I apologize to
22 you, Councilwoman, for the photo.
23 That should not have happened, but
24 saw that photo -- the video comes

1 from what's going down in the
2 Parkway. There's a -- I was not
3 there, but all reports and all the
4 reports are coming to me from the
5 field that things are going great
6 on the Parkway and things are
7 moving through. Folks are having a
8 great time.

9 So again, next slide.

10 As the day is evolving, 11:00 a.m.,
11 again everything goes well. And by
12 12:00 p.m., we're surveying the
13 Gayborhood. Everything is good.
14 By 11:15, we're underway at the
15 Parkway, already underway at the
16 Parkway where we've now moved the
17 Pride event to the Parkway. We're
18 now starting to see activity in the
19 Gayborhood. We're starting to see
20 an influx of personnel and people
21 are coming to the Gayborhood.

22 We're now at 2:00 p.m.

23 We're still continuing to see
24 pedestrian volume increase. So at

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 2:00 p.m., which is not customary,
2 even if we were not and we were
3 going to move the festival and go
4 somewhere else and come back to the
5 Gayborhood, our staffing is not
6 coming in until about 3:00. And
7 so, we're facing some challenges
8 early in the process because we are
9 now seeing a significant increase
10 in pedestrian traffic in the
11 Gayborhood. While the full Pride
12 event is now underway at the
13 Parkway, that's a dynamic we could
14 not have predicted. That creates a
15 challenge for us because even when
16 we do the events of the day, it's
17 later.

18 By 5:30, we're now
19 starting to see some issues and
20 we're shutting down some of the
21 streets. By 5:50, we're now moving
22 our deployment. Again, there are
23 those who think it's easy just to
24 say we'll take everything, the

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 Parkway is doing good, just move
2 folks over. It is not built that
3 way. Each one and every person out
4 there has a responsibility. And
5 every time we pull, we create a
6 weakness in the Parkway.

7 But we are able to move
8 some of our mechanized personnel.
9 Our MIRT team, our Mass Incident
10 Response Team, is the first group
11 that moves. Those are the ones
12 I'll talk to you about in the all
13 black. Ladies and gentlemen, they
14 are never often times seen. I had
15 about 400 of them work the FIFA.
16 They come out when there's a
17 potential biological agent that's
18 been dispersed. There may be an
19 explosive event. There may be
20 something. They're highly trained.
21 They have masks to be able to go
22 into a space. If there's something
23 been let go in that space that is
24 biological, chemical. But because

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 they're a mechanized group and
2 we're forced to move staffing over
3 to the Gayborhood, we move them
4 over. Portions of the crowd detail
5 again are there. We do start to
6 move people over.

7 Next slide. At 6:55,
8 there are multiple incidents that
9 we start to see. And I'll share
10 with you some additional videos
11 that you shared. By 7:30 -- and I
12 won't go through all the
13 timeline -- we are now initiating
14 our push to move the crowd out
15 because of the things that we saw
16 that were causing us concern.

17 The men and women who
18 started that day on the Parkway
19 would start from 8:00. They would
20 not finish up until midnight that
21 night. Councilman Thomas, do you
22 need me to stop?

23 COUNCILMAN THOMAS:
24 (Indicating no).

1 COMMISSIONER BETHEL:

2 Oh, I'm sorry. Okay. Next slide.

3 So I'm going to share with you some
4 incidents that would drive us to
5 start to make some decisions that
6 we now need to move folks. And
7 most of that is happening on Walnut
8 Street. It is on the outer rim of
9 the Gayborhood. But we're now
10 having some issues with young
11 people.

12 For the purpose of my
13 videos, ladies and gentlemen, I
14 blurred them. I felt it was
15 important that it was not my duty
16 to show -- particularly, I'm going
17 to show you young people. I would
18 come to learn that those young
19 people are from the community and
20 came to the Gayborhood. And so, I
21 am not showing their faces. So it
22 may be a little hard for you to
23 see, but you'll be able to see some
24 of the activity and the lang -- I

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 mean, not the language, but the
2 movements of the folks. But it is
3 purposely blurred because it was
4 our duty and our job not to
5 disclose those young people or
6 anyone in my videos being
7 disclosed.

8 So if you could do the
9 first one on the left.

10 (Video playing.)

11 COMMISSIONER BETHEL:

12 This is the 1200 block of Walnut.
13 So again, we're seeing -- when we
14 have young people to come into a
15 space, and for those who know, I
16 work around the flash mob and we
17 still deal with that, I'll talk
18 about that, we have that on a
19 regular basis, young people who are
20 surging across the city --

21 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: I'm
22 sorry. For clarity, because we
23 can't see that video, I don't know
24 what I just watched, right. So

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 help me understand. Are you saying
2 that this video is a group of young
3 people?

4 COMMISSIONER BETHEL: It
5 is a group of young people there on
6 Walnut --

7 COUNCILMAN THOMAS:
8 Define young people for us.

9 COMMISSIONER BETHEL: So
10 we're talking about teenagers. So
11 we have young teenagers --

12 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: I
13 know I'm not supposed to do this
14 and I apologize. Help me
15 understand. High school basketball
16 coach, on the Board of PIAA
17 District XII, downtown all the
18 time, see groups of young people
19 gather like this probably daily,
20 right, and not just in Philly.

21 What does that clip --
22 because I can't see it. What does
23 that clip of young people have to
24 do with today's conversation? I'm

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 confused. And I'm not -- an honest
2 question. I can't see it.

3 COMMISSIONER BETHEL:

4 Yeah. If you allow me, if I
5 continue through the videos, what
6 we're seeing now are the kids that
7 are fighting. They move into an
8 alcove. They're taking over the
9 1200 block of Walnut. I'll show
10 you an additional video.

11 COUNCILMAN THOMAS:

12 Right. So this is what I'm trying
13 to understand, right. The kids
14 gather in Center City and do their
15 thing on a consistent basis. So
16 when I think about Black Pride, I
17 think about mostly adults. These
18 are kids. So because you pulled
19 the video up, just help us
20 understand how this incident with
21 these children that I can't really
22 see has to do with adults
23 celebrating Black Pride?

24 (Applause.)

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 COMMISSIONER BETHEL:

2 Again --

3 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: No,
4 no, no. Let me do this. Let's
5 stop, because I don't want him to
6 think or anybody to think that
7 we're trying to be spicy. I'm
8 legit confused.

9 COMMISSIONER BETHEL:

10 No, I think it's legitimate.
11 There's a build-up now. What I'm
12 building you up to is what's going
13 on. We have a large group, about a
14 thousand, a large group of young
15 people who have descended into the
16 Gayborhood for what they think is
17 something there. There is nothing
18 for them there but other than to
19 take over the street at this point,
20 which was not planned. And so,
21 that's part of my moving forward
22 what do we do.
23 We've been getting a
24 build-up of young people who've

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 been coming to the Pride event for
2 over the last couple of years.
3 This would be the largest group of
4 young people who would come to this
5 space. To do what is the question.
6 And that's my issue moving forward.
7 What do we do with young kids who
8 identify from the community, who
9 come into the Gayborhood, hundreds
10 of them, and there's nothing to do.

11 So when you have young
12 people who come into the space --
13 Councilman Phillips, we dealt with
14 your young people up at the rec
15 center. We deal with young people
16 who are surging all over the city.
17 C.B. Moore, we've got calls from
18 Council about the different places
19 where they come and we move them.
20 We don't arrest them. And you'll
21 see even in this case, we didn't
22 arrest very few. We had one child,
23 a 16-year-old who was arrested. We
24 come in and we just move the crowd

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 to break them down. And if you let
2 me go through it, you'll see. So
3 that's part of a continuum.

4 Again, we're getting
5 additional fights. Now, kids are
6 getting jumped by other kids. I
7 have a duty, I have a duty to not
8 allow others to get victimized. I
9 have a duty in the fight to take
10 some action to make sure that
11 someone doesn't get hurt. I stand
12 by and do nothing and a child gets
13 knocked down, brutalized and
14 assaulted, I'll be in a different
15 conversation sitting here now as to
16 why you didn't do anything.

17 So we have done this
18 customarily. It's our rhythm. We
19 move the kids along. They move
20 along. They break them down and
21 make sure that everyone's safe.
22 It's not pretty. It's not pretty
23 when you move a crowd of young
24 people, especially when they don't

1 want to move. But that's what
2 we're doing. It's not to harm
3 them. It's not to take anything
4 away from them. And they did not
5 go to the Parkway. Whether it was
6 because it was \$10 to go on the
7 Parkway, whatever that was, the
8 kids did not go to the Parkway.
9 And we have to figure that out.

10 And folks in this room,
11 not me, folks in this room have to
12 figure out what are we going to do
13 with those young people. What are
14 we going to do with them as they
15 move through this process,
16 especially young people who are
17 identifying now and willing to come
18 out. That's a good thing. Listen,
19 we should praise that. We should
20 praise that. But I need folks who
21 are chirping to help me do that
22 because I don't know what to do in
23 that situation, but we can talk
24 about that.

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 The next video is the
2 kids again building up. I know
3 it's hard for you to see it, but I
4 could not show the videos of young
5 people. But you're seeing kids
6 that are fighting now and that's
7 continuing. Again, same area.
8 We're in the Walnut area. We're in
9 12th and Walnut area. I won't
10 belabor you, but go to the next
11 video.

12 At some point, I told
13 you 1200 Walnut is open. We
14 ultimately closed it, but we have
15 the young people and now Meridian,
16 we're taking over the garage. Now,
17 if you could hit that video. Okay.
18 So now, up inside the garage, in
19 some cases they're on top of --
20 we're not sure. We can't tell if
21 there's a wall or cars, but they've
22 now moved into the garage area. We
23 don't have control over this. We
24 don't have control over this.

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 Next video. You'll see
2 a young lady is now -- an
3 individual has moved up and climbed
4 up onto the top and now hanging
5 off. If that young person, that
6 juvenile fall from there and with
7 us not taking any actions, what
8 would the conversation be then,
9 right. And so, we're making sure
10 that we are again addressing the
11 behavior we're seeing, and that's
12 what we're doing. I don't need to
13 show the next video, but we can
14 skip to the next one.

15 And so here, because I
16 think it's important now you get to
17 our response. As I share with you,
18 been at it a long time, right. We
19 know as young people, there's
20 nothing for them to do, they
21 converge. I am not making an
22 indictment of none of those young
23 people. That's us as adults to
24 figure out what the hell to do with

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 them. That's our job now. I'm
2 telling you right now and I'm
3 setting that tone now. That is our
4 job in this room to figure out what
5 we're going to do with those young
6 people because they're coming.
7 They weren't on social media. They
8 weren't on social media. This was
9 not a set-up. They didn't call
10 each other down here. They
11 actually appear, from what we can
12 see, looking to attend something.
13 And so, our response at that time
14 was we're going to deal with this
15 as our kids are converging, that
16 we're starting to lose control of
17 the area. We're going to make the
18 decision now that we're going to
19 push the crowd out.

20 I'm going to show you a
21 video. I think you shared those
22 same videos. I just want to add a
23 little bit more context to those
24 videos. At some point, we move --

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 there was this conversation the
2 horses have taken over. I have two
3 horses on the Parkway that move
4 over to the Gayborhood to help with
5 our crowd control issues.

6 You will see on the
7 left. -- I don't need to show the
8 videos because there's a repeat of
9 your videos. I blurred the videos
10 out, but the horses are 1500 to
11 1900 pounds. They have been used
12 in crowd control for over 200
13 years. The goal of the horse is to
14 minimize, one, because they have
15 high angles and they can see what's
16 over them; two, it did exactly what
17 they're supposed to do. When
18 people see a horse, they run. It
19 de-escalates the situation.

20 Now, that may be very
21 intimidating and I understand that,
22 to folks who do not -- it can be
23 very intimidating to a group of
24 young people who have never seen a

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 horse move methodically like that,
2 but the horse is not running anyone
3 over. They said the horse was
4 charging. They do a normal slight
5 trot that you saw the young people
6 move away from that area. You see
7 them on the other side.

8 The next slide. Here
9 again, the conversation around our
10 officers moving them out. For the
11 purpose of not repeating, you
12 already saw that video of the
13 officers moving those individuals
14 out. At this point, we moved our
15 motorbikes over into the space.
16 We've moved our MIRT team over into
17 the space. We have two Academy
18 classes down there. We have young
19 officers down there. And so, we
20 use our motorbikes who often times,
21 often times are out in the field
22 doing ATV details, who are chasing
23 ATVs, etc. But because they're a
24 mechanized component, we need to

1 move more mechanized groups over
2 there to start to move folks out.

3 Is it pretty when we put
4 the bikes up on the sidewalk? No.
5 Are we looking and examining that?
6 Yes. Customarily, we would like to
7 use our bikes, just our plain bikes
8 to be able to press those. We have
9 about 30 bikes. We don't have
10 enough staffing to do that. So the
11 motorbikes are a component that we
12 use.

13 But if you look at the
14 video, most of the individuals when
15 they saw the bikes, turn around and
16 just walk away. We do encounter
17 some people, some minor resistance,
18 and that's customary whether we're
19 on bikes, whether we're on horses,
20 whatever we are. But the
21 mechanized group just turning on
22 the sirens. But if you look at the
23 videos, you'll see most of the
24 folks just turn around and said,

1 we're going to move and they were
2 compliant. Should we have broken
3 out the barricades? Yes, we can
4 sit there as part of our process.

5 But part of when we do
6 that and we move people out in the
7 street, I go back to the question
8 we had before. Once they get in
9 the street, I have to find a way to
10 put the bollards up and to be able
11 to block them. So there is this
12 thing -- even if I put them out
13 into the street and I let them go
14 out into the street, the question I
15 will keep coming back to all of you
16 in this room was to do what? We
17 have some bars on 13th Street. I
18 think there's a DJ. Mike Weiss has
19 something set up at 13th and
20 Locust. But other than that,
21 there's no events, there's no porta
22 potties, there's nothing here to
23 do.

24 So even if we take away

1 the barricades -- and we will
2 accept that the barricades created
3 this thing, this kettling that
4 people talked about. And after
5 After Action Review, we realized
6 that we should have made a
7 different decision. And so, accept
8 that as part of the process. We
9 admit that. But we also recognize
10 in that process, even if we did, we
11 would have had hundreds of people
12 standing in the street. I cannot
13 stop a car coming down the street
14 that may do something to those
15 individuals.

16 And I don't know what we
17 would have done other than drinking
18 and what else. Where are the
19 events, where are the things that
20 make people feel the part of the
21 Pride that they normally -- because
22 what happens is people are coming
23 to a Pride event in the Gayborhood
24 thinking it's the same event they

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 had last year, not realizing -- and
2 I don't know. So messaging has to
3 be a part of that, has to be a big
4 part of that. You're coming to an
5 event. You're looking like this is
6 not -- even some of my cops came up
7 and they didn't even understand it.

8 So next slide. There's
9 some conversations about some of
10 the activity. You showed a video
11 of my officer tasing and there was
12 conversation about individuals
13 being tased. No one was tased.
14 However, what we did have as part
15 of our policy is the officer able
16 to arc, to create that electric
17 sound, as a deterrent and it
18 de-escalates to move crowds.

19 You'll see the sergeant
20 in -- you'll see the officer doing
21 that. We have removed that as part
22 of our policy. And we are going to
23 a new taser, a Taser 10 that does
24 not allow the arcing. Even the

1 manufacturer realized that that
2 arcing can give people a sense --
3 so I fully understand why people
4 felt tasing was happening. The
5 officer was moving around, as you
6 saw. You already saw the video. I
7 don't need to show it again. But
8 she is arcing it to move the crowd,
9 and you see the crowd is moving.
10 It is not pretty, but they are
11 given that authority. She's
12 working under the authority of me
13 as the Commissioner and policy.
14 And me as the Commissioner will
15 change policy to recognize that
16 that can be harmful. And so, we
17 have changed the policy, but also
18 moving to something to not allow
19 that to happen.

20 Next slide. As it
21 relates to arrests, I just want to
22 clarify. Our job was not to harm
23 those kids. Everybody knows my
24 work. I don't put young people,

1 juveniles, young people in a space
2 where I want to arrest them. So
3 despite all of the issues we have
4 with many of our juveniles, I
5 arrest very few of them, very few
6 of them, and the men and women in
7 the department know that.

8 In this case, we
9 arrested two young juveniles, one
10 for disorderly conduct at 11th and
11 Market at 9:30 at night. The other
12 one, we have a carjacking that
13 happens around the corner. In the
14 process of doing the move, there's
15 a carjacking that occurs around the
16 corner outside of a bar. An
17 individual's car is taken and two
18 individuals, an adult and a
19 juvenile are involved. They turn
20 into the traffic where we were on
21 Walnut Street. And so, we make an
22 arrest. Those are the only two
23 juveniles out of all of this that
24 occurred. So despite the

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 conversation that we were in there,
2 you know, arresting and doing that,
3 we did not.

4 We would make arrests
5 all the way -- you can show the
6 slide. Many of the slides, you'll
7 see the upper part, the top part is
8 in the Gayborhood area. But we
9 would make arrests all the way down
10 onto Walnut Street -- I mean, onto
11 Market Street, 16th and Locust onto
12 Broad Street. Ladies and
13 gentlemen, we deal with the crowds
14 for all night long and all the way
15 up until 12:00, 12:30, do we not
16 resume the detail to turn it back
17 over to Central.

18 So even though we moved
19 the crowd off of the gate out of
20 the area, we were still struggling
21 with large pockets of kids that
22 were moving around the city to do
23 that. I apologize. I know I keep
24 saying kids. I'm 63 years old. I

1 apologize. It's no disrespect to
2 our juveniles. I know some people
3 are sensitive to that word. But
4 fully understand that I'm talking
5 about juveniles. I hear you in the
6 background. It is not meant to
7 disrespect young people. So young
8 adults, whatever you want to call
9 them.

10 Next slide. The
11 conversation around complaints, we
12 received a total of six complaints.
13 I believe we received an additional
14 complaint today from CPOC related
15 to a job. Three of those jobs were
16 for physical abuse, pushing and
17 shoving. Two of those jobs were
18 for verbal abuse and one was the
19 policy violation related to the
20 mass of the kids wearing -- I mean,
21 the officers wearing the masks.

22 Most of these jobs were
23 not made by the complainant. In
24 some cases, people watched the

1 video, the videos that you showed
2 earlier and called into Internal
3 Affairs to make those complaints.
4 And so, that's where those
5 complaints came from. So for
6 those, we did not get any
7 complaints that anyone said they
8 were beyond what you see here,
9 pushing and shoving, which I think
10 some of the videos captured verbal
11 abuse, which we're addressing and
12 the team is going through that
13 process. And now, Internal Affairs
14 has that investigation.

15 The next slide. There
16 is a cost associated with all of
17 this. The cost for the
18 Philadelphia Police Department,
19 that comes out of my budget. This
20 was grandfathered in as an event
21 that we would fund. Costs for us
22 to put the staffing out there to be
23 able to do the layers of staffing
24 that I talked about is around 355.

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 There's another \$85,000 that comes
2 out to a total of \$438,000 to put
3 that event on Sunday. And so, as
4 we think through moving forward
5 next year, that's going to be an
6 important factor looking ahead.

7 Next slide. Looking
8 ahead here's what I see, and I hope
9 everyone in here sees it the same
10 way, Jazelle will have to talk
11 about it. But this is the event on
12 the Parkway and this is the event
13 in the Gayborhood. We have to now
14 determine and plan that we are
15 going to have two separate events,
16 two separate events, working with
17 who's either the organizer for
18 both, to ensure that we have it set
19 up in the Gayborhood for those
20 individuals who are coming there so
21 they can have a good time and have
22 it the same way we've had it years
23 past and those who are going to
24 attend the Parkway.

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 Who that may be,
2 Councilwoman, I do not know. And
3 that's a conversation that we will
4 have with Jazelle. I'm not a party
5 planner. My job is to make it safe
6 and secure for the folks who attend
7 these events, and we do countless
8 of them.

9 We did the FIFA with no
10 problem. People made a question
11 about the FIFA. But the difference
12 between the FIFA and the fans,
13 because they were compliant, they
14 did not cause any issues. They
15 were not fighting. They just moved
16 through that process and we moved
17 effectively with them.

18 Next slide. What we
19 will do moving forward. Part of
20 our process is this was centered in
21 Center City. We're going to move
22 that. Recently, we created a
23 policy planning and special events
24 team led by a Chief Inspector.

1 This event will now move into a
2 higher echelon of planning so that
3 we have the complete oversight of
4 what is going on. That is a direct
5 report to Commissioner Stanford,
6 who's the First Deputy.

7 And so, he will ensure
8 that we have a centralized,
9 coordinated, organized event. He
10 will ensure that we have all the
11 implementations and the processes
12 that we use for our FIFA and our
13 America 250. As part of our
14 ongoing commitment, one of the
15 things we've always done,
16 particularly when we're doing First
17 Amendment activity, and
18 Commissioner Ramsey instituted
19 that, was that we were talking
20 about in front of our people about
21 what the roles and responsibility
22 and people's rights.

23 And so, part of this job
24 now will be we will do that before

1 a Pride event, because often times
2 both in our academy and our
3 training they will get that. But
4 moreover, when they're at those
5 events, we will give our men and
6 women a history of Pride because I
7 think often times they don't
8 understand the history of that and
9 the tension of that, and that this
10 was borne out of protest. And any
11 time we're in that space that we're
12 going to trigger the trauma of the
13 past, how we have to comport
14 ourselves in a way to make that
15 effective.

16 We're going to continue
17 to meet with Tito, who put together
18 a group of us to start talking
19 through what are the next steps,
20 who are the key stakeholders
21 because they're missing people at
22 the table. And who are those
23 missing entities who should be at
24 the table to discuss how we have

1 better communication, how we have
2 better planning, how do we reset
3 all of that, we're looking at our
4 liaison that Commissioner Massey
5 oversees to see what that liaison
6 group, how we can build that group
7 out to be more effective. There
8 are a lot of things going underway.

9 But I will end here.

10 And I know I took up most of your
11 time, but I appreciate you giving
12 me the grace. We did not go into
13 Pride with the intention of those
14 things happening and having to turn
15 folks away from the Gayborhood.

16 Yes, we acknowledge that we have to
17 do a far better plan of planning.

18 Yes, we have to make sure that we
19 have an organized process.

20 But what I will tell
21 you, it will not go out today, no
22 one in my department gave any order
23 that you're going to go down into
24 the Gayborhood and attack the

1 LGBTQ+ community. That is not who
2 we are as an organization. That is
3 not who I will allow us to be as an
4 organization. We went down there
5 with the purpose of making it safe.
6 It wasn't until 7:30. We went
7 quite a long time trying to get
8 things, even though it wasn't
9 perfect. And we have some things
10 that we look back, my executive
11 team, my entire team, to see how we
12 can make it better.

13 But I stand here before
14 all of you and I say this to you,
15 next year it will not be like that.
16 It will be prepared. It will make
17 sure that everyone who is supposed
18 to be at the table, who came after
19 the fact or at the table exactly
20 saying what do you want to do.
21 Because it is not my job to police
22 that event. It is to keep it safe.
23 If it's done properly, it does not
24 require me to put the officers in

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 there. It just requires me to take
2 our positions, make sure we keep it
3 safe and you own it. That's the
4 goal.

5 My goal is to keep it
6 safe, and that's what we're going
7 to do next year. That is our
8 vision for it next year. So I'll
9 stop there.

10 COUNCILMAN THOMAS:

11 Thank you for your testimony.

12 Other members of the
13 panel, would you like to provide
14 your testimony before we jump into
15 questions?

16 MR. VALDES: Good
17 morning, Chairperson Thomas, Vice-
18 Chair Landau, can you hear me?

19 COUNCILMAN THOMAS:

20 (Nodded affirmatively).

21 MR. VALDES: Okay.
22 Councilmember Brooks, Councilmember
23 O'Rourke. And thank you for your
24 ongoing advocacy and partnership to

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 this community. It doesn't go
2 unnoticed. And of course, members
3 of the Committee on Legislative
4 Oversight. I'm Tito Valdez,
5 Executive Director of LGBTQ+
6 Affairs for the City of
7 Philadelphia. Thank you for the
8 opportunity to testify regarding
9 Resolution No. 260650, introduced
10 of course by my friend
11 Councilmember Landau.

12 I am joined today by my
13 colleagues, Police Commissioner
14 Kevin Bethel and City
15 Representative and Director of
16 Special Events Jazelle Jones. And
17 while they can best speak to the
18 public safety and event planning
19 aspects of this year's Pride march
20 and festival, I'm happy to speak
21 about this city's unwavering
22 commitment to the LGBTQ+ community,
23 not just during Pride Month, but
24 throughout the entire year.

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 First, I'd like to
2 provide an overview of the Mayor's
3 Office of LGBTQ+ Affairs. The
4 office serves as the city's primary
5 liaison to Philadelphia's LGBTQ+
6 community, working to strengthen
7 relationships between city
8 government and LGBTQ+ residents,
9 organizations, businesses,
10 advocates and community leaders.
11 Our mission is to foster meaningful
12 engagement, advance inclusive
13 policies and practices and ensure
14 city services are responsive,
15 accessible, and reflective of the
16 diverse communities we serve.

17 Established to elevate
18 the voices and experiences of
19 Philadelphia's LGBTQ+ residents
20 within city government, the office
21 works across departments to
22 identify opportunities, address
23 challenges and create pathways for
24 collaboration. This work extends

1 far beyond Pride Month and reflects
2 the Administration's commitment to
3 ensuring that every Philadelphian
4 feels seen, respected, valued and
5 connected to their government.

6 Pride is one of
7 Philadelphia's largest and most
8 visible celebrations, and its
9 success depends on the collective
10 efforts of event organizers, city
11 agencies, public safety partners,
12 businesses, volunteers and
13 community members. Each year the
14 Office of LGBTQ Affairs recognizes
15 and supports Pride celebrations as
16 an important expression of the
17 strength, history and diversity of
18 our LGBTQ+ community.

19 While event planning and
20 execution are led by Pride
21 organizers in coordination with
22 relevant city departments, our
23 office remains available as a
24 resource to support communication,

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 community engagement and connection
2 to city leadership when needed.
3 This year, our office supported the
4 celebration by maintaining an open
5 line of communication with
6 organizers as well as community
7 stakeholders, making ourselves
8 available to assist where
9 appropriate and helping to expand
10 community access and participation
11 through support for community
12 members attending Pride events.

13 Following this year's
14 Pride celebrations, which
15 successfully brought thousands of
16 people together for a vibrant and
17 memorable celebration on the
18 Parkway, our office recognized the
19 importance of continuing the
20 dialogue beyond the event itself.
21 In response to concerns and
22 frustrations expressed by members
23 of the community following the
24 celebration, we convened

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 conversations with LGBTQ+
2 organizations, business owners,
3 community leaders, residents,
4 advocates and event participants to
5 better understand their experiences
6 and identify opportunities for
7 improvement and to offer greater
8 transparency.

9 On June 16th, we hosted
10 a two-hour inperson information
11 gathering and solutions-focused
12 meeting with key community
13 stakeholders, representatives from
14 the Mayor's Advisory Committee on
15 LGBTQ+ Affairs, leadership from the
16 Mayor's Office and other city
17 departments, all representing the
18 Administration's commitment to
19 listening directly to community
20 members and supporting a
21 collaborative path forward.

22 As with any large-scale
23 public event, of course there are
24 opportunities to reflect, to

1 evaluate and to improve. During
2 that discussion, the Philadelphia
3 Police Department, led by
4 Commissioner Bethel, provided an
5 overview of Pride weekend
6 operations, including crowd
7 management strategies, public
8 safety outcomes, enforcement
9 activity and ongoing accountability
10 measures. Members of the community
11 also shared their experiences and
12 perspectives regarding public
13 safety interactions, accessibility
14 and communication.

15 What became clear
16 through these discussions is that
17 there is a shared desire to
18 strengthen the relationship between
19 the city and the LGBT community,
20 law enforcement and event
21 organizers. While this
22 conversation of course did not
23 resolve every issue, it created an
24 important opportunity to listen, to

1 better understand different
2 perspectives and to begin building
3 a foundation for a meaningful
4 collaboration.

5 One of the key takeaways
6 from these conversations was that
7 trust is built not only through
8 dialogue, but through how we
9 respond to what we hear. That
10 means acknowledging concerns,
11 identifying opportunities for
12 improvement and remaining committed
13 to continued partnership.

14 Community members identified
15 opportunities to strengthen future
16 Pride planning through earlier
17 engagement, improved communication,
18 expanded accessibility
19 considerations, greater youth
20 inclusion and continued efforts to
21 build trust between law enforcement
22 and the LGBTQ+ community.

23 Participants emphasized
24 that public safety and community

1 dignity are shared goals and that
2 both must remain central to future
3 planning efforts. Moving forward,
4 my office will continue working
5 with our partners to advance
6 recommendations focused on three
7 priorities: Rebuilding trust and
8 accountability, expanding inclusion
9 and accessibility, and
10 strengthening coordination,
11 investment and community
12 partnership. These efforts will
13 include establishing stronger
14 collaboration structures among
15 Pride stakeholders, expanding
16 LGBTQ+ cultural competency efforts,
17 enhancing communication protocols,
18 developing a comprehensive LGBTQ+
19 youth engagement strategy,
20 conducting a citywide LGBTQ+
21 listening tour, exploring
22 community-based safety and wellness
23 initiatives, identifying
24 sustainable resource opportunities,

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 and establishing measurable
2 indicators to evaluate progress,
3 just to name a few.

4 What we heard through
5 this process was that this
6 conversation is about more than one
7 weekend or one event. We know that
8 Pride is rooted in history and
9 community and culture and in
10 belonging. We remain committed to
11 fostering meaningful relationships
12 between the city and Philadelphia's
13 LGBTQ+ community, continuing to
14 learn and supporting efforts that
15 promote dignity and respect for
16 all.

17 The Mayor has
18 consistently emphasized that the
19 strongest solutions are developed
20 in partnership with the communities
21 we serve. That principle will
22 continue to guide my work and the
23 work of my office as we build a
24 Pride celebration that is safe,

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 welcoming, accessible and
2 reflective of the diversity and
3 strength of Philadelphia's LGBTQ+
4 community. Thank you for the
5 opportunity to testify today and
6 I'm happy to answer any questions
7 that you have.

8 MS. JONES: Good
9 morning. Thank you, Chairperson
10 Thomas, Vice-Chair Landau and
11 members of the Committee on the
12 Legislative Oversight. I am
13 Jazelle Jones and I serve as the
14 City Representative and the
15 Director of Special Events for the
16 City of Philadelphia. Thank you
17 for the opportunity to testify
18 regarding Resolution No. 260650,
19 introduced by Councilmember Landau.
20 I am joined today by my colleagues,
21 Police Commissioner Kevin Bethel
22 and Director of the LGBTQ+, Tito
23 Valdez.

24 Commissioner Bethel's

1 testimony spoke to the public
2 safety aspect of this year's Pride
3 march, and Mr. Tito's testimony
4 spoke to the city's ongoing
5 partnership with the LGBTQ+
6 community. My testimony is going
7 to focus on the importance of event
8 planning overall when it comes to
9 ensuring successful events.

10 First, I'd like to
11 provide an overview of my office
12 and the hundreds of events that we
13 support each year. Most notably, I
14 want to share some important
15 takeaways from the multitude of
16 2026-related events this summer.
17 The Office of the City
18 Representative and Special Events
19 serves as a one-stop shop for the
20 planning, production and permitting
21 of special events throughout
22 Philadelphia.

23 Our mission is to ensure
24 event organizers obtain the

1 appropriate permits, licenses and
2 insurance required to host a safe
3 and successful event within the
4 city. Our team also serves as the
5 primary point of contact for
6 special events. We assist
7 organizers with site plans, road
8 closures, permitting requirements
9 and other operational details
10 depending on the size, the scope
11 and complexity of an event. Our
12 office coordinates planning
13 meetings between event organizers
14 and the city's Special Events Task
15 Force, which includes
16 representatives from city
17 departments and agencies who are
18 responsible for the permitting, the
19 coordination and safe execution of
20 special events.

21 These agencies include
22 the Philadelphia Police Department,
23 the Philadelphia Fire Department,
24 the Department of Public Health,

1 the Department of Streets,
2 Philadelphia's Parks and
3 Recreation, the Departments of
4 Licenses and Inspections and many
5 other key partners. Together the
6 Special Events Task Force reviews
7 permit applications, the site
8 plans, traffic management plans,
9 public safety plans, ADA
10 accessibility plans and other
11 operational documents to ensure
12 that events are safe and properly
13 permitted as well as coordinated.

14 This collaborative model
15 has successfully supported some of
16 Philadelphia's largest events just
17 this summer, including FIFA Fan
18 Festival, the MLB All-Star Red
19 Carpet Show, Wawa Welcome America
20 Festival, the 4th of July concert
21 and Fireworks, America 250
22 celebrations and soon the upcoming
23 Philadelphia Cycling Classic and
24 numerous other festivals, races,

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 parades and community events. This
2 review process also helps determine
3 the level of city services that are
4 requested and/or required for each
5 event, including police, fire,
6 sanitation, traffic control and
7 many other municipal resources.

8 In addition to
9 coordinating the permit process,
10 our office provides onsite
11 operational support for many major
12 events, including the Philadelphia
13 Pride March and Festival that took
14 place on the Benjamin Franklin
15 Parkway. The permitted
16 Philadelphia Pride March and
17 Festival on the Parkway was
18 executed safely and successfully
19 through close coordination among
20 event organizers and city partners.

21 The event, which
22 typically exceeds over 60,000
23 attendees throughout the day,
24 featured a new location which had

1 an expanded footprint to improve
2 accessibility and overall event
3 experience for the attendees,
4 security screening and a dedicated
5 medical unit to enhance public
6 safety, a traffic control plan that
7 followed the city's proven Parkway
8 event model, utilizing an
9 established road closure footprint
10 that has been successfully
11 implemented for major events along
12 the Ben Franklin Parkway.

13 The event organizer,
14 Philly Pride 365, applied to host
15 the Philadelphia Pride March and
16 Festival on the Benjamin Franklin
17 Parkway, a premier event venue that
18 has successfully hosted nationally
19 recognized events such as the Made
20 in America Festival, the 2017 NFL
21 draft, Welcome America and the
22 annual Philadelphia Marathon
23 weekend.

24 Upon review, the

1 proposed move was approved because,
2 in part, the expanded footprint
3 provides the space and
4 infrastructure needed to support
5 the event's continued growth in
6 attendance, programming,
7 entertainment and community
8 engagement while increasing its
9 visibility as one of the city's
10 signature annual celebrations.

11 Hosting Pride on the
12 Parkway positions the event for
13 long-term success, allowing
14 organizers to build upon its
15 momentum and accommodate future
16 growth in a safe, accessible and
17 world-class setting. The office of
18 the City Representative and Special
19 Events remains committed to
20 supporting the Philadelphia Pride
21 March and Festival as well as all
22 the other permitted events
23 throughout the city with
24 professionalism, collaboration and

1 attention to detail through
2 thoughtful planning, strong
3 partnerships and a steadfast
4 commitment to public safety,
5 accessibility and operational
6 excellence.

7 Our office will continue
8 to ensure that all events of all
9 sizes are coordinated and executed
10 safely, successfully and in a
11 manner that best serves event
12 organizers, our residents and our
13 visitors alike. I thank you for
14 the opportunity to testify today
15 and I am also here to answer any
16 questions that you may have.

17 COUNCILMAN THOMAS:
18 Commissioner Bethel, the masks.

19 COMMISSIONER BETHEL:
20 Yeah. I'd just like to -- during
21 the movement and didn't show a
22 video, at the end of one of the
23 videos you would have seen one of
24 the officers depicted with masks

1 on. First and foremost, we did a
2 thorough analysis. We went beyond
3 the four -- there were additional
4 officers. I believe eight or nine
5 officers who had on masks.

6 I sit here today and I
7 can tell you I have absolutely no
8 idea why my officers were wearing
9 masks on that day. That is not
10 acceptable. That is not a part of
11 the policy and you are 100% --
12 Councilmember, I sat in your room
13 and I told you that and I said that
14 that's not what we do. But just
15 like anything, unfortunately folks
16 violate policy and we have a
17 process for that. We
18 immediately -- Internal Affairs is
19 investigating that matter. The
20 officers right now, as I said, they
21 work in the district and they move
22 into these MIRT components as a
23 specialized and privileged entity.
24 They are not in that position at

1 this time as we go through the
2 investigation. I won't go through
3 anything more because they are
4 going through a disciplinary
5 process.

6 But I stand here before
7 everyone, my men and women are not
8 supposed to be wearing masks unless
9 it's by policy. Now, you may see
10 one of my highway patrol officers
11 on a 30-degree day going down 95,
12 yes, they're going to wear masks.
13 On January 1st during the parade,
14 yes, we're going to give them some
15 authority to wear something that is
16 much more comfortable.

17 But for their daily
18 duties and their daily work, they
19 do not and shall not and will not
20 be wearing masks. We will address
21 that. We addressed that internally
22 and we'll address that through the
23 disciplinary process. I just want
24 to make sure I get that out.

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: And
2 so, if I can thank you for that
3 statement. If I can just offer a
4 little recommendation as it relates
5 to what they wear. It's been cold
6 for as long as I've been born. The
7 mask phenomenon is a new thing. So
8 whatever people need to do to stay
9 warm, don't wear what they wear.
10 And we all know who they are. All
11 right. So whatever is going to be
12 to stay warm, there was a long time
13 where we would stay warm with
14 mittens and all these other things
15 that were not masks. This is a new
16 phenomenon.

17 So even in the cold 30
18 degree weather, -30 degree weather,
19 I don't think it's any excuse for
20 law enforcement to cover their
21 face. We can go earmuffs --

22 (Applause.)

23 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: We
24 can wear gloves, we can do a lot.

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 But I don't think that we should
2 let the weather justify people
3 doing something in 2026 that they
4 didn't do in 1996.

5 COMMISSIONER BETHEL: And
6 I hear you, Councilman. I just
7 want to meet you somewhere --
8 highway patrol officer who's on a
9 wheel going 60 or 70 miles an hour,
10 whether he's doing a parade or a
11 lead or something, that air hitting
12 his or her face is significant.
13 And I think --

14 COUNCILMAN THOMAS:
15 You've been around a long time.
16 What did that officer do before we
17 were in this ICE phenomenon?

18 COMMISSIONER BETHEL:
19 They've always worn -- on the
20 motorcycles, they've always worn
21 some type of shield. But they take
22 them off. It's only done when
23 they're riding, not when they're --

24 COUNCILMAN THOMAS:

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 We'll cross that bridge when we get
2 there. You know where we are as it
3 relates to that. And I just want
4 to remind folks, when young people
5 were wearing masks, we demonized
6 them, right. It didn't matter if
7 it was cold. It didn't matter what
8 was going on. They got demonized
9 when they were wearing masks. And
10 unfortunately, we find these
11 justifications, especially in a
12 climate like this, for law
13 enforcement to do it. I have to
14 pass it to Councilmember Landau.
15 She's going to chair the rest of
16 the hearing.

17 Before I pass it to
18 Councilmember Landau, I'm just
19 curious. You said in the beginning
20 that you had officers, to use your
21 words, you had officers who are
22 considered amongst the community,
23 right. That was part of your
24 testimony in the beginning. How

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 many officers who were deployed
2 that day would you consider amongst
3 the community?

4 And then how many --
5 because if I'm amongst the
6 community and I see something
7 wrong, I think I feel a little more
8 obligated to report it. So how
9 many officers that day that were
10 deployed were considered amongst
11 the community? And how many
12 officers reported any bad behavior
13 from their colleagues that day?

14 So we're looking at
15 video where we clearly see officers
16 doing wrong. I'm curious did any
17 other officer say, hey, Rue, you
18 got a mask on, you should probably
19 take that off. Were there any
20 reports that day from officers
21 reporting officers for behavior
22 that we should not have seen since
23 there were so many officers out
24 there that's amongst the community?

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 COMMISSIONER BETHEL: I
2 don't have that information as to
3 where all of those -- we did both
4 the external complaints and then
5 what we have, Internal Affairs is
6 going through all of the video of
7 all the men and women through their
8 body-worn cameras, to see if we
9 determined that there is anything
10 that was in violation.

11 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: But
12 did a police officer report another
13 police officer for being in
14 violation? Was there one officer
15 who said, man, they got on masks,
16 that's not right, I'm going to
17 report this?

18 COMMISSIONER BETHEL:
19 No. I think in that regard as part
20 of the investigation, it should
21 have been a supervisor who
22 identified those -- those men and
23 women were under supervision. It
24 is the supervisor's responsibility

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 at that time to identify that the
2 officers are not in policy and make
3 those adjustments. That is part of
4 the investigation internally that
5 we're doing.

6 It should have not taken
7 an officer to say that this person
8 should not have a mask on. It
9 should have been the supervisor who
10 was managing those men and women to
11 identify that those persons were
12 not in policy.

13 COUNCILMAN THOMAS:
14 Commissioner Bethel, this is
15 where -- so let's go back, because
16 we have a long history. And so,
17 there was a time when you were
18 running school police and I was the
19 Chair of the Education Committee.
20 And when an incident happened in a
21 school, a teacher who witnesses the
22 incident is obligated to report the
23 incident whether I'm in charge of
24 that person or not.

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 So help me understand
2 how do we have a climate with law
3 enforcement where I can watch my
4 colleague do something wrong, and
5 then you are telling us that the
6 person who's responsible for
7 addressing the colleague doing
8 something wrong is a supervisor and
9 there's no responsibility for the
10 officer standing next to the
11 officer with a mask on?

12 So if I'm with Rue,
13 right, and Rue does something wrong
14 and I don't say something to Rue,
15 the public will view both of us as
16 doing something wrong. So I'm
17 trying to figure out why would it
18 be only the responsibility of the
19 supervisor? And again, I'm
20 asking --

21 COMMISSIONER BETHEL:
22 That's not what I'm saying. What
23 I'm saying in that situation there
24 the supervisor had a duty and

1 responsibility to make sure his
2 people were in the proper uniform.
3 As it relates to overall, our men
4 and women are trained and in policy
5 that if they observe officers doing
6 things that are inappropriate and
7 outside of policy, they have a duty
8 to stop that behavior and they have
9 a duty to report that behavior.

10 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: So
11 the mask wouldn't fall in that
12 category?

13 COMMISSIONER BETHEL:
14 But what I'm saying to you, yes,
15 even if the officer saw the person
16 that had a mask on, he or she has
17 no authority to say, hey, Officer
18 Smith, take that off. He or she
19 would go to the supervisor and give
20 that information.

21 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: So
22 that was my first question.

23 COMMISSIONER BETHEL: My
24 position is that could have

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 happened. That's why we're going
2 through the investigation. We
3 don't know if that happened or not
4 until we do the investigation. I
5 don't know that.

6 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Come
7 on, Commish. I mean, the incident
8 happened a long time ago --

9 COMMISSIONER BETHEL:
10 No, I'm going through a --

11 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: You
12 don't know if one officer reported
13 one officer?

14 COMMISSIONER BETHEL:
15 Listen --

16 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Let
17 me explain why I'm asking. Because
18 when you communicated early on, I'm
19 just listening, right, all the
20 videos and clips, I seen maybe one
21 or two. I'll give a shout-out to
22 Jacen for telling me that's what
23 was going on. But a lot of this
24 information is new for me. So I

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 have no bias here, right. I'm
2 collecting information. I'm
3 listening to questions.

4 And when I hear the
5 intention of the Administration is
6 to put people of the community in
7 the event, it would give us the
8 perception that you're putting
9 people there who are sensitive to
10 the issues that's going on, knowing
11 that they would --

12 COMMISSIONER BETHEL: I
13 --

14 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: --
15 they would address it -- okay. Go
16 ahead.

17 COMMISSIONER BETHEL:
18 First and foremost, I have a number
19 of officers who do not identify
20 within the department. So I
21 couldn't begin to tell you the
22 number of officers I --

23 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: So
24 you gave us the wrong perception.

1 You probably shouldn't have said
2 that to us.

3 COMMISSIONER BETHEL: I
4 met with my GOAL Chapter after this
5 event. In that process, I found
6 that some of the officers were down
7 in that space during the operation.
8 They shared with us that they had
9 concerns about how we operated.
10 They had concerns about the
11 barricades. And it did not come up
12 that they -- depending on where
13 they were. They could have been on
14 13th and Locust, standing on the
15 corner, watching a barricade and
16 not seeing any of the behavior that
17 you're describing. So I don't make
18 any assumptions that those folks
19 that I described to you who
20 identify with the community who met
21 with me were in that place where
22 you're describing the masks.

23 That was a small area
24 where we saw the men and women

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 walking up with the masks. I can't
2 tell you who was in that space was
3 from the community who would have
4 said, hey, there's something wrong.
5 That being said --

6 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: I
7 understand what you're saying. I'm
8 just going by what the testimony
9 was that was communicated.

10 COMMISSIONER BETHEL:
11 That being said, when we
12 investigate things through Internal
13 Affairs, we do an expansive --
14 that's why I told you, I could
15 easily sit with the four people you
16 showed me and say that was it. We
17 went through every video and said,
18 oh, there's additional men and
19 women who are wearing masks,
20 because we didn't even see it in
21 the video. That was expanding the
22 investigation.

23 Part of Commissioner
24 Dales and his team will now go

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 through and they will sit down and
2 will determine what was being said
3 in that situation. There may have
4 been an officer who went to a
5 supervisor and said something is
6 wrong, you need to do something.

7 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: So
8 you don't know? You don't know if
9 any officer --

10 COMMISSIONER BETHEL: I
11 have a process. They have due
12 process. I can't make those --
13 they have to go through a due
14 process. My men and women go
15 through an interview process. They
16 have attorneys through the FOP in
17 that process. We're going through
18 the process of an investigation.
19 We're not going to sit there and
20 make any assumptions. I want to
21 know why they were in masks. Those
22 things will come out.

23 And then at that point,
24 we'll be able to make a full

1 determination of what was said,
2 when it was said, what should have
3 been done, what was not done. And
4 then I will make and ultimately the
5 department will make a disciplinary
6 decision as to what should happen
7 to those men and women. But I
8 can't do those things without
9 getting all that together,
10 Councilman.

11 I cannot sit there and
12 say he did it because I would
13 expose that investigation. Even if
14 I had that information, I could not
15 sit here and tell you that Michael
16 Smith gave that information because
17 that would not be appropriate. We
18 need to make sure the
19 investigation -- even in this
20 public environment, I have things
21 that I have to -- and processes I
22 have to do. Because if we can do
23 that, then guess what, there'll be
24 no discipline.

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: So,
2 Commissioner, look, let's take a
3 step back.

4 COMMISSIONER BETHEL:
5 Yes, sir.

6 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: All
7 right. So first of all, let me
8 commend you because you're the only
9 person who came up here and said,
10 we did this wrong and we'll do
11 better, right. So I appreciate you
12 having a spirit of being open to
13 admitting what wasn't done well and
14 then saying, this is what we need
15 to do moving forward. So let me
16 provide that context because I
17 think that's important.

18 I think just listening,
19 and this is it and I'll pass it to
20 Councilmember Landau, the Chair
21 moving forward, not knowing much
22 information coming into today's
23 conversation and listening and
24 watching, especially the video of

1 the young people, I still don't
2 understand what young people
3 fighting at 3:30 has to do with --
4 or whatever time it was.

5 I'm going to explain it
6 to you. In broad daylight, we're
7 watching young people fight. And
8 anybody who knows the City of
9 Philadelphia, we know the young
10 people gather because they just
11 want to gather. So I still don't
12 really understand the context of
13 the young people gathering the way
14 they did while the parade was
15 happening over there and then the
16 young people in broad daylight
17 doing what they doing, leading to
18 this aggressive police presence
19 that happened later. So I'm not
20 even going to go there. I'll let
21 Councilmember Landau figure that
22 out.

23 I think what I'm
24 listening to and what the concern

1 is, is it doesn't really feel like
2 we're having a conversation that
3 can put us in a position of earning
4 the trust of a lot of the people
5 who feel like the trust has been
6 lost, because some of this stuff is
7 let's just call it confusing. And
8 so, when I listen to you talk about
9 the officers and I'm wondering all
10 of the negative behavior we've
11 seen, like my instinct says, wow,
12 did any of the officers say
13 anything.

14 I mean, it's okay to say
15 you don't know, and I would never
16 ask you to name an officer, but
17 there are a lot of people -- there
18 are well more than dozens of
19 officers out there. And as we're
20 watching this clip, I think what
21 we're trying to figure out is the
22 culture of the police department.
23 Do we have a police department
24 where the culture is if I see

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 somebody doing something wrong, I'm
2 going to say something or do we
3 have the culture of a police
4 department whereas if I see
5 somebody doing something wrong,
6 this is my brother, this is the
7 brotherhood and I'm not doing
8 nothing, I'm more loyal to the
9 brotherhood than the people we
10 serve. And I think that's the
11 thing that we're trying to figure
12 out right now.

13 (Applause.)

14 COMMISSIONER BETHEL: I
15 think that's a big jump. You have
16 553 men and women on station that
17 day. Of that, nine individuals
18 were identified wearing masks. So
19 I would say this --

20 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: So
21 let's move past the masks. Masks
22 was just one thing. I think we saw
23 other behavior that was
24 problematic.

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 COMMISSIONER BETHEL: But
2 you said a culture, right. I want
3 to put it in context.

4 COUNCILMAN THOMAS:
5 Yeah, culture.

6 COMMISSIONER BETHEL: If
7 I got 553 people and that nine
8 people were in violation of the
9 policy, we're going to address
10 that. So when you say the culture,
11 I mean, I don't know -- I don't
12 know where you're going with that
13 when you say the culture. On this
14 day I am walking -- we're walking
15 through that process. We have a
16 duty.

17 See, I don't have the
18 luxury of looking at a clip and
19 saying, that's all I have. I don't
20 have the luxury of looking at a
21 video and saying that little
22 30-second shot -- I need to do the
23 complete. In that investigation,
24 I'm not just looking for masks.

1 I'm looking for any other
2 violations. Did those officers use
3 force that they weren't supposed
4 to, beyond just the masks. Did any
5 of those officers engage in force
6 that they weren't supposed to.
7 We're going to be looking at their
8 body camera. What happened at the
9 end when they walked, what happened
10 before they walked up and put the
11 mask on. When did the body-worn
12 camera go on? When did they
13 activate the body-worn camera?
14 There's multiple layers, multiple
15 layers --

16 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: I'm
17 not denying that. It was more of a
18 yes or no thing, right. It was an
19 alley-oop, Commish. That was an
20 easy one to be like, no, of course
21 not, that's not the climate of our
22 police department. We understand
23 we serve the people of
24 Philadelphia. We're here to serve

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 the people of Philadelphia. And if
2 someone sees someone doing
3 something wrong, they see
4 something, they say something.

5 COMMISSIONER BETHEL:

6 But you know that, Councilman. You
7 know that.

8 COUNCILMAN THOMAS:

9 That's called an alley-oop,
10 Commissioner. Yes, of course
11 that's the case. I'm telling you
12 that people have the perception
13 that that's not what's going on.
14 So I'm throwing you an alley-oop so
15 you can let the people know --

16 COMMISSIONER BETHEL: I
17 don't need an alley-oop. Listen --

18 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Hey,
19 look, this is what's going on. We
20 are not that type of department.
21 We do because you're --

22 COMMISSIONER BETHEL:

23 I've said that countless times.

24 You focused on the masks and you

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 centered around the masks. You
2 start with a question around --

3 COUNCILMAN THOMAS:

4 Commissioner, I promise I'm not
5 focused on the masks. And this is
6 going in a direction that I don't
7 think is productive. So what I'll
8 do is I'll pass it to Councilmember
9 Landau so Councilmember Landau can
10 begin to chair the conversation,
11 because I'm just trying to -- I'm
12 trying to be the mediator right now
13 and put us in a position to restore
14 trust with the public. And I think
15 you're getting frustrated with me
16 because you think I'm trying to
17 have these gotcha moments and I'm
18 not.

19 I'm just looking at the
20 audience. I'm looking at their
21 facial expressions. This is the
22 teacher that I am. And I'm saying,
23 whoa, they're cringing back there.
24 They don't like that. Let's come

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 back with a different tone and let
2 people know, hey, look, no, that's
3 not the climate in our police
4 department. Our folks are taught
5 and trained if they see something,
6 they do this, they do that, they do
7 this --

8 COMMISSIONER BETHEL: I
9 said that to you. I told you that.
10 I told you there was a policy --

11 COUNCILMAN THOMAS:
12 Madam Chair, you got it. Thank
13 you, Commissioner. Thank you,
14 everybody.

15 (Applause.)

16 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:
17 Commissioner Bethel, we have known
18 each other for a long, long time.
19 I was running the city's Commission
20 on Human Relations. You were a
21 Deputy Commissioner. You were my
22 number one point person when we
23 were resolving issues in the City
24 of Philadelphia. I must admit that

1 your testimony today and what I'm
2 hearing is both painful and
3 perplexing.

4 Your description of what
5 happened on June 7th and the way
6 you've described it, you ended up
7 contradicting yourself multiple
8 times. You said you knew people
9 were going to come back to the
10 Gayborhood, that you knew they
11 would migrate there, that you had
12 planned for it. And then you would
13 say on another separate occasion
14 you didn't know this was going to
15 happen. This was something that
16 wasn't planned.

17 Your own slide says you
18 had ten scheduled inperson and
19 virtual meetings that were held
20 between April 17th and June 4th.
21 Yet early meetings were focused on
22 the event's relocation to the
23 Parkway. Yet planning discussions,
24 public safety discussions and

1 numerous additional phone calls
2 occurred before and during the
3 event to exchange intelligence and
4 coordinate planning, logistics and
5 merging.

6 It is mind-boggling to
7 think that you and your team would
8 not know that people were going
9 back to the Gayborhood. When we
10 went down to Penn's Landing when
11 Pride was there for many years, we
12 went back to the Gayborhood. This
13 was not a surprise. It wasn't
14 unexpected. And, in fact, it is my
15 belief that there actually was a
16 version of a plan; is that correct?
17 That with the captain, there was a
18 version of the plan of what to do
19 that day?

20 COMMISSIONER BETHEL: As
21 I shared, I don't think I'm being
22 contradictory. What I'm saying to
23 you is it's easy for -- we didn't
24 know what we were going to expect

1 back there. We knew people were
2 going to come back. We knew that.
3 What they were going to do and what
4 it would be is what we would not be
5 able to anticipate.

6 There was no way anyone
7 could anticipate -- yes, they're
8 going to come back to the
9 Gayborhood. But if the event has
10 now moved, if the event has now
11 moved to the Parkway, we've shifted
12 all of our assets to the Parkway.
13 Then, yeah, we're going to come
14 back so the team set up a
15 pedestrian detail, right. We're
16 going to let the traffic move --
17 similar to what we do after, you
18 know, we used to have the Greek and
19 after the Greek in the park, folks
20 would go to South Street.

21 After we have the
22 Mummers, they go to 2 Street.
23 After we have the Puerto Rican Day
24 parade, they go back into -- but in

1 all those cases, there are
2 organizers. There are folks who
3 are helping to manage it and keep
4 it together, you know what I mean.
5 What we did not and could not
6 anticipate there would be a large
7 number of people who are not going
8 to go to the Parkway.

9 If they're setting up --
10 if they're coming to the Gayborhood
11 at 1 o'clock in the afternoon, what
12 does that tell you, Councilwoman?
13 Our detail wasn't even set to start
14 until 3:00 because we did not
15 anticipate that they would be in
16 the Gayborhood that early.

17 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:
18 Commissioner, this is not my job to
19 anticipate when folks are coming
20 back. It is your job. And I will
21 say this --

22 COMMISSIONER BETHEL: I
23 know my job, Councilwoman. I know
24 my job.

1 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:

2 When you described the Greek Picnic
3 going to South Street and Mummers
4 going to 2 Street, you did not say
5 that there was nothing there for
6 them. Because to us there is never
7 nothing there in the Gayborhood.
8 For us, there is community. There
9 are bars for people who are over
10 21. There is music, there is fun
11 and there is absolutely community.
12 And when you saw young people in
13 the parking garage, they were
14 dancing. They weren't fighting.
15 They were dancing.

16 COMMISSIONER BETHEL:

17 Councilwoman, Councilwoman, now,
18 let's be -- we have to have a --
19 the only music that I made aware of
20 is what Michael Weiss had set up at
21 13th and Locust. Yes, historically
22 there was what you just described.
23 But somebody tell me that was there
24 that day. Yeah, I got alcohol, I

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 got alcohol being sold. Folks are
2 telling me that -- show me the
3 video. You showed a lot of videos
4 here.

5 Somebody show me a video
6 of what you described, that there's
7 DJs out there for people to dance,
8 that there's urinals for people to
9 be able to go to the restroom if
10 they have to. I mean, from what
11 I've seen up to this point there is
12 nothing out there but what is up at
13 13th and Locust. And then there's
14 other people who are just walking
15 around.

16 Yes, when they go to
17 South Street, that would be a
18 challenge for us but there are
19 stores there too, right. And so,
20 there was a lot of commercial
21 activity and we would ultimately
22 wind up, guess what, Councilwoman,
23 pushed people off of South Street
24 when the crowd got so bad that we

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 could not control it and it would
2 get out of control and we would
3 ultimately -- and I would lead
4 those as a sergeant, as a
5 lieutenant, as a captain and as a
6 deputy commissioner as well,
7 because we would have to move
8 people because that convergent
9 behavior will become dangerous.

10 You talk about the young
11 people. You can't separate the
12 process. You can't have kids who
13 are fighting in a breezeway,
14 hundreds of them, you can't have
15 kids who are taking over a business
16 and people can't get their cars.
17 You can't take kids who are -- I
18 didn't show you all the videos.
19 All right. I mean, you pick and
20 select the videos. That continuous
21 behavior, we've seen enough of it.

22 Then there's a shooting.
23 There's a shooting. And then
24 everybody's looking at me like,

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 well, why did you do that. The
2 goal was just to move them out.
3 We're not going in -- we don't make
4 an arrest. So if the goal is what
5 I described, to move them out of
6 that space, push them and get them
7 out of that space. We didn't take
8 them anywhere. They stayed
9 downtown until 1 o'clock, 2 o'clock
10 in the morning. So we didn't say
11 you couldn't be here.

12 But what we do know and
13 we have enough evidence of it, that
14 we have large groups of young
15 people who get together with
16 nothing to do. Partying, what?
17 partying? Tell me what party are
18 we describing.

19 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:
20 Commissioner, Commissioner, first
21 of all, let me just say one thing.
22 It is 2026. This is where the kids
23 have their music (indicating cell
24 phone). They don't need a DJ. The

1 second thing is whose fault is it
2 that you're saying the kids have
3 nothing to do when I'm also saying
4 even getting together as a
5 community is something to do?

6 The kids are not allowed
7 in the Fashion District after
8 2 o'clock. They're not allowed in
9 Liberty Place. We have shut down
10 all of their places. And most
11 importantly, we are raising money
12 for the Attic Youth Center to open
13 their building, which they have
14 purchased at 12th and Chestnut.
15 And we have asked the City of
16 Philadelphia for additional funding
17 that was not even approved. I have
18 been championing that for the Attic
19 Youth Center to move there to 12th
20 and Chestnut. This is where they
21 belong.

22 When we were describing
23 what happened at 12th and Walnut,
24 you said what were they all doing

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 there, how could they all
2 congregate there. They will have
3 their home at 12th and Chestnut
4 very, very soon. They belong
5 there. They belong in our city and
6 they are allowed to congregate.

7 (Applause.)

8 COMMISSIONER BETHEL:

9 Listen, I'm happy that the Attic --
10 I mean, I've been as a Deputy over
11 in the Attic talking to young
12 people. When I sit there and tell
13 you about -- listen, we did our due
14 diligence. Initially, I didn't
15 even know the young people were
16 from the community until you slowed
17 it down and you start to see the
18 Pride flags and all of that. And
19 so, I gave the charge to this body,
20 right, and to all of us, right.
21 What did we do? It's a good thing.
22 It's a good thing that hundreds of
23 young people or young people of
24 color who are sitting there saying,

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 hey, I'm out and I want to be a
2 part of something. It's our job,
3 our job. And I'm 100% supportive
4 of that, Councilwoman, to sit down
5 with whomever to say, what can we
6 do with those young people.

7 If Pride was set up the
8 way it was, somebody tell me, the
9 organizer, would they have let 500
10 of the kids into the event, would
11 they have let them? Yes,
12 absolutely, right. And what you
13 would do at that point and say,
14 what do you do for them, because it
15 ain't about alcohol, right. We got
16 the bars. But we're talking about
17 14- and 15- and 16-year-old kids,
18 yeah, so they need to have
19 something to do, right.

20 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:
21 They were doing it. They were
22 dancing.

23 COMMISSIONER BETHEL:
24 Listen, but I think we can sit

1 here --

2 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU: I
3 want to ask some specific questions
4 and get them on the record so we
5 can move on to get community
6 conversation happening here and
7 community voices. But what
8 operational guidance was provided
9 to officers assigned to the Pride
10 event? Were there instructions to
11 follow a specific incident action
12 plan or rely on prior training and
13 experiences?

14 And I want to
15 specifically find out what my
16 understanding is, is that there was
17 some version of a plan by the
18 Captain, but that a Chief Inspector
19 overrode that decision. And also
20 in your testimony, I want to be
21 really clear about this when you
22 talked about force. For most of
23 us, riding a motorcycle on a
24 barricaded sidewalk where you can't

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 go anywhere, that's force. That is
2 terrifying. That is dangerous.

3 (Applause.)

4 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU: We
5 don't allow bikes on the sidewalk.
6 We don't allow motorcycles on the
7 sidewalk in general. You put
8 motorcycles on the sidewalk with
9 barricades when there were too many
10 humans on there and you knew it and
11 you did it anyway. You brought
12 horses into areas to terrify
13 people. There are so many
14 things -- you said we were going to
15 block off the street, but we
16 couldn't -- you had enough
17 motorcycles and police cars that,
18 yes, you could have blocked off the
19 street. You could have. These are
20 choices. These are decisions.

21 I want to know was there
22 a plan? What was the plan? Who
23 created the plan? When did the
24 plan change? Who created the new

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 plan? Let's get it all out now.

2 COMMISSIONER BETHEL: So

3 let me say this: We go into these

4 plans with a safety plan to create

5 a barrier around those events.

6 That is the first leg of that

7 process. There's multiple layers

8 below that. We're prepared to go

9 with our MIRT team if something

10 significant happens. As I said,

11 someone sets off an explosive, a

12 biological agent, chemical agent,

13 we're prepared to go with that.

14 We have Rescue and we

15 work with our Fire Department. And

16 that's what you heard Jazelle Jones

17 say, there'd be some kind of mass

18 incident, so we are prepared for

19 that. As it relates to the

20 Gayborhood, it's a traffic detail.

21 It's a traffic detail. It's not

22 set up for anything other than to

23 maintain the traffic and people

24 moving.

1 At some point, the
2 Chief -- yeah, the Chief is the
3 Chief. He is the authority. He
4 has a higher skill set. And he
5 made -- the Captain may have
6 mentioned it, he wanted to break
7 the barricades down. The Chief in
8 his experience may have determined
9 in this case that he had a
10 different course of action that he
11 would take. And so, he did. He is
12 then going to move into a secondary
13 move.

14 So at that point, when
15 we move from a traffic detail, we
16 are set up, we are trained and
17 well-trained to be able to say
18 we're going to shift. At that
19 point, we're going to shift and
20 we're going to shift to a process
21 for the safety of the young people
22 who are there, for the safety of
23 the crowd. We are going to now
24 move the crowd out of that area to

1 make it safe.

2 People can disagree with
3 that and I respect that. I respect
4 folks who have never been in that
5 experience, seeing a motorcycle
6 could be traumatizing and we
7 apologize. That was not our goal.
8 I can understand if someone has
9 never seen a horse. Most people
10 don't see my horses. So seeing a
11 horse used in an operational
12 element for traffic or crowd
13 control can be disarming to people.
14 We understand that. But we have
15 the capacity to move from one
16 process, and then we move into our
17 execution mode of doing that, and
18 then we move into maintaining the
19 order, and then we move to going
20 back to basic order.

21 So those orders don't
22 specifically -- the men and women
23 know, the leadership knows how to
24 move through that process. I can

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 go from a very calm situation into,
2 hey, guess what, we have to move
3 people off the July 4th Parkway
4 because of thunder strikes and we
5 move into that process. There are
6 multiple layers of our training and
7 our process that allow us to do
8 that. The Chief has the
9 flexibility to do that and we
10 execute, and he used that to
11 execute.

12 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU: Do
13 you believe that their decision to
14 put motorcycles on the sidewalk
15 with the barricades was a good
16 decision?

17 COMMISSIONER BETHEL: I
18 believe that the goal to move the
19 crowd out of that area for their
20 safety was appropriate at the time.
21 That's what they had at their
22 availability to do that and they
23 used that. Yes, I agree with that.
24 However, I do caution

1 that had we had other assets to be
2 able to do what we knew, could we
3 now as we come back and look back
4 and the conversations we're having
5 today, that what that does, I mean
6 we are and we talked about looking
7 at what the impact it has on people
8 when we see those motor -- as I
9 shared with you, when the
10 motorcycles went up the sidewalk,
11 99.9% of the people moved.

12 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU: Of
13 course they moved. The motorcycles
14 are on the sidewalk and they're in
15 a barricade. They have two
16 choices. They're going to get run
17 over or they have to move.

18 COMMISSIONER BETHEL:
19 But, Councilwoman, I think this is
20 going beyond just the motorcycles.
21 I don't think if I had officers
22 there, it would have made -- at
23 that point, folks just did not like
24 the fact that they were being moved

1 out. Whether I use motorcycles,
2 whether I use horses, whether I use
3 people, whether I use bikes, it is
4 based on what we hear. The
5 kettling and the blocking of the
6 sidewalk caused significant issues
7 for us.

8 It caused that
9 convergence and that squeezing of
10 folks together and that made people
11 uncomfortable. And that's what we
12 recognize now. We recognize that
13 we can't do that. We have to avoid
14 those situations because of what it
15 caused to folks. So, yes, we took
16 a lookback. We did in our After
17 Action Review, is that the best
18 course of action, right. The Chief
19 is working off of what he has at
20 the time. We're trying to move
21 folks and he's moving things very
22 quickly.

23 The MIRT team would not
24 have been in that front position.

1 We do not use them in that front
2 position. But because we needed to
3 get assets over there, we did. So
4 we did have entities that were out
5 of their components if we had a
6 full deck of the things that we
7 have to do. But we're shifting
8 personnel from the Parkway over to
9 the Gayborhood. We're trying to
10 make a process to make sure it
11 moves safely. Our goal is to get
12 our folks out of there, make sure
13 they're safe, make sure there's no
14 harm to them.

15 And ultimately, at the
16 end of the day, I mean, two years
17 prior we had a shooting on Market
18 Street following one of the Pride
19 events where the young people had
20 come down and got on Market Street.
21 Obviously, we had the unfortunate
22 homicide on Camac, but I don't
23 associate that with the Pride
24 because that happened at 2:30, and

1 that's a significant loss. I mean,
2 you know, part of that was what
3 happened as well. So there isn't a
4 backdrop of this, the men and women
5 trying to avoid what we had a
6 shooting in 2024. We had something
7 to happen in the offset. We don't
8 want that to happen. So that is
9 also working in the backdrop of all
10 of this, because I don't know who
11 has potentially has a weapon. I
12 don't know who wants to do harm
13 down there. And so, we're moving
14 folks out. And that's the process
15 that we used.

16 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU: I
17 would suggest that most people did
18 not believe that you were there to
19 protect them. They were terrified.
20 They were harassed. They were
21 traumatized. This was not about
22 protection. You had 150 officers
23 there by your own testimony. That
24 is a significant amount of

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 officers.

2 COMMISSIONER BETHEL:

3 But I disagree with you. I'll tell
4 you what, then do you want police
5 there at all, because that's the
6 question then, right? Is policing
7 there at all?

8 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU: My
9 comment that there was 150 officers
10 there should not turn into the
11 zero-sum game of do you not want
12 anybody there.

13 (Applause.)

14 COMMISSIONER BETHEL:

15 That's not what I'm --
16 Councilwoman, listen, you know I
17 have a lot of respect for you. And
18 so, we're having a conversation.
19 So just make sure I'm not being
20 disrespectful to you when I push
21 back. I want you to know that.
22 But that's conversation.

23 I shared to you earlier
24 in the process if this is done

1 properly, then I should be having a
2 reduced number of officers coming
3 into the Gayborhood. All I should
4 have is officers standing on the
5 corner as we've done year after
6 year. Something's going on that
7 they can't handle, the marshals or
8 the volunteers will come out and
9 say, hey, listen, we got a problem
10 with X, Y, Z.

11 But we don't sit in --
12 the 13th and Gayborhood, we're not
13 in -- we have men and women moving
14 through. And it's a good day,
15 right. It polices itself. The
16 community polices itself. That
17 should be the goal.

18 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:
19 But for those barricades, I believe
20 that it would have been an easier
21 and good day. And so, let me
22 just -- I have other logistical
23 questions that I'm going to submit
24 to you in writing. I appreciate

1 that. I do want to clarify
2 something for all the press that's
3 listening.

4 You said that there was
5 one arrest at 9:30 at night at 12th
6 and Market. Even last year, Pride
7 ended at 7:00. So I want to be
8 really clear about what you're
9 conflating that is happening with
10 Pride and the aftermath and what is
11 not.

12 COMMISSIONER BETHEL:
13 You said Pride at 7:00, right.
14 Well, we didn't start moving the
15 kids, young people, until 7:30. So
16 the Pride was over.

17 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU: My
18 point was you talked about an
19 arrest that occurred at 9:30 at
20 12th and Market. And I'm saying
21 this would have been long after any
22 event.

23 COMMISSIONER BETHEL:
24 Understood.

1 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:

2 The truth is this, there was an
3 expectation people were coming
4 back. There could have been a
5 plan. There could have been a
6 reassessment of the plan. You guys
7 all seen -- we've all been in
8 situations, it's getting out of
9 control. There could be a huddle
10 at that moment to change tactics
11 and change the way things were
12 happening. That did not happen.
13 You went forward with the course of
14 what people saw as overpolicing,
15 aggressive policing, of really
16 feeling like the one thing that we
17 know in all of the times that we've
18 worked together, the cornerstone of
19 community policing is trust,
20 communication. None of that was
21 there. That was all broken. That
22 was absolutely broken. And it will
23 take a very, very long time to
24 repair this.

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 Again, I actually find
2 this painful, more painful than I
3 could have even expected. We look
4 forward to moving on and working on
5 this. And I apologize to the
6 community that it has taken this
7 long to get you up here. The next
8 panel is going to be fantastic.
9 There has to be an accountability
10 that leads to potentially even an
11 apology, as we know, is always a
12 very helpful thing to help and
13 start healing. And we need to
14 really, really work on the healing
15 process to get to the next place.

16 I want to end with one
17 thing, Commissioner, with all
18 respect and we will help support
19 you on this, please, please, please
20 start calling your officers,
21 officers and not your men and
22 women. There are trans and
23 non-binary people on your force or
24 folks who are scared to come out.

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 (Applause.)

2 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:

3 Officers, that's it. Thank you so
4 much.

5 Ms. Hartman, can you
6 please call the next panel. Thank
7 you.

8 THE CLERK: Chris
9 Bartlett --

10 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:

11 Oh, I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry.
12 The Chair calls Councilperson
13 Phillips for some questions. I'm
14 sorry.

15 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

16 Thank you. I'm just going to be
17 really brief. Commissioner, I just
18 want to -- just because we're in
19 the business of problemsolving, so
20 I want to thank you for coming
21 along to help us problemsolve for
22 next year. I just want to be clear
23 on the record. What I'm hearing is
24 that the intent was to ensure that

1 that day was safe and sound.

2 Unfortunately, there
3 were things that happened that
4 didn't allow for that to happen the
5 way that you planned, such as the
6 disruptions that you said the young
7 people came out. Now, what I hear
8 with the barricades, you're like,
9 okay, these decisions were made,
10 you're now looking into other
11 alternatives such as not locking
12 down the sidewalks, other things
13 that you could do.

14 In moving forward, what
15 I'm also hearing is that going into
16 next year you're going to be
17 looking into if the permit group,
18 as Ms. Jazelle Jones, if they want
19 to have people at the Gayborhood as
20 well, that has to be a part of the
21 permit process so that the police
22 department can prepare for that as
23 well. And because you weren't
24 properly prepared for that right at

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 that moment, it led to an array of
2 decisions being made that weren't
3 necessarily all the way in step
4 with the department's processes and
5 decisions. Is that what I'm
6 hearing as well?

7 COMMISSIONER BETHEL: I
8 believe you have that right.
9 Because as you ended, Councilwoman
10 Landau, there needs to be an --
11 when you huddle, I usually huddle
12 with the organizer of the event,
13 the Parkway. I have somebody to do
14 the huddle with major events.
15 There's always somebody to huddle
16 with to make the pivot that you
17 described, Councilwoman. That
18 needs to be organizers to be able
19 to get into that huddle to make
20 those decisions. So, yes, I
21 believe you got it correctly.

22 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
23 Thank you so much. And I just have
24 two questions. How does the

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 department determine when a large
2 gathering has shifted from a
3 celebratory event to a public
4 safety concern?

5 COMMISSIONER BETHEL:

6 Say that again, sir.

7 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

8 How does the department determine
9 when a large gathering has shifted
10 from a celebratory event to a
11 public safety concern?

12 COMMISSIONER BETHEL:

13 When conditions change, where the
14 behavior is now starting to get out
15 of control, where folks are now
16 engaging in violent behavior,
17 whether it be amongst themselves or
18 against property, is when we have
19 to make a determination that we
20 have to take action. And so, we
21 cannot wait until the windows are
22 broken or that folks are now being
23 injured to use that as the
24 barometer.

1 We've been at it long
2 enough to know that there's, you
3 know, when folks are fighting,
4 fighting, fighting, now, you're
5 getting retaliation in the moment
6 because now fighting creates more
7 fighting. Broken windows create
8 more broken windows. So we try to
9 move very quickly to be able to
10 move that and manage that because
11 we find that it's more effective
12 for us. It limits our need to make
13 any arrests in that situation and
14 we get people to move along.

15 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
16 Okay. And my final question is,
17 could you describe in the ideal
18 world, and I think you kind of
19 hinted on this already, if you
20 haven't, but in an ideal situation
21 could you describe the
22 de-escalation strategies that
23 police officers are trained to use
24 during large public events and how

1 those strategies and whether those
2 strategies were applied during
3 Pride or were they not fully?

4 COMMISSIONER BETHEL: I
5 mean, the officers are trained to
6 de-escalate. We have an able
7 program that they go through that
8 teaches them to de-escalate. We
9 have policies that require them to
10 de-escalate. We have required
11 policies, and we see that happen on
12 a regular, regular basis. We see
13 that more now than I've ever seen
14 in my career where officers are
15 saying stop, where officers are
16 saying you can't do that, where
17 officers are engaging and making
18 sure that they understand their
19 roles and responsibility.

20 Do we have to do a
21 better job with Pride? I shared
22 that with you, when we -- because
23 often times folks don't understand
24 the history of Pride and the trauma

1 of Pride. And so, being able to
2 share that information is also a
3 great de-escalator too, because
4 they understand the why, why is
5 there so much tension. I'm just
6 standing here. Not understanding
7 when you activate like that, it
8 triggers so much of the history of
9 policing and the LGBTQ+ community.

10 And so, those are the
11 things we add to our conversation
12 now so we fully understand that.
13 But I'm fully confident that today
14 the men and women who are in the
15 department today are doing a good
16 job of de-escalating through their
17 training, de-escalating their
18 colleagues, etc.

19 And Councilman Thomas, I
20 may not have hit the mark when he
21 was asking that because I thought
22 he was talking about something more
23 specific. But the men and women
24 that are doing that, Councilman, on

1 a regular basis, even as we look to
2 the video of Pride, we'll see
3 officers disengaging.

4 If I show you videos, I
5 mean, there is a lot of stuff
6 that's coming at them where the
7 officers did not engage, who are
8 being cursed at and bottles are
9 being thrown at them and things are
10 being said to them where they just
11 did not engage, and they absolutely
12 did what they're supposed to do in
13 their training and trained to do.

14 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
15 Yeah. I think that one of the
16 things that I learned today is that
17 now, especially hearing the
18 testimony from Ms. Jones, is that
19 there's going to have to be --
20 potentially if that happens again,
21 they're going to have to be
22 permitted in that area as well,
23 right. Because I can understand
24 that it is probably very difficult

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 for you to quickly pivot strategies
2 at that moment when you think it is
3 in one area and then you had to do
4 the quick communication. So I just
5 think it's important that all
6 parties are working together going
7 forward. I have confidence that
8 that will happen next year.

9 COMMISSIONER BETHEL:

10 Yes, sir. Thank you, sir.

11 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

12 Thank you.

13 MS. JONES: Thank you.

14 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:

15 Thank you very much.

16 Ms. Hartman, can you
17 call the next panel.

18 THE CLERK: Chris
19 Bartlett, Naiymah Sanchez and Jacen
20 Bowman.

21 (Witnesses approached
22 witness table.)

23 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:

24 Thank you all so much for your

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 patience. Can you please state
2 your name and your pronouns and
3 proceed with your testimony.

4 MR. BARTLETT: Good
5 morning. I'm Chris Bartlett,
6 he/him/his pronouns. Vice-Chair
7 Landau, members of the committee,
8 we really appreciate you hearing
9 our testimony. And I just want to
10 thank Minority Leader Brooks for
11 being here and sticking out. And
12 most importantly, to thank our
13 incredible vocal and wise community
14 for having our backs today, as
15 we're here to speak for those who
16 might not be able to -- I'm getting
17 some height here. Thank you.
18 Thank you very much.

19 Good morning. I'm Chris
20 Bartlett, the emeritus Director of
21 the William Way LGBT Community
22 Center and a longtime student of
23 police-LGBTQ relations in
24 Philadelphia. And I'm honored to

1 be joined by my friends and
2 colleagues, Naiymah Sanchez and
3 Jacen Bowman.

4 As a 25-year-old member
5 of ACT UP Philadelphia while
6 participating in a peaceful and
7 non-violent protest of the visit of
8 President George H.W. Bush at the
9 Bellevue Stratford Hotel in
10 September 1991, I directly observed
11 a police riot that led to injuries
12 of three of my friends. All three
13 experienced lifetime trauma from
14 the violence they faced and the two
15 who are still alive experienced
16 PTSD to this day. I believe
17 Councilmember Landau was there with
18 me that day.

19 I myself sat on Broad
20 Street as police, horses and
21 hostile police attacked my friends
22 for the crime of expressing their
23 constitutionally protected civil
24 right to protest. My experience

1 was not the first time that LGBTQ
2 people had faced overpolicing by
3 the PPD. In 1959, when Mel Heifetz
4 owned the Humoresque Café on the
5 200 block of Sansom Street, police
6 raided the café, which was filled
7 with underage coffee drinkers.

8 Heifetz later learned
9 that Captain Rizzo was most upset
10 that Black and White patrons were
11 drinking coffee together. Because
12 LGBTQ people exist in every
13 neighborhood and every demographic
14 in the city, we are one of the
15 communities where individuals come
16 together across differences to
17 explore our similarities and police
18 should be trained to understand
19 this dynamic as a community asset
20 and not treated hostilely.

21 But the LGBTQ and police
22 relationship did begin
23 adversarially. Under Frank Rizzo,
24 the department treated LGBTQ people

1 as a part of a group of
2 undesirables, alongside sex workers
3 and drug dealers, to be controlled
4 rather than protected. The
5 department lumped Center City sex
6 workers, drug dealers and LGBTQ
7 people together. And if police
8 didn't try to eradicate these
9 marginal groups, they tried to
10 control and harass them with raids
11 on our community's bars, common
12 through the early 1980s.

13 This era included
14 aggressive crackdowns on cruising
15 around Rittenhouse Square and
16 Schuylkill River Park, also known
17 as Judy Garland Park, and violent
18 raids on gay bars, leading many to
19 be verbally and physically abused
20 by officers. Police harassment and
21 brutality against LGBTQ people was
22 endemic across the U.S., and in
23 Philadelphia in the 1960s Captain
24 Rizzo had a policy of anti-gay

1 harassment that persisted
2 institutionally for years. Even
3 after Mayor Rizzo left City Hall,
4 that harsher style of policing
5 continued in the department.

6 Today we've heard that
7 it continues to this day when our
8 bars, especially those patronized
9 by Black LGBTQ people, are
10 overpoliced and experience
11 aggressive policing when
12 de-escalation should be the
13 strategy. Transgender
14 Philadelphians, especially trans
15 women of color, describe their
16 experiences as particularly
17 dangerous.

18 One activist recalled in
19 the Gayborhood of the early 1990s,
20 the worst threat of violence for
21 trans people didn't come from drugs
22 or robbery, but from the police
23 department itself. This culminated
24 in the case of Nizah Morris, who

1 died in 2002 while under police
2 custody in the Gayborhood.

3 Formal positive
4 engagement started in the late 20th
5 century. The Police Advisory
6 Commission was formed more than
7 three decades ago under
8 Commissioner John Timoney and Mayor
9 Ed Rendell in the wake of the 1991
10 ACT UP protest I mentioned. It was
11 a hard-fought victory for community
12 advocates. Since before then,
13 there had been little official
14 positive interface between the
15 LGBTQ community and police.

16 In 2008 Commissioner
17 Charles Ramsey, who had created an
18 award-winning gay and lesbian
19 liaison unit in Washington, D.C.,
20 brought that model spirit to
21 Philadelphia. When Ramsey took
22 office in Philadelphia, he said he
23 hoped to implement a similar unit
24 and also planned to have all

1 officers, not just new recruits,
2 undergo LGBTQ-sensitivity training
3 over the following two to three
4 years.

5 Attention also turned
6 inward towards LGBTQ officers
7 themselves. We should note the
8 1999 suicide of Gilbert Colt, the
9 first openly gay police officer at
10 that time soon after graduating
11 from the police academy. That
12 suicide spoke to the intense
13 pressures on out police officers.
14 These LGBT officers in the
15 Philadelphia area formed a chapter
16 of the Gay Officer Action League,
17 GOAL, around 2015, joining existing
18 chapters in New York, New England
19 and Chicago.

20 The city's LGBT Affairs
21 Director at the time noted this was
22 necessary because many LGBT
23 officers hadn't come out to
24 colleagues since the department's

1 internal culture "is not
2 necessarily accepting or positive
3 or affirming in any way." In fact,
4 it's quite the opposite.

5 Deputy Commissioner
6 Kevin Bethel at the time, then the
7 department's LGBT liaison, argued
8 the department had grown more
9 tolerant with younger cadets, while
10 still acknowledging that officers
11 needed their own support network,
12 and he predicted internal tolerance
13 would translate into better
14 relationships with the broader LGBT
15 public.

16 And I just want to note,
17 as I was researching this history,
18 numerous leaders pointed out the
19 great work of Commissioner Bethel
20 over the eight years he pointed out
21 in developing this LGBT Liaison
22 Committee, including leadership
23 from our community.

24 By the early 2020s, the

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 Liaison Committee model was showing
2 its age. The group brought forth
3 innovations like Directive 152,
4 which outlines how officers should
5 respectfully interact with
6 transgender community members
7 during stops and has helped with
8 victim support and diversity
9 training. But this is an all
10 volunteer liaison committee of the
11 police department with no oversight
12 power. And by current standards,
13 is arguably toothless.

14 A 2022 attempt at
15 revitalization stalled, co-chairs
16 developed a strategic plan to move
17 things forward, but momentum was
18 short-lived due to command changes
19 throughout the department. Today
20 with Commissioner Bethel at the
21 helm of the police department and
22 with a history of good interactions
23 with the Liaison Committee, we
24 expect that the department will

1 build upon its earlier successes.

2 Recent reports of raids
3 on LGBTQ bars in the Gayborhood and
4 on South Street and unnecessary
5 escalation by police of encounters
6 with LGBT citizens, including
7 aggressive attacks on ACT UP as
8 recently as 2021, gives us reason
9 for great concern and shows that
10 years of hard work to build LGBT-
11 friendly community policing
12 strategies have reverted to the
13 historic policy of control rather
14 than protect.

15 When police come into
16 our neighborhoods to control us,
17 especially when they consciously
18 disobey department policy by
19 wearing masks, We know that we need
20 some strong leadership from
21 Commissioner Bethel and department
22 brass to show that there will be
23 zero tolerance for escalating
24 police hostility towards LGBTQ

1 Philadelphians and our social
2 spaces. Thank you. And I'll turn
3 it over to Naiymah.

4 MS. SANCHEZ: Thank you,
5 Chris. Well, we're at good
6 afternoon, City Councilmembers,
7 Co-Chair of the Legislative
8 Oversight Committee, my friends in
9 the gallery and the neighbors that
10 are watching today. I know it's a
11 privilege to sit here in front of
12 you today. My name is Naiymah
13 Sanchez. I respectfully use
14 she/her pronouns. And I'm here
15 today in support of examining the
16 actions of the Philadelphia Police
17 Department during the events on
18 Sunday, June 7, 2026 when
19 Philadelphians celebrated their
20 Pride in the Gayborhood, which I
21 say folks are calling it Washington
22 Square West.

23 I did want to address
24 some things because there was a

1 panel that was here before me of
2 city officials. And as a 42-year-
3 old trans woman of color who came
4 into my truth preteen, the
5 Gayborhood was a place that we went
6 after Pride because Pride was at
7 Festival Pier that now was being
8 gentrified or redeveloped to
9 accommodate the new Philadelphians.
10 And so, that was our place to go.
11 And as a person who did not have
12 access to go to the Festival Pier
13 because of \$30, \$20 or the stigma
14 around receiving a free ticket for
15 a HIV test, me and my friends at a
16 young age, we found our solace
17 going to parks or going to the
18 Gayborhood to fellowship with our
19 peers.

20 Now, as I sit here today
21 in support of this investigation, I
22 want to be transparent that any
23 investigation without genuine
24 intent towards true accountability

1 and a restorative justice process
2 that includes true oversight and
3 effective implementation of
4 recommendations is not justice. It
5 is another publicity stunt.

6 We must be willing to
7 hold the Philadelphia Police
8 Department accountable for
9 escalating the situation. They had
10 every opportunity to de-escalate.
11 If not, this becomes another
12 exercise and managing public
13 perception rather than delivering
14 public accountability. Communities
15 have become far too familiar with
16 reports that collect dust, while
17 people harmed are expected to move
18 on or just get over it. We are no
19 longer willing to accept this
20 behavior.

21 Safety is not a
22 one-size-fits-all. Safety is very
23 individualized. For some, the
24 presence of police represents

1 security. For others, that same
2 presence often represents
3 surveillance, intimidation,
4 profiling and violence, as we saw
5 in the videos on the day of
6 question.

7 These concerns about
8 police choice of force, racism and
9 profiling did not start on June
10 7th, which you heard from Chris and
11 I'm sure you're hearing from my
12 fellow panelist Jacen. It is a
13 continuation of what we have spent
14 years, even decades, telling the
15 city about, the harm experienced by
16 LGBTQ+ Philadelphians and our
17 guests.

18 These stem from
19 discriminatory practices
20 implemented by businesses to the
21 overpolicing practices that
22 disproportionately impact Black and
23 Brown people, especially Black and
24 Brown trans and queer folks. We

1 have testified, we have organized
2 and we have protested, and many of
3 us continue to offer up our free
4 labor and solutions to these
5 problems.

6 Now, the question from
7 me is not whether the city heard
8 us. The question is whether the
9 city has really listened. As a
10 transgender Philadelphian, I used
11 to come to the Gayborhood to find
12 community, as I shared earlier, to
13 fellowship. And no matter what, I
14 was met with discrimination. I
15 have been banned from entry into
16 clubs based on a perception that I
17 was a sex worker. I have faced
18 harassment by police just by
19 walking down the street to get a
20 slice of pizza, overpriced pizza
21 from Homo Hut. And I really found
22 peace in an area that I should have
23 felt welcome to patronize or
24 fellowship in.

1 We had bike cops, they
2 were called Ren and Stimpny at the
3 time, following us as we walked.
4 We had patrol cars demanding our PP
5 Nos. or threatened to arrest us.
6 And all this was because we were
7 transgender and that I was a woman
8 of color. After the death of my
9 dear Auntie Nizah Morris, I drew
10 the line in the sand. I said to
11 myself, Naiymah, you are not safe
12 here and find fellowship elsewhere.
13 There is a reason Philadelphia
14 became the first city to add the
15 Black and Brown stripes to the
16 rainbow flag. It was an
17 acknowledgment that racism exists
18 within LGBTQ+ spaces and that our
19 liberation is incomplete if it does
20 not include all of us in those town
21 halls. Leading up to the pivotal
22 moment to introduce the more color,
23 more Pride flag, we voiced our
24 concerns about the racism in the

1 Gayborhood, the excessive policing
2 and practices by Philadelphia
3 police.

4 And I do recall concerns
5 over the entities that are now
6 claiming ownership of that
7 Gayborhood through an association
8 that, to me, is clear as welcoming
9 to some and exclusionary to others.
10 And so, the flag became more
11 inclusive but that wasn't the
12 destination. It was a commitment.
13 These pivotal moments have lasting
14 impacts on our lives, and the
15 commitments we make must include
16 all of us. Because as I shared
17 earlier, safety is very
18 individualized. We must
19 acknowledge that nothing can happen
20 for us without our involvement.

21 When discussing
22 accountability and restorative
23 justice, it is crucial that these
24 conversations include individuals

1 who have suffered or are still
2 suffering from the harm. Excluding
3 people just because our efforts
4 challenge longstanding systems that
5 have operated without
6 accountability undermines the
7 purpose of justice. If our truth
8 make institutions and entities
9 uncomfortable, then perhaps the
10 discomfort belongs with those
11 entities who ignore our demands for
12 dignity and respect.

13 Let's not ignore
14 history. Police in this country
15 was birthed from systems designed
16 to capture, control, and dehumanize
17 people who were treated as property
18 or those less deserving of care.
19 That legacy continues to shape how
20 many communities experience
21 policing today. This is why I'm
22 baffled that city leadership
23 centers the police in the name of
24 public safety, knowing that the

1 historical context and leaving
2 institutions like the police to
3 design safety measures alone.

4 Black and Brown queer
5 and transgender Philadelphians and
6 our visitors are not a threat to be
7 contained. We are not a problem to
8 be managed nor are we cattle to be
9 herded as we seen with the horses.
10 We are, however, neighbors,
11 taxpayers, voters, constituents.
12 We are artists, advocates, parents,
13 students and definitely survivors.
14 We deserve the same freedoms
15 everyone else deserves to gather,
16 to celebrate, to love, exist
17 without the fear of these
18 institutions paid to protect us.

19 Now, I know we've been
20 here for a minute so I want to wrap
21 up my remarks with this. I ask
22 this committee to investigate
23 thoroughly this incident and demand
24 expanding oversight that includes

1 subpoena power for the Citizens
2 Police Oversight Committee. I ask
3 that we not exclude people from
4 future conversations like what
5 happened, because folks are
6 passionate advocates labeled as
7 radicals that make other folks
8 uncomfortable with facing the
9 realities.

10 And please,
11 Councilmember Landau, other
12 Councilmembers and everybody
13 watching, please don't let this
14 hearing become another headline.
15 Let it be a commitment to our
16 collective goal of safety. I want
17 us to choose accountability over
18 the optics. Let's choose
19 restorative justice over political
20 convenience and choose people over
21 policing. I want to thank you all
22 for allowing me to share today. I
23 yield to my fellow panelist Jacen
24 or this body for questioning.

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 (Applause.)

2 MR. BOWMAN: Good

3 afternoon, Legislative Oversight

4 Committee, community members,

5 Councilmember Brooks, thank you for

6 staying, invited guests. My name

7 is Jacen Bowman. I serve as the

8 President of Philadelphia Black

9 Pride and the Commissioner on

10 Governor Josh Shapiro's Commission

11 on LGBTQ Affairs.

12 I stand before you

13 because I love Philadelphia. I

14 love our LGBTQ+ community and I

15 believe this city can become a

16 national example of what meaningful

17 inclusion and equitable public

18 safety look like. But that

19 requires us to tell the truth.

20 Today's hearing may be focused on

21 Pride, but that conversation is

22 about something much larger. It's

23 about trust. It's about equal

24 protection. It's about belonging.

1 It's about whether Philadelphia's
2 most recognizable LGBTQ+ Gayborhood
3 truly serves the entire community
4 it claims to represent.

5 I want to be very clear
6 what happened during Pride did not
7 begin during Pride, and it did not
8 end when those rainbow flags came
9 down. Pride exposed concerns that
10 Black and Brown LGBTQ+
11 Philadelphians have raised for
12 years. While those disparities
13 must be named directly, the harm
14 does not stop with us. Aggressive
15 and consistent and disrespectful
16 policing damages the relationship
17 between law enforcement and the
18 broader community as well. That
19 includes transgender and non-binary
20 people, people with disabilities,
21 young people, nightlife workers,
22 residents, visitors and people
23 experiencing homelessness, and
24 anyone who enters that Gayborhood

1 expecting to be treated with
2 dignity.

3 As the President of
4 Philadelphia Black Pride, I've
5 spent years listening to our
6 community, standing in our
7 community and experiencing this
8 harm firsthand. These stories are
9 remarkably consistent. Black and
10 Brown LGBTQ+ people are watched
11 differently. We are approached
12 differently. We are policed
13 differently. And too often, we are
14 made to feel like visitors in a
15 neighborhood that is promoted as
16 the heart of Philadelphia's LGBTQ+
17 community.

18 But even those who do
19 not share our exact identities
20 should be concerned. When officers
21 are allowed to treat one group as
22 inherently suspicious, that conduct
23 eventually threatens the safety and
24 civil rights of everyone. A

1 policing culture that dehumanizes
2 any part of the community makes the
3 entire community feel less safe.

4 This testimony though is
5 deeply personal to me. Last year
6 my chosen son Derwin Matthews was
7 murdered during Pride weekend.
8 That loss changed my life. When I
9 returned to Pride this year, I did
10 not return as the President of
11 Philadelphia Black Gay Pride. I
12 returned carrying grief.

13 I returned hoping to
14 experience some measure of healing
15 in a community that meant so much
16 to me. Instead I watched that joy
17 turn into fear. I watched the
18 celebration become divided by
19 tension. I watched interactions
20 that raised serious concerns about
21 dignity, restraint and whether
22 everybody present was being treated
23 as an individual or whether an
24 entire crowd was being treated as a

1 threat.

2 I understand the
3 incidents occurred that law
4 enforcement had the responsibility
5 to respond to. Public safety
6 matters. No one's asking the
7 police department to ignore
8 fighting violence or unlawful
9 behavior. But the issue isn't
10 whether officers have a job to do.
11 The issue is whether the job is
12 being done equally, respectfully,
13 without treating an entire
14 community inherently suspicious.

15 I've heard officers say
16 comments that have stuck with me.
17 I heard officers say they were
18 covering their faces because they
19 didn't want to be recognized for
20 being in the Gayborhood. I heard
21 statements to the effect of, I
22 don't want to be down here with
23 these F bombs. I don't want to see
24 anybody seeing me dealing with

1 these gay people.

2 As an openly Black gay
3 man and the President of
4 Philadelphia Black Pride, it is
5 difficult to describe what it feels
6 like to hear members of your
7 community disgusted that way by
8 people who are assigned to protect
9 you. Those comments do not make us
10 feel protected. They make us feel
11 othered.

12 It also raises a larger
13 concern for every Philadelphian.
14 If an officer can openly express
15 contempt for the people they are
16 assigned to serve, how can any
17 community trust that bias will not
18 influence the officer's judgment.
19 This is simply not a story about
20 what happened over Pride Weekend.

21 Over this past weekend,
22 I had another interaction with a
23 police officer in the Gayborhood
24 that I experienced unnecessary,

1 aggressive and inappropriate and
2 disrespectful behavior from a cop.
3 I've contacted police leadership,
4 and I intend to continue the
5 Internal Affairs process and pursue
6 a formal complaint.

7 I know how to navigate
8 systems. I know who to call. I
9 know how to document what happened
10 and advocate for myself. But I
11 cannot stop thinking about the
12 people that do not know how to do
13 that. How many people have been
14 treated this way and never filed a
15 complaint because they did not know
16 how? How many people believed
17 nothing would happen? How many
18 feared their reporting an officer
19 will only expose them to further
20 disrespect or retaliation? My
21 position and relationships may have
22 prevented that encounter from
23 becoming much worse. But a person
24 should not need a title, political

1 relationships or recognition as a
2 community leader to receive basic
3 dignity. Your rights should not
4 depend on who you are or who you
5 know and what title you have.

6 We must also discuss
7 what unequal enforcement looks like
8 in the neighborhood that we are now
9 marketing as Midtown Village.
10 We've all seen fighting, extreme
11 intoxication and disruptive
12 behavior and serious public safety
13 concerns outside of other bars and
14 clubs in the same area. We've seen
15 crowds and incidents outside of
16 McGillin's. We've seen incidents
17 outside of U-Bahn. We've seen
18 behavior outside of venues who
19 patrons are not predominantly Black
20 or Brown or LGBTQ+ can be just as
21 disruptive and sometimes more
22 violent. But what occurs outside
23 those venues the communities
24 attend? The police response does

1 not appear to look the same.

2 We are not consistently
3 seeing officers surrounding those
4 establishments throughout the
5 night. We do not see people
6 leaving those venues treated as if
7 they are potentially dangerous. We
8 do not see the same presumption
9 that an entire crowd is a problem
10 because of the conduct of a few
11 individuals.

12 So I have to ask a
13 serious question. Is public safety
14 only urgent when Black and Brown
15 people gather? Are the safety of
16 patrons, employees and residents of
17 McGillin's, U-Bahn and other
18 Midtown Village venues also not a
19 priority? Public safety must apply
20 to the entire Gayborhood, but equal
21 public safety also requires equal
22 enforcement.

23 It cannot mean
24 protection for one group, tolerance

1 for another and containment for the
2 rest. When similar behavior
3 receive different policing response
4 depending on who is gathered
5 outside, the issue is no longer
6 public safety. The issue is
7 unequal enforcement. Black and
8 Brown LGBTQ+ people experience the
9 sharpest edge of that disparity,
10 but the consequences reach far
11 beyond us.

12 Residents lose trust.
13 Business owners lose confidence.
14 Nightlife workers are placed in
15 tense situations and community
16 members needing police assistance
17 become less willing to call for
18 help. And most importantly, the
19 City of Philadelphia is supposed to
20 be the City of Brotherly Love and
21 Sisterly Affection. Our visitors
22 question whether they feel safe.
23 Philadelphia cannot celebrate
24 LGBTQ+ people in June and treat us

1 like a public safety problem for
2 the rest of the year.

3 At the same time,
4 Philadelphia cannot allow any
5 resident, worker or visitor to be
6 subjected to disrespectful policing
7 simply because we are standing in a
8 certain neighborhood or entering a
9 gathering in a certain community.
10 Following Pride, I appreciated the
11 opportunity to speak with Mayor
12 Parker's Administration, Police
13 Commissioner Bethel, and I believe
14 those conversations were sincere.
15 Especially when I speak on the
16 entire community, it does not
17 appear that the Parker
18 Administration cares much about the
19 LGBTQ+ community.

20 I repeat, a meeting is
21 not accountability. A promise is
22 not a policy. A concern without
23 consequences will not change
24 conduct.

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 (Applause.)

2 MR. BOWMAN: I

3 understand that personnel and
4 disciplinary matters cannot always
5 be discussed publicly, but the
6 public should be informed when a
7 complaint has been investigated or
8 the policies were violated and
9 whether corrective action has been
10 taken place to prevent similar
11 conduct. Confidentiality should
12 protect a fair process. It should
13 not become a blanket excuse for
14 silence. Accountability that the
15 public can never see begins to feel
16 impossible to tell apart from
17 inaction.

18 So today we are asking
19 City Council to move beyond
20 conversations that require
21 meaningful action. First, require
22 an independent action review of the
23 policing of Pride. That review
24 must examine deployment decisions,

1 command structures, offer conduct
2 de-escalation practices, body-
3 camera footage complaint and
4 whether enforcement was applied
5 equitably.

6 Black and Brown LGBTQ+
7 organizers, transgender and
8 non-binary leaders, disability
9 advocates, residents, nightlife
10 workers and beyond must be full
11 participants and not invited after
12 the conclusions have already been
13 written.

14 Second, a permanent
15 LGBTQ+ Public Safety and Equity
16 Advisory Council with a formal role
17 in planning before and after all
18 major events in the City of
19 Philadelphia. Include Philadelphia
20 Black Pride, Philly Pride 365,
21 transgender and non-binary leaders,
22 nightlife employees, businesses,
23 the police department, the Mayor's
24 office, the Office of LGBTQ

1 Affairs, disability advocates and
2 civil rights organizations.

3 Third, require a
4 collection of public reporting data
5 on police deployments and
6 interactions throughout the
7 Gayborhood and Midtown Village.
8 That should include stops,
9 citations, arrests, use-of-force
10 complaints, deployment levels and
11 locations where these interactions
12 occurred.

13 The information should
14 be disaggregated by race, gender
15 identity and other relevant
16 demographics while protecting
17 individual privacy. The city
18 should also compare police
19 responses outside different
20 establishments and determine
21 whether similar conduct received
22 similar enforcement. We cannot
23 correct disparities if the city
24 refuses to measure.

1 Fourth, require a
2 meaningful LGBTQ+ cultural
3 competency, anti-bias and
4 de-escalation training for every
5 officer assigned to this
6 neighborhood. Training cannot be a
7 box that officers check off during
8 their onboarding and forget.
9 Supervisors must also be held
10 accountable for the conduct they
11 witness, encourage and permit. Any
12 officer credibly accused of
13 expressing anti-LGBTQ+ bias should
14 be removed immediately.

15 Fifth, require a written
16 implementation plan with clear
17 deadlines of public process before
18 the next Pride celebration. We
19 recognize that some of what I'm
20 saying sounds mighty familiar,
21 because versions of these
22 structures already exist.
23 Philadelphia already has meetings.
24 Philadelphia already has trainings.

1 Philadelphia already has advisory
2 boards. Philadelphia already has
3 citizen police oversight. But
4 these structures are not being
5 utilized correctly.

6 The problem is not again
7 whether the structures exist. The
8 question is whether or not the
9 structure has the authority,
10 independence or enforcement power
11 necessary to produce
12 accountability. Oversight without
13 authority is observation. An
14 oversight body can receive
15 complaints, it can review
16 investigations, it can issue
17 reports and recommendations, but
18 its findings can be ignored when we
19 cannot independently impose
20 consequences when the public cannot
21 see how those recommendations are
22 being addressed and communities are
23 left questioning whether the
24 process designed to deliver

1 accountability or simply manage
2 public frustration.

3 This is why I'm not
4 asking City Council to create
5 another group that can meet and
6 discuss and recommend. We are
7 asking City Council to strengthen
8 the authority of these structures
9 we already have. Require written
10 public responses to their findings.
11 Establish consequences when the
12 recommendations are repeatedly
13 ignored.

14 The Gayborhood is more
15 than a collection of streets, bars
16 and businesses. It's a symbol
17 that's supposed to represent
18 safety, freedom and belonging. But
19 rainbow flags are not proof of
20 equity. Equity is measured by how
21 people are treated beneath those
22 flags.

23 Again last year, I
24 buried my chosen son. This year I

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 watched too many people leave Pride
2 carrying fear instead of joy. And
3 over this past weekend, I was
4 reminded once again that these
5 concerns did not disappear when
6 Pride ended. Next year I hope that
7 our community will leave Pride with
8 something different.

9 I want Black and Brown
10 LGBTQ+ people to feel protected
11 rather than targeted. I want
12 transgender and nonbinary people to
13 feel respected rather than
14 profiled. I want residents,
15 workers, visitors, businesses and
16 owners to trust that public safety
17 applies equally to them. And I
18 want every person that enters this
19 neighborhood to know that their
20 identity, race, income, appearance
21 or choice of venue will not
22 determine the level of dignity they
23 receive.

24 Pride should not be

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 measured by how many rainbow flags
2 Philadelphia hang. It should be
3 measured by whether every person
4 walking beneath those flags can
5 celebrate, breathe and return home
6 safely. Thank you.

7 (Applause.)

8 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:

9 Thank you so much and thank you to
10 you for your collective and very
11 thoughtful recommendations. I
12 think they will go a long way. I
13 don't have any questions for this
14 panel. You pretty much summed it
15 up perfectly.

16 Does anybody else have
17 any questions?

18 (No response.)

19 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU: It
20 was wonderful. Thank you. And if
21 you have any other comments please.

22 MS. SANCHEZ: Because
23 Jacen said something that is really
24 important is the continuous

1 implementation of training, right.
2 But it has to go beyond the
3 Gayborhood because LGBTQ+ people
4 don't just exist on 13th Street. I
5 live in Germantown. I know folks
6 that live in West Philly, the
7 Northeast. And so, this needs to
8 be a departmental or institutional
9 implementation.

10 The Office of LGBT
11 Affairs has an obligation to see
12 LGBTQ+ Philadelphians and they must
13 be allowed to do the job in which
14 they are tasked to do, right. And
15 so, this has to continue, not just
16 in the Gayborhood, right, but
17 throughout the city because we
18 exist everywhere. That's the
19 reason why Pride was taken out of
20 the Gayborhood because we exist
21 outside of the Gayborhood. And so,
22 I yield back. Thank you.

23 (Applause.)

24 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 Thank you all very much.

2 Appreciate you and all of the
3 leadership that you give us every
4 day, especially for our community.

5 Ms. Hartman, can you --
6 one second. We are now moving to
7 public comment. Ms. Hartman, will
8 you please call the first person
9 making public comment or a few
10 people, if you would like, who we
11 have to testify this afternoon on
12 the resolution before us today.

13 THE CLERK: We ask that
14 you please keep your comments to no
15 longer than two minutes. Jazmyn
16 Henderson and then it will be
17 Jasper Liam and C. Michael
18 Robinson.

19 (Witnesses approached
20 witness table.)

21 MS. HENDERSON: My name
22 is Jazmyn Henderson. I use she/her
23 pronouns. Let me just say the fact
24 that the public only gets two

1 minutes to speak while we just sat
2 here for almost two hours listening
3 to the cops tell us a bunch of
4 garbage ain't right, first of all.
5 And let's talk about the fact that
6 there's one thing that we seem to
7 be dancing around and Councilmember
8 Thomas tried to get to it without
9 saying it.

10 And it was that when you
11 look at those videos, the violence
12 you've seen was all perpetrated on
13 Black bodies, which is what it
14 always is when it comes to this
15 city or to policing period. Until
16 we remove the racist components of
17 what policing has always been in
18 this country, we're going to
19 continue to see this. We don't
20 need police. We need public safety
21 officers. We need law enforcement.

22 We don't need people who
23 use words like when they descended
24 on the Gayborhood. We didn't

1 descend. We went there because
2 that's where our community was
3 gathering, right. We don't need to
4 be contained. We didn't need to be
5 controlled. And this wasn't some
6 thing that they just decided to do
7 at the last second. Those
8 barricades was out days before.
9 They spread them out that day.

10 The police have been
11 setting up shop on Camac Street
12 every weekend since this year has
13 started and they harassed Black and
14 Brown bodies every weekend because
15 the neighbors there who just moved
16 there want to change the culture
17 and don't want us to congregate
18 where we've been congregating. So
19 this isn't something new like Jacen
20 said. This is something that's
21 been happening and they've been
22 planning and rolling this out for a
23 minute.

24 What happened on Pride

1 was just ridiculous. There is
2 absolutely no excuse for it. You
3 can't tell me that they thought at
4 any given point in time they're
5 putting bikes on the sidewalks was
6 okay, that those horses was okay.
7 And they purposely, let me just
8 say, tried to kettle us to where
9 the violence was. Because I was
10 down on 12th Street and I tried to
11 go to my car that was parked on
12 Race Street, and they tried to push
13 me to 13th where they were doing
14 the violence to people.

15 I had nothing to do with
16 any of that violent confrontation.
17 But the fact that they tried to put
18 me there is a problem, right. And
19 then they want you to go this way,
20 that way, this way, that way.
21 Finally, I just told them I'm
22 climbing a barricade and dared them
23 to stop me. But even then why when
24 people are trying to leave, are you

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 holding them hostage. And then you
2 say things like we got to contain
3 you or you descended there.

4 Ultimately, the
5 Gayborhood should have been shut
6 down to cars on that day like it
7 normally is, whether the festival
8 was there or not. Because
9 unbeknownst to the Commissioner,
10 there were live bands on Camac
11 Street, there were DJs on Camac
12 Street, 13th Street was shut down
13 so that Woody's could have a foam
14 party, right.

15 But when it came time
16 for the juveniles -- and I'm 50
17 years old, I'll be damned if I'm a
18 juvenile. But I was sure out there
19 with everybody else, right. This
20 wasn't this. Don't believe that
21 this was just young kids. No, this
22 was everybody from every age
23 category who refused to pay the
24 money that the Pride on the Parkway

1 was costing. That's what happened
2 there. And they knew that was
3 going to happen because it was all
4 over social media. They just chose
5 this because they want to make us
6 afraid, Black and Brown people
7 particularly, to be afraid to hang
8 out in the Gayborhood on the
9 street.

10 And it's -- I mean, I
11 have no faith that this hearing is
12 going to do anything. I believe
13 that come next -- because what we
14 heard from the Commissioner again
15 was a budget proposal. It cost
16 this much money for us to do this,
17 so we're going to need more money
18 next year. They continually want
19 more money and they're being paid
20 and then they are abusing the
21 citizens. This was never about
22 public safety. This was about
23 protecting property. And the
24 sooner we realize that and we

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 change these things around, the
2 better off it's going to be.

3 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:

4 Thank you so much, Jazmyn.

5 (Applause.)

6 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:

7 Please state your name for the
8 record and your pronouns.

9 MR. LIAM: Let's change
10 this to good afternoon,
11 Councilmembers. Thank you for
12 convening this hearing. My name is
13 Jasper Liam. I use he/him pronouns
14 interchangeably and I am a proud
15 transgender Philadelphian. I grew
16 up in Philadelphia's LGBTQ
17 community. And today I have the
18 privilege of serving as the
19 Executive Director at the Attic
20 Youth Center, where every day LGBTQ
21 young people find safety, support
22 and opportunity.
23 I'm here because what
24 happened following Pride that

1 evening was not simply an
2 unfortunate night. It was a
3 failure of leadership, a failure of
4 planning and it revealed a standard
5 of policing that Philadelphia
6 should no longer accept. And I
7 want to point out that that area
8 has been the Gayborhood since
9 Tavern on Camac opened its doors
10 before 1930.

11 What I witnessed today
12 is grown professionals blaming
13 young people for their failure to
14 plan and manage a community event.
15 What I heard was this city doesn't
16 know how to create safe and
17 structured spaces for young adults.
18 And I want to clarify that
19 juveniles might be under 18. But
20 on the list that Commissioner
21 Bethell shared with us in his
22 PowerPoint, of the 20 arrests, two
23 of them were under 18. Seven of
24 those 20 are over the age of 25.

1 So we need to make up our mind.

2 Are we blaming teenagers for
3 fighting or are we arresting
4 transitional-age adults?

5 And as someone who has
6 grown up in this community, I can
7 tell you that the fear and anger
8 that we feel is not new. And I
9 fear that it's not going to change
10 much. The overpolicing of LGBTQ
11 people in Philadelphia is not new
12 at all. The distrust between our
13 community and law enforcement is
14 not new, and our community
15 remembers Stonewall/Dewey's lunch
16 counter. I remember the '90s and
17 early 2000s during my coming-out
18 era when hanging out with young
19 Black and Brown folks in the
20 Gayborhood meant routinely being
21 stopped, harassed, arrested on
22 summary offenses or I suppose the
23 early version of stop-and-frisk, so
24 much so that we called it walking

1 while Black in the Gayborhood.
2 Obviously not for me, but we called
3 it that as a community. That is
4 how prevalent it was.

5 That history taught us
6 to rely on one another, to build
7 chosen family and our own informal
8 community systems. It taught us
9 not to assume that institutions
10 would protect us simply because
11 they were supposed to. Our
12 community learned from that
13 history. What happened after Pride
14 demonstrated that the city and
15 Philadelphia police have still not
16 learned enough from our history.
17 That should concern every member of
18 the Council.

19 To understand why this
20 matters, you have to understand
21 what Pride means, especially for
22 transitional-age youth, by which I
23 mean under 25 and young adults.
24 For many, its coming-of-age moment.

1 It's when we step into a community
2 and find chosen family. It's when
3 we realize that we're not alone.

4 It's that we are not just
5 understood, but accepted.

6 And what I saw that
7 evening was that we also cannot
8 rely on others to be protected.
9 The Gayborhood is not an
10 entertainment district. When I
11 came out, bars still had windows
12 blacked out and minimal signage to
13 protect patrons from being outed by
14 walking through their doors.

15 The Gayborhood was one
16 of the most historically
17 significant LGBTQ neighborhoods in
18 the country. What unfolded after
19 Pride was reactive, fragmented and
20 not a coherent public safety
21 strategy. The decision to keep
22 vehicle traffic moving when they
23 did, while compressing thousands of
24 people into tighter spaces created

1 unnecessary risk.

2 It is my understanding,
3 and also heard again earlier today
4 that creating the audible arc of a
5 taser as a show of force is
6 permissible under current policy.

7 I understand maybe that's changed
8 in the past couple months, but
9 permissible doesn't mean effective.
10 Intimidation is not de-escalation.
11 However, it seems to be a preferred
12 method. When people are already
13 crowded into limited space,
14 introducing additional fear
15 increases the potential for chaos
16 rather than reducing it. This all
17 was preventable.

18 The actions and the
19 reactions that happened that
20 evening were all preventable. And
21 I will be the first to say, and I
22 don't usually like to, but we told
23 you so. I know that folks in the
24 community had these meetings with

1 the city, with the police
2 department, and all of this was
3 preventable.

4 So let me be clear, that
5 as someone who's also had
6 conversations with folks in the
7 police department, including
8 leadership, too often those
9 conversations have focused on how
10 organizations like the Attic and
11 any other youth-serving
12 organization should serve as some
13 kind of recruitment space rather
14 than how the department can better
15 understand and serve LGBTQ youth
16 and young adults.

17 The Attic Youth Center
18 will not serve as a recruiting
19 ground for the police department,
20 period. That is not our mission.
21 If an individual young person
22 chooses that path, we will support
23 that young person in pursuing their
24 future and help them make their own

1 decisions. But we are here to
2 create opportunities for young
3 people and not to strengthen
4 systems that continue to lose and
5 break our trust.

6 This hearing should not
7 be about whether individuals
8 intended harm. It should be about
9 the standards we accept. Two
10 months later after all of this, we
11 have not heard a clear answer on
12 whether officers who were masked.
13 I hear there's eight or nine of
14 them that were identified. We
15 haven't even heard whether our own
16 department knows who those
17 individuals and officers were.

18 We have heard that there
19 is a process. We haven't heard
20 whether that process has been
21 started for those individuals. And
22 we have not heard anything about
23 whether those individuals are still
24 in active duty. We have not heard

1 anything other than, oh, when it's
2 done, it will be buried on this
3 website.

4 As a Philadelphian, I'm
5 concerned that our own police
6 department can't close an internal
7 investigation within two months.
8 Our silence doesn't protect us. We
9 know that slogan. Your silence is
10 not accountability. Accepting
11 responsibility and demonstrating
12 through action that lessons have
13 been learned, that is
14 accountability.

15 Our community has
16 already done the hard work of
17 learning from history. It's time
18 for our institutions to do the
19 same. This city has repeatedly
20 denied the Attic Youth Center
21 funding that could have had us into
22 our new building, that could have
23 had programming and a space for
24 these young adults. And we don't,

1 we do not have that. Now is the
2 time for our institutions to step
3 up. If we refuse to learn from our
4 history, we are not simply
5 repeating it. We are choosing it.

6 Our community deserves
7 better, our young people deserve
8 better and the city can do better.
9 That is why this hearing matters.
10 Hearings create accountability.
11 But accountability demands action,
12 and action is what creates change.
13 So the Attic Youth Center stands
14 with all of our LGBTQ community,
15 especially our youth and young
16 adults. We support them as they
17 grow into community-oriented,
18 independent adults. And I wish
19 there were more of them in this
20 city. Thank you.

21 (Applause.)

22 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:

23 Thank you. Very quickly before you
24 proceed, I'm clearly doing a very

1 bad job of sticking to a two-minute
2 timeline because I'm holding on to
3 I love public comment, I hold on to
4 every word. I'm going to pass this
5 responsibility up to the Clerk
6 who's going to have a buzzer and
7 just try to remind you. I'm sorry.
8 There's a lot of people who want to
9 speak.

10 Thank you. Please
11 proceed. State your name and your
12 pronouns and proceed.

13 MR. ROBINSON: C.
14 Michael Robinson, he/they,
15 Wynnefield. Before I begin, I want
16 to state for the record that only
17 adult bullies scapegoat children.
18 And that was a weak display of
19 leadership. And perhaps you need
20 to go back to the books if that's
21 the experience that you bring to
22 public service.

23 Sometimes it is not
24 enough to be the voice for the

1 voiceless. Sometimes victims of
2 violence, particularly state-
3 sponsored violence, should be given
4 audience in the so-called people's
5 house and speak to their own
6 traumas. Alas, Councilors, we live
7 in an era of risk adversity, and a
8 city would never condone that sort
9 of forthrightness.

10 In 1693, your
11 predecessors passed an ordinance
12 that prohibited enslaved and free
13 Philadelphians from gathering in
14 Washington Square, colloquially
15 known at that time as Congo Square.
16 So shall we stop dancing around the
17 issue here? That patrol car that's
18 posted in the last section of the
19 Gayborhood where Black bodies do
20 freely assemble is no coincidence.
21 Neither are the surveillance
22 cameras that connect directly to
23 the DVIC fusion center. No, I'm
24 not talking about Circa 1960s Jim

1 Crow Philadelphia. I'm talking
2 about last weekend on Camac and
3 Locust.

4 It takes coordination,
5 coordination between institutions
6 and agencies and coordination by
7 individuals who are likely in this
8 room participating in this very
9 hearing. Yet we talk a good game
10 about constitutional rights. I
11 fear for us, some of us who may
12 descend from those very enslaved
13 Freedmen who congregated in Congo
14 Square, which is known as
15 Washington Square Park again and is
16 an African burial ground,
17 Washington Square Park, an area
18 that is immensely represented by
19 non-Black LGBTQ leaders with an
20 authority to ensure our safety or
21 not.

22 Perhaps it's time for
23 Black queer people to divest from
24 the Gayborhood. Here's a novel

1 idea: How about we just go back
2 into the closet. After all, the
3 last Black-owned Gayborhood bar was
4 closed several years ago, and the
5 concentration of Black queer spaces
6 that existed in mid-century West
7 Philadelphia shuttered just around
8 the time the Gayborhood switched
9 over from the Rittenhouse Square
10 area.

11 Black queer people
12 deserve safe spaces in their own
13 neighborhoods like we did in the
14 first half of the 20th century.
15 And so, here's the question that
16 begs to be answered: Is any Black
17 Philadelphian entitled to an
18 existence free from surveillance,
19 censorship, and profiling? Notice
20 I said any Black Philadelphian, not
21 just LGBTQ ones. Any political
22 scientist worth their degree would
23 have recognized that it would
24 occurred at Pride was a drill, a

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 warning. And we Black folks have
2 been here before. Thank you.

3 (Applause.)

4 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:

5 Thank you so much for your
6 comments.

7 Ms. Hartman, can you
8 please call the next few witnesses,
9 public commenters.

10 THE CLERK: Asa Khalif
11 and then next, Grace Hewitt and Em
12 Bennett.

13 (Witnesses approached
14 witness table.)

15 MR. KHALIF: Good to see
16 you. Hello, Councilpeople. I know
17 we are enforcing the two-minute
18 rule, but we've heard a lot of
19 people say a lot of things and gave
20 up a lot of time. I'm asking for
21 you to give us a few minutes if we
22 go a little over just to give us
23 some grace, because this is so
24 important to hear from community

1 members and leaders and those who
2 are putting their bodies on the
3 line for our community and it's
4 well worth it.

5 Okay. Thank you so much
6 if you can. First and foremost,
7 good morning or good afternoon
8 everyone. My name is Asa Khalif.
9 I am an activist, organizer in the
10 Black Lives Matter Movement. I am
11 a proud, queer Black man here in
12 this community, an advocate in this
13 community as well. And I would
14 like to thank a dear friend, a
15 warrior, Councilmember Rue Landau,
16 for having the courage to speak
17 truth to power and use her platform
18 to get to the truth and hold those
19 accountable.

20 Also, Pride was a riot
21 and no (inaudible) at Pride. I had
22 an opportunity to meet one of the
23 victims who's now a survivor on the
24 terrible fiasco that took place

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 after Pride on June 7th. Her name
2 is Mia. We'll call her Mia. An
3 18-year-old who has the most
4 incredible courage and beautiful
5 spirit, who did not have that much
6 courage to come today, but trusted
7 me, along with her permission of
8 her parents to speak in her words.
9 And these will be her words that I
10 speak. Nothing will be added or
11 subtracted.

12 Good morning. My name
13 is Mia. I'm 18 years old. I
14 identify as lesbian and my pronouns
15 are she/her. My first Pride was
16 nothing like I imagined. Instead
17 of fun and celebration with my
18 friends, the police turned joy into
19 fear and abuse. I can't put into
20 words the fear that I experienced
21 on June 7th. As much as I try, I
22 guess you just had to be there.

23 The police pushing,
24 arresting, pulling out their

1 tasers, pointing at me and my
2 friends. It was horrible. All I
3 wanted to do was dance and
4 celebrate Pride in the Gayborhood.
5 I won't be back in the Gayborhood.
6 I don't feel safe around the
7 police. Maybe one day I'll try
8 again. I don't know, maybe. Mia.
9 And I would like to add,
10 I would like to remind the
11 Philadelphia police and
12 particularly when you're dealing
13 with Black and Brown and trans
14 people in the Gayborhood, which has
15 never been a safe place for any of
16 us, I want to remind you, just
17 because you put your uniform on
18 doesn't mean you take your humanity
19 off. Thank you again,
20 Councilmember Rue Landau.
21 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:
22 Thank you. Please state your name.
23 Whoever's next, please state your
24 name and your pronouns for the

1 record and proceed with your
2 testimony.

3 MS. HEWITT: Hi. My
4 name is Grace Hewitt, she/her. I'd
5 like to thank the Council, the
6 community and all of the uniformed
7 police officers who have been on
8 their phones all morning. On
9 Sunday, June 7th, I attended a
10 Pride-related event at Frankie
11 Bradley's in the Gayborhood.
12 During this time, I witnessed
13 several instances of police
14 intimidation and violence against
15 attendees, Pride celebrants and the
16 general public in an alleyway
17 between Chancellor Street and
18 Locust Street.

19 At least a dozen
20 officers marched in a line and
21 began yelling at attendants, two of
22 whom were having medical
23 emergencies related to the
24 excessive heat. The officers

1 demanded that the two attendees
2 move with no reason, given there
3 was no street blockage or safety
4 concerns. One of these attendees
5 included a young woman who had
6 recently gained consciousness after
7 fainting.

8 These officers yelled at
9 them, offering medical assistance,
10 but never once actually provided
11 any help. During my time outside
12 the venue, I witnessed officers
13 attempt to physically and verbally
14 intimidate attendees who were there
15 to celebrate their community.
16 Again, when you say that there's
17 nothing in the Gayborhood, we were
18 there.

19 As for a paid event, as
20 attendees in the Gayborhood to
21 celebrate, they interrogated people
22 up and down the street, demanding
23 people leave and mocked the Pride
24 flags and signage. It was clear

1 from their first moment on the
2 street that they were not there to
3 protect or serve anyone.

4 Many of us want to
5 celebrate Pride safely while
6 supporting queer-owned businesses.
7 I've attended Pride in Philadelphia
8 for the past three years and I
9 still cannot understand why the
10 city has not figured out how to
11 keep the community safe after so
12 many Pride events. The police have
13 never been an ally to this
14 community. The police have never
15 made my community feel safer.

16 If you guys aren't ready
17 to change, we can go back to
18 picking up pennies and bricks from
19 the police today. All I've heard
20 are excuses. You're here to
21 explain yourselves and give excuses
22 and show these illegible slides,
23 but not apologize to the community.
24 You bring up safety with vehicle

1 ramming attacks, but your officers
2 are the ones using their vehicles
3 as weapons against civilians, many
4 of whom were minors.

5 You list terror events,
6 but your force became the terror
7 that day to people. It was not a
8 perfect day. Yeah, that was clear
9 to everyone there that it was not a
10 perfect day. And I really think
11 that you owe everyone here and
12 everyone who was there an apology
13 for how the police behaved. I'm
14 really not excited to hear more
15 excuses and I really don't have
16 trust that anything is going to get
17 better after everything I've heard
18 today from the Commissioner. But I
19 really want to thank everyone here
20 for their time. Thank you.

21 (Applause.)

22 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:

23 Thank you. Please state your name
24 and your pronouns and proceed.

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 MS. BENNETT: My name is
2 Em Bennett. I use they/them
3 pronouns and I am a queer activist
4 of South Philly. Before I speak on
5 my Pride experience, I would like
6 us to reflect on a quote from
7 Philly journalist Mark Segal
8 describing the conditions of
9 Christopher Street before
10 Stonewall. The police ruled
11 Christopher Street. They harassed
12 us nightly in our own neighborhood.
13 Their message was
14 simple: You people are not allowed
15 to gather. You are not allowed to
16 be visible. You are not allowed to
17 exist together. When I left the
18 bar the night of June 7th, the
19 bubble of exuberance I felt with my
20 community burst quickly as I
21 noticed menacing officers in masks
22 wielding their batons as
23 playthings. It became a pit of
24 fear as I realized my friend and I

1 were kettled with no place to go,
2 fear that turned into despair as I
3 heard yelling, tasers being
4 deployed against my community.

5 We were trapped and
6 things were horribly wrong. When I
7 asked an officer where we were
8 supposed to go, he said, I can't
9 tell you. I'm just doing my job.
10 Processing what happened to my
11 community that night, I am
12 incensed. Police Commissioner
13 Bethel, you have failed the
14 community you swore to serve. It
15 has become clear you see us not as
16 humans, but as a nuisance to be
17 controlled. Your use of fear and
18 surveillance on the queer community
19 showed complete ignorance of our
20 history and values.

21 We cannot thrive because
22 you do not believe in our right to
23 be visible, to exist together. Not
24 even on our most sacred of days are

1 we safe in your care. Police
2 Commissioner Bethel, I implore you
3 to resign from your position. Err
4 you repeat the history that brought
5 us here. And I would also like to
6 point out that one of the videos
7 was claimed to be the 1200 block of
8 Walnut is actually 1625 Chestnut
9 Street, the Shops at Liberty.
10 Nowhere near the Pride
11 celebrations. Thank you. I yield
12 my time.

13 (Applause.)

14 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:

15 Ms. Hartman, can you please call
16 the next witnesses.

17 THE CLERK: Madison
18 Gray. Then Lindsay Gottschall and
19 Daniel Guy.

20 (Witnesses approached
21 witness table.)

22 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:

23 Thank you. Please, whoever wants
24 to start, state your name, your

1 pronouns and please proceed with
2 your testimony.

3 MS. GRAY: Hi. My name
4 is Madison Gray. My pronouns are
5 she/her. I have been a resident of
6 Philadelphia for more than ten
7 years now. I attended many Pride
8 celebrations and also other
9 celebrations, Eagle celebrations,
10 Erin Express, all types of street
11 parties that have been a little
12 rowdy and I have never, ever seen
13 anything like what I experienced on
14 June 7th.

15 On June 7th, we walked
16 out of our friend's apartment
17 building, which was on Walnut
18 Street between 12th and 13th. Once
19 you're on that intersection, there
20 are four different ways you could
21 potentially leave. We were heading
22 to dinner. The intersection of
23 12th and Walnut was shut down with
24 barricades. The intersection at

1 13th and Walnut was shut down with
2 barricades, both with dozens of
3 cops, you know, maybe even 50-plus
4 cops at each intersection.

5 There's two other ways,
6 right. There's an alleyway down
7 Camac Street and then there's a
8 courtyard where you can go north.
9 Both of those were also shut down
10 with cops blocking the exits. We
11 had no way to leave the area. At
12 this point, we were just going to
13 dinner, which is our right to do
14 so.

15 We talked to the police
16 and asked them why they were
17 shutting it down. We were told no
18 explanation of why they were
19 shutting it down. And we began to
20 see police officers with masks,
21 horses, paddy wagons. To be
22 honest, it was unlike anything I've
23 experienced outside of legal
24 observing. I'm a lawyer and I do

1 legal observing at protests, and
2 I'm talking about legal observing
3 at some of the most intense
4 protests in 2020, like after Walter
5 Wallace was murdered in West
6 Philly, where we know we also saw
7 their police kettling people. But
8 that was in a protest situation.
9 And this was in a situation where
10 there was no resistance. There was
11 no explanation for why they were
12 behaving the way that they were.

13 And I mean, I
14 immediately recognized it as
15 kettling. The only way we were
16 able to get out eventually was
17 because one officer just decided
18 that he would let us out of there,
19 which we were a group of
20 predominantly White people, so I
21 don't know that everyone would have
22 been afforded the same privilege.

23 While we were there, we
24 saw two young girls trying to get

1 to their car so they could leave.
2 I think they had been celebrating
3 Pride in the city and were just
4 driving home. They were followed
5 into their car by a group of
6 officers who began slamming on the
7 windows of the car and yelling at
8 them to the point that these girls
9 were crying. And they weren't able
10 to leave. They were stuck in their
11 car and they just had -- I don't
12 even know when they were able to
13 leave the situation.

14 When we asked the police
15 officer what we should do, they
16 told us to just go back inside as
17 if we don't have the right to walk
18 around the Gayborhood on Pride
19 Sunday. In conclusion, this was an
20 experience unlike any other. And
21 thank you for holding a hearing on
22 this. And I really hope that we
23 can see some real accountability
24 and change from this.

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 MS. GOTTSCHALL: Hi. My
2 name is Lindsay. I use she/her
3 pronouns. I've lived in Philly my
4 whole life and I love this city and
5 the community. I've been going to
6 Pride events since I was in college
7 at Temple. So I'm grateful to be
8 here to share my experience. On
9 June 7th, around 5:00 p.m. I was,
10 you know, with Maddie at points. I
11 exited my friend's apartment on
12 Walnut Street.

13 I was immediately met
14 with multiple cops standing there
15 telling me to move. I calmly
16 asked, why do we need to get off
17 the sidewalk. And I was told, by
18 this officer, "You guys just need
19 to move because those guys back
20 there will have no mercy on you."
21 That is a direct quote.

22 I looked up and I see
23 coming down Walnut rows and rows of
24 cops revving their engines with

1 their helmets on. I mean, it was
2 like a mob of cops. I'm being told
3 to get off the sidewalk. I can't
4 go in the street. So we were
5 essentially pushed into a side
6 alleyway with everyone from Walnut
7 Street.

8 I watched a young woman
9 intoxicated but engaging with the
10 cops. And instead of escalating
11 the situation, I watched him
12 literally pick her up, throw her
13 over his shoulder and walk her down
14 the end of the alleyway. That is
15 not de-escalation in my opinion.
16 That is physical force. Let alone
17 the no-mercy comment. You can
18 assume what was meant by that.

19 Cops are just slowly
20 coming over. We're not allowed to
21 leave. I mean, the sheer number of
22 cops there was alarming. I'm still
23 not quite sure what the shift was
24 to necessitate that. All I saw was

1 people hanging out, singing with
2 music that was there and having fun
3 with their community. It was
4 pretty impossible to even get out
5 of this alleyway that we're all
6 trapped in now, like we're a bunch
7 of herded animals.

8 Even walking to the
9 Pride event, all I see is cops just
10 staring and laughing like it's a
11 bunch of puppets essentially. To
12 what Maddie said too, I have also
13 attended a lot of events in the
14 city, Eagles, Mummers, Erin
15 Express. When I've seen people
16 climbing street signs and trash
17 cans and the cops, don't even bat
18 an eye. But when it involves queer
19 or Brown and Black people, it's an
20 issue. So we need to change the
21 narrative. It doesn't make any
22 sense. Thank you.

23 (Applause.)

24 MR. GUY: Hello, City

1 Council. I'm Danny Guy, they/them
2 pronouns. I work at CPOC, but I'm
3 here today speaking in my capacity
4 as a resident and a Pride attendee
5 since 2009. These words are my
6 personal experience, not an
7 official position of CPOC. I want
8 to underscore the city's lack of
9 planning at this year's Pride.

10 Until the pandemic, Pride was held
11 in Penn's Landing and people came
12 throughout the day to celebrate in
13 the Gayborhood. This is not new.

14 Why was the city not
15 better prepared for people to be
16 celebrating in the Gayborhood? My
17 personal experience was attempting
18 to get back to our friend's hotel
19 on Locust Street post street
20 clearing. We interacted with two
21 officers at different intersections
22 who were unhelpful and could not
23 provide a clear route back to the
24 hotel.

1 We were finally allowed
2 to pass after my friend pleaded
3 with a third officer. This was a
4 privileged experience. We were a
5 group of three White cis-presenting
6 men, but no officer had a clear
7 answer. No one would tell us when
8 Locust would be open. Why did it
9 take us pleading to get back to a
10 hotel, my friend's home, for that
11 night. Compared to what we all saw
12 today, mine was a low-level
13 complaint. But what it highlights
14 is the lack of planning and
15 communication from police and city
16 leadership.

17 As I said back here in
18 June, it seems that we can plan
19 quickly to welcome rowdy Eagles
20 fans to take over Broad Street
21 directly after a Super Bowl win,
22 and we don't seem concerned when
23 they're climbing street poles. So
24 why didn't the city anticipate

1 queer people celebrating in the
2 Gayborhood on Pride.

3 It only exacerbates how
4 our community feels disregarded and
5 dehumanized in a hostile, political
6 climate. We deserve to be treated
7 humanely like our straight
8 counterparts, given equal moments
9 of joy and celebration. Thank you.

10 (Applause.)

11 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:

12 Thank you all so much.

13 Ms. Hartman, can you
14 call the next few public
15 commenters.

16 THE CLERK: Lindsay
17 McCormick, Nurya Abdullah, Taron
18 Barkley.

19 (Witnesses approached
20 witness table.)

21 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:

22 Good afternoon. Please state your
23 name and your pronouns and proceed
24 with your testimony.

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 MS. McCORMICK: Hi. My
2 name is Lindsay McCormick. My
3 pronouns are she/her. And I've
4 attended Philadelphia Pride every
5 year since 2013 when I moved to
6 Philadelphia. And every year it
7 seems like police presence
8 increases and intensifies. After
9 what I witnessed this year, I'm
10 scared what will happen in the
11 future if this pattern continues.

12 Around 5:30 p.m., I was
13 waiting for my friend outside their
14 apartment on Walnut. Within 15
15 minutes of me waiting, everyone on
16 Walnut was kettled onto Camac
17 Street and not allowed to leave. I
18 saw a person being held up by two
19 friends because they were not well
20 enough to walk. They were not
21 allowed to exit. Even though it
22 was clear this person needed
23 medical attention, it felt like the
24 police kettled us to instigate and

1 escalate. They were not there for
2 our safety.

3 It also was not lost on
4 me that a couple days after Pride,
5 there was a promotion for open
6 streets in Midtown Village, which I
7 guess is what we're calling the
8 Gayborhood now. With the
9 aggressive police presence and the
10 promotion of open streets in
11 Midtown Village, not the
12 Gayborhood, it makes me ask who is
13 allowed to exit and exist in
14 Philadelphia. It feels like the
15 city is trying to intimidate queer
16 existence and erase LGBT history.
17 Thank you.

18 (Applause.)

19 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:

20 Thank you so much.

21 MS. BARKLEY: Hello.

22 Good afternoon. Thank you for the
23 time. My name is Taron Barkley. I
24 use he/him pronouns. This has been

1 an interesting day. Everything
2 I've heard here has made no sense.
3 I'm honestly so confused. But just
4 to highlight a few things, because
5 I'm solution-based and we've heard
6 nothing but just comments today.

7 The only reason why
8 we're here is because it wasn't
9 just queer people. It wasn't just
10 LGBTQ people. This was Black and
11 Brown people that were policed and
12 corralled and have been policed and
13 corralled in the city nightly since
14 then. If it had not been for my
15 video where I painted the picture
16 of what it felt like to me there --
17 I'm 31 years old, I came out when I
18 was 16.

19 I've been coming
20 downtown after school, we would
21 walk from St. Joe's Prep, that's
22 where I went, my alma mater, and we
23 would walk down here and I would be
24 in the city. So it's not about

1 just queer people. It's not just
2 about -- and I've heard other
3 people say it's never been a safe
4 space. I've never also encountered
5 that either.

6 The Gayborhood is a
7 living, breathing space daily,
8 nightly. So it's not about there
9 not being anything to do and it's
10 not about there being children
11 downtown. You guys needing to
12 police kids, that's known.
13 Everyone knows that. But we're not
14 going to blame the children being
15 downtown for you coming downtown
16 and policing us from going to the
17 bars and specifically Black people.
18 Because since that night, every day
19 except for Latin night, might I
20 add, because that was last night
21 and I went just to see, you're down
22 there. So I don't want to hear
23 about it being kids.

24 And also too, it's like

1 what Pride is and the Gayborhood is
2 bars. So if you're not 21 years
3 old, you shouldn't be in the
4 Gayborhood. Blocking the streets
5 off is something new. We never got
6 that, but it's like there for 21
7 and up. So if you're not 21, you
8 got to go home. And if you guys
9 can't figure that out, then it's
10 not our job to figure that out.

11 And I feel like we're
12 being -- we've lost the plot here,
13 right. Like, are you going to keep
14 coming downtown and ruining the
15 space that lives and breathes daily
16 or is it about, you know, LGBTQ
17 bodies? Or are we going to
18 actually put the light on where it
19 needs to be? Thank you so much and
20 have a great day.

21 (Applause.)

22 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:

23 Thank you very much.

24 Ms. Hartman, can you

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 please call the next few witnesses.

2 THE CLERK: Mia Rivera,
3 Christiana Lewis, Mark Roberts.

4 (Witnesses approached
5 witness table.)

6 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:
7 Good afternoon. You're the first
8 sitting. If you'd like to state
9 your name and your pronouns and
10 proceed with your testimony.

11 MR. ROBERTS: My name is
12 Mark Roberts. I use he/him. My
13 wife and I are 20-year-plus
14 residents of the Gayborhood. We
15 have always felt welcomed and safe
16 there. I'm an officer of Neighbors
17 Across Market RCO and a member of
18 the Neighborhood Alliance of
19 Washington Square West as well as
20 of course the Civic Association.

21 I'm speaking out today
22 against the police response in our
23 neighborhood for our LGBTQ and
24 straight neighbors because it's not

1 really acceptable to have mass
2 police terrorizing our citizens.
3 Trump and ICE goons are trying very
4 hard to make that an acceptable
5 daily practice and every one of us
6 has to say, no, you won't.

7 It is obviously a relief
8 that no one died on June 7th. But
9 we all know that's an easy option
10 for our overmilitarized local
11 police departments among unarmed
12 citizens. I'm glad Commissioner
13 Bethel did confirm that masks are
14 not a part of PPD's uniforms. I'm
15 retired. But when I worked for
16 many for several years, had more
17 than a passing relationship with
18 law enforcement. I've always been
19 impressed by law enforcement's
20 ability to de-escalate the tense
21 situations.

22 When those responsible
23 for keeping the peace don't, we end
24 up in a worse place. And this was

1 really only partiers. What will go
2 down with flash mobs looking for
3 trouble, machine guns, bazookas.
4 We can laugh, but facing this
5 seriously now and doing the right
6 thing now protects us all into the
7 future. Thank you for listening to
8 my testimony.

9 (Applause.)

10 MS. LEWIS: Hi. My name
11 is Christiana, she/they pronouns.
12 When I attended Philadelphia Pride,
13 I didn't expect to leave with
14 trauma and pain. As a 23-year-old
15 queer woman, I've never experienced
16 police brutality before. But the
17 truth is this is a norm for our
18 community, especially our Black,
19 trans, queer and non-binary
20 community.

21 A police officer charged
22 at me with their horse, forcing me
23 into open traffic, proclaiming
24 clear the corners or we'll charge

1 at you. The claim the chief made
2 that the horses were just
3 performing a trot does not
4 understand the control the rider
5 has over the horse. The rider
6 decides the path the horse takes.

7 Several officers had
8 full face coverings. I witnessed a
9 woman officer threatening the
10 community with a taser. The
11 chief's solution is to arc your
12 tasers. So now we won't know if
13 we're getting tased next. It is
14 clear to me that our police
15 department is corrupt, systemically
16 racist, homophobic and needs change
17 now. This is even more clear by
18 all the excuses the police chief
19 made with his presentation.

20 Intention doesn't
21 matter. Impact does. The city
22 wanted to profit off of the
23 community by charging for Pride on
24 the Parkway, but couldn't protect

1 us against our own public servants.
2 If there's dozens of free Pride
3 events in the Gayborhood, which I
4 attended and where Pride has been
5 for many years, common sense would
6 tell you to close off the streets.

7 They closed off the
8 roads and sidewalks with a barrier
9 herding us like cattle. Why didn't
10 we block off the road for the
11 people to walk on it if it wasn't
12 even open for cars? Let me be
13 clear. I was not the target of
14 this brutality. The target is and
15 always has been our Black, Brown
16 and trans non-binary community.
17 I'm not here to mansplain to the
18 LGBTQ community. I'm here for so
19 my voice reaches the privileged
20 ears that have refused to listen to
21 us before. This is what systemic
22 racism and deep-rooted homophobia
23 looks like in Philadelphia. And as
24 our public servants, it is your

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 duty to make sure this never
2 happens again. Thank you.

3 (Applause.)

4 MS. McCORMICK: Hi. My
5 name is Mia, she/her, YouTuber
6 MiaRTV. In the worst way possible,
7 the history of Pride has come full
8 circle as an ally. I listened
9 carefully to the Police
10 Commissioner's response. He said,
11 I'm not making excuses, but that's
12 all we heard. Pointing to a small
13 number of official police reports
14 does not erase what happened.

15 Many videos that we saw
16 today capture these incidents, but
17 people may be too afraid to file a
18 police report after experiencing
19 the abuse from the very department
20 that we're expected to report to.
21 A sergeant has contacted me
22 regarding an interview from my
23 official complaint. And if I'm
24 being honest with everyone, I don't

1 know if I can bring myself to show
2 up. I'm still scared and
3 traumatized by what happened to the
4 point where being in the same room
5 as an officer feels horrifying.

6 It's also stated that
7 mounted officers are used to
8 intimidate. That admission alone
9 should concern everyone in this
10 room. Intimidation has no place
11 for an event where he said he's
12 here to protect safety and promote
13 safety. We are not young kids
14 fighting in the street. I should
15 not fear being nearly trampled by a
16 horse because a blurred video of
17 children fighting triggered police
18 to abuse us.

19 We were also compared to
20 the FIFA crowds and told they were
21 compliant. We weren't that. The
22 countless videos of their chaos
23 tells a different story. Yet they
24 weren't brutalized. It sounds like

1 the police officers are the ones
2 compliant and silent towards each
3 others abuse of civilians. Our tax
4 dollars should not fund officers
5 who discriminate. If bias
6 training, emotional regulation and
7 de-escalation are not preventing
8 this, then accountability must
9 follow. Fire them. How have we
10 learned nothing from 2020? We are
11 not progressing or regressing.
12 Pride should be a celebration, not
13 another reminder of why this
14 movement began in the first place.

15 And finally, using
16 police horses needs to go. They
17 deserve to be free, just like we
18 do. And just like us, these horses
19 are controlled and placed in
20 situations they did not choose.
21 They are animals, not public
22 servants like you police. They
23 should never be used as tools of
24 intimidation against the people

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 they don't get to choose to police.

2 Thank you.

3 (Applause.)

4 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:

5 Thank you all so much.

6 Ms. Hartman, can you call the next
7 few public testimony please.

8 THE CLERK: Christian
9 Orr, Brett Bender, James
10 Bridgeforth.

11 (Witnesses approached
12 witness table.)

13 MR. ORR: My name is
14 Christian Orr. I use he/they
15 pronouns. And on June 7, 2026, at
16 the Pride Festival I was assaulted
17 by a police officer on Chancellor
18 Street. At around 7:00 p.m. as I
19 was attempting to go around the
20 bike rack barricade and get home,
21 officers on foot and on dirt bikes
22 pushing back the line of attendees,
23 I was pushed by Police Officer
24 Diore, as I believe it is

1 pronounced, no less than five
2 times.

3 One of those times I was
4 pushed to the ground resulting in a
5 scraped and bloodied knee, hip and
6 hand, I do have pictures. While I
7 am saddened and disappointed by
8 this and other officers actions on
9 that day, I am not at all surprised
10 as this historically has been how
11 police engage with our community.
12 And as a side note, I do attend
13 many other community events in the
14 city, whether that's the Mummers
15 Parade or the St. Patty's Day
16 Parade and on many occasions with
17 my left eye, I witness attendees
18 defacing property and with my right
19 eye, I watch officers in full
20 uniform with open containers of
21 alcohol drinking. On many
22 occasions I have witnessed that
23 happen. So because of the banality
24 of how they police us in our

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 communities, it's not my only
2 concern about the overpolicing in
3 the community on that day.

4 As I am certain that
5 after this hearing and
6 investigation, City Council will do
7 its due diligence to ensure our
8 community will not be met with this
9 level of force by PPD on the day of
10 Pride again, at least not in the
11 near future.

12 My other concern is the
13 systemic one. It's that multiple
14 departments within City Hall may
15 have been fully aware of the plan
16 for an overwhelming police presence
17 well in advance of the day and
18 chose to do and say nothing to
19 prevent, stop or warn our community
20 of the dangers awaiting us in the
21 Gayborhood. My professional
22 background is in large-scale
23 parades and festivals held in major
24 metropolitan cities.

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 I have worked on
2 logistics and production teams for
3 events such as the National Cherry
4 Blossom Parade in Washington, D.C.,
5 the July 4th Parade in both D.C.
6 And in Philadelphia, the 6ABC
7 Thanksgiving Day Parade here in
8 Philly. I have managed the Lehigh
9 Valley Pride and I was one of the
10 logistics coordinator for Philly
11 Pride when the festival was brought
12 to the Gayborhood in 2022. I have
13 worked on these teams many times
14 over the span of a decade. I have
15 participated in meetings with many
16 metro city police, police
17 departments, Office of Emergency
18 Management, Office of Special
19 Events, Office of LGBTQ Affairs,
20 EMS, Fire, the Department of
21 Homeland Security and other
22 municipal departments. I
23 understand how these kinds of
24 events work and how they are

1 coordinated across teams and
2 departments from inception to
3 execution.

4 So when it was proposed
5 to the city to move the festival to
6 the Parkway, which I fully support
7 by the way, as the safest option,
8 I'm finding it incredibly hard to
9 believe that no one in all of those
10 departments on all of those teams
11 asked the questions, what are we
12 going to do with the Gayborhood or
13 how are we going to handle the
14 influx of people in the Gayborhood
15 after the festival has ended on the
16 Parkway. These are logical
17 questions that should have and
18 likely were posed to these multiple
19 departments within City Hall.

20 The first priority of an
21 event producer and the city that
22 facilitates it should always be the
23 safety and protection of the
24 attendees before, during and after

1 an event. This priority is
2 magnified here in Philly because of
3 our predominantly Black and Brown
4 city and our Pride attendees along.
5 And they belong to a -- the
6 priority is magnified here in
7 Philly because we are a
8 predominantly Black and Brown city,
9 and our Pride attendees belong to
10 multiple marginalized communities.

11 The City of Philadelphia
12 and the PPD failed in its mandate
13 to protect our community this year.
14 And if, in fact, multiple
15 departments were in full awareness
16 of this plan to overpolice us, the
17 people who lead these departments
18 also need to be held accountable.
19 Thank you.

20 (Applause.)

21 MR. BRIDGEFORTH: My
22 name is James Bridgeforth.
23 Pronouns are he/him/his. I'm here
24 speaking today as a resident of the

1 City of Philadelphia. But I would
2 be remiss if I didn't also
3 acknowledge that I'm the Ward
4 Leader of the Democratic Ward,
5 Leader of the 46th Ward of
6 Philadelphia.

7 I came here to support
8 today's hearing and the people who
9 signed up to share their truth
10 about what happened at Pride. As
11 an academic with years of
12 experience studying crisis
13 management and community voice and
14 policy and decision-making, I came
15 here today because I wanted to see
16 how our government would respond to
17 community members who are often
18 ignored, marginalized and whose
19 concerns are labeled as
20 unimportant, given all the many
21 issues we're facing in this world.

22 I originally didn't plan
23 on speaking today. I was only at
24 Pride for a short time that day and

1 I didn't directly experience a
2 trauma that so many others actually
3 faced. But I decided I wanted to
4 speak because I wanted to be on the
5 record that we need to continue to
6 see this kind of energy from
7 Council.

8 When these kinds of
9 crises occur in too many cases in
10 our city and in this country,
11 residents often feel ignored and
12 shut out from decisions that are
13 made in their name. As we move
14 forward from this hearing, my hope
15 is that we hold our city
16 accountable for making sure that
17 all of our residents and visitors
18 feel safe and free to celebrate
19 openly, to simply live their very
20 best lives free from harassment,
21 intimidation and violence of all
22 forms.

23 In the future when we
24 talk about safety, I also want us

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 to always consider what do we
2 actually mean when we say that
3 word. Safety from what and safety
4 for whom. Thank you.

5 (Applause.)

6 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:

7 Thank you both so much.

8 Ms. Hartman, can you
9 call the next public commenters.

10 THE CLERK: Alicia
11 Gambrel and Tyrell Brown.

12 (Witnesses approached
13 witness table.)

14 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:
15 That's it. You two are the last
16 two, at least who have signed up.
17 Can you repeat the other name?

18 THE CLERK: Alicia
19 Gambrel.

20 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:
21 Apparently, she's no longer here.
22 Please state your name and your
23 pronouns for the record.

24 MR. BROWN: Yes. Tyrell

1 Brown, they/he pronouns
2 interchangeably. Hi. I'm the
3 founder and Executive Director of
4 Philly Pride 365. And I wasn't
5 going to comment today, but there
6 were some things that were
7 inconsistencies that I have heard
8 repeated over and over again in
9 meetings with the Commissioner.

10 There are also things
11 that I'm actually shocked to hear
12 because one of my friends Christian
13 just spoke, and spoke about what
14 they experienced on the festival
15 ground and I wanted to express
16 within two minutes that -- number
17 one, our community is very unique
18 in the sense that we are interwoven
19 with power titles, but also
20 community members that we call
21 family that are family to us. And
22 it's horrifying to know that on
23 that day, somebody that I hold near
24 and dear was pushed several times

1 to the ground. And that's personal
2 to me.

3 But it's also knowing
4 that watching those videos, it was
5 horrifying because I actually have
6 emails and communications in which
7 I sent over guidances to people
8 saying that these are things that
9 they should anticipate. So even if
10 they say they didn't anticipate it
11 was going to happen or they didn't
12 know it was going to happen, what
13 we can look back at as history from
14 2022, 3, 4 and 5, knowing that
15 there was an influx of people that
16 were coming to the Gayborhood to
17 celebrate even when the festival
18 was happening in the Gayborhood.

19 People were coming down
20 at 5:30, 6:00, 7:00 and staying
21 later. So the fact that there
22 wasn't an anticipated, you know, or
23 an expected attendance boom into
24 the Gayborhood, it's just factually

1 not true. And it's not supported
2 by anyone looking at history and
3 data and looking at communications
4 for the past four years.

5 And so, my thing is
6 about shared accountability and
7 really accepting the fact that
8 there were mistakes made this year.
9 And I think that I have to take
10 accountability and that means that
11 I have to make changes in the way
12 that I organize things. But if I'm
13 going to do that and I'm going to
14 tell the truth about it, then
15 goddamnit, the people here that
16 work in institutions that get paid
17 by our tax dollars should be ready
18 to tell the truth about the things
19 that were communicated to them,
20 about the things that they were
21 planning for, and then also about
22 how we can have shared
23 accountability about planning
24 forward. And if we're not going to

1 do that, if we're going to try to
2 just hide behind excuses and video
3 evidence and saying, I understand,
4 we understand all these things, we
5 know what happened.

6 People were there and we
7 saw what happened. We did. We saw
8 intercommunity violence. We all
9 witnessed those things. We also
10 saw aggression. We saw unnecessary
11 agitation. We saw violent language
12 being used against our community.
13 And it wasn't just on June 7th, as
14 has been expressed over and over
15 again. These are things that have
16 happened routinely for the last --
17 for as long as I've lived in
18 Philadelphia my entire life. This
19 is stuff that has happened, and it
20 was exacerbated and it was put on
21 display.

22 And it was a public
23 embarrassment during June Pride
24 Month for the entire nation for

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 Philadelphia to be represented that
2 way, to be our community during
3 Pride to be treated that way. And
4 I just want to end with Pride is
5 not just an event. It is literally
6 what we -- it's what we reach to.
7 It's what we carry within
8 ourselves. It's what we have to
9 carry with ourselves, whether or
10 not you attend an event or not.

11 And so, if that's being
12 crashed into by authorities saying
13 and calling us names and pushing us
14 to the ground -- I was in the
15 Gayborhood that day after our
16 event. They wouldn't even let us
17 to our hotel. We were staying at
18 the Fairfield on 13th and Locust.
19 They yelled at us. They yelled at
20 me and Sappho and told us that we
21 couldn't get to our hotel. They
22 prevented us from walking after
23 working an entire 12-hour day to go
24 to our hotel to rest.

1 It felt dangerous. It
2 felt like they didn't care. And
3 even I will say this, my last
4 thing. Over the years, even with
5 my credentialing, this is the
6 thing, it's like I'm the producer
7 of the event. I have this badge
8 and I go to officers and I say,
9 hey, I need you to move this, that,
10 or the other or I need you to
11 please tone down this or that or
12 the other, and they look at me like
13 I'm a stranger to them, like I have
14 no authority in that space. And
15 that happens whether or not the
16 Pride is on the Gayborhood or on
17 the Parkway, because it did happen
18 on the Parkway.

19 They looked at me there
20 on the Parkway and they wouldn't
21 follow instructions from me there
22 on the Parkway. And I'm holding
23 credentials saying that I run this
24 event so there isn't -- it just

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 feels like there isn't any respect,
2 regardless of whether or not you're
3 an attendee, an organizer, or
4 whether or not you have an
5 institutional position. None of
6 these things seem to be able to
7 protect us, and we should just be
8 treated respectfully as sovereign
9 residents of Philadelphia. And
10 that's just that. So thank you.

11 (Applause.)

12 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:

13 Thank you very much.

14 Is there anybody else
15 here who wants to provide public
16 comment?

17 (Witnesses approached
18 witness table.)

19 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:

20 Please state your name for the
21 record, your pronouns and proceed
22 with your testimony.

23 MS. GOLPHIN: Hello. My
24 name is Brighton Golphin and I go

1 by they/them pronouns. I'm a
2 resident of South Philadelphia.
3 Aside from the violence that
4 happened as it relates to the
5 police in the Gayborhood, I do want
6 to put something on your radar,
7 Councilmember. Aside from the
8 Gayborhood being overly policed, as
9 we saw in Jacen Bowman's video this
10 past weekend, South Street has been
11 terribly, overly policed.

12 Because I am a South
13 Philly resident, I often go to
14 South Street because, you know, we
15 have Val's. I don't personally
16 attend marches, but we also have
17 marches, we have all these other
18 businesses that are also on South
19 Street. We have South Street Art
20 Mart. They have a lot of events
21 there. And there's other
22 businesses that have been known for
23 Black and Brown queer folks to
24 attend. And that was way before

1 marches and Val's had appeared.

2 When I leave Val's at
3 12:00 at night, most bars close at
4 2:00. Why is 2nd and South blocked
5 off barricaded, lights off, closed
6 off. It doesn't make any sense.
7 And it's not just me and other
8 folks that attend South Street
9 events or bars that have been
10 dealing with this. It's also other
11 businesses that have been suffering
12 threatening to close because of the
13 overpolicing and the barricades
14 that have been happening on South
15 Street.

16 And again, I'm aware
17 that years ago there was a shooting
18 incident that happened. However,
19 it's been so many years. I don't
20 understand why we still need the
21 barricades and whatnot. Now, if
22 it's a festival or an event such as
23 this, festivals at South Street, I
24 mean, South Street Art Mart puts

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 together, okay, I understand it.
2 It's going to be open. We're going
3 to have all these events. But to
4 be overpoliced, if I'm going to the
5 Philly Aids Thrift or going to
6 Val's, that's unnecessary. And we
7 call it the Lesbordhood. But how is
8 it the Lesbordhood if we're still
9 being overpoliced there? I know
10 this was about the Gaybordhood, but
11 I just wanted to put that into your
12 perspective that we're not even
13 welcome in our own Lesbordhood
14 because of the overpolicing.

15 (Applause.)

16 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU: So
17 thank you. Thank you so much for
18 your comments. I really appreciate
19 it. Just want you to know that
20 we've been in -- Councilmember
21 Squilla and I have been in
22 conversation with the
23 Administration over a lot of the
24 incidents that are happening on

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 South Street. We hope to clear
2 them up and make it more free and
3 accessible as well.

4 MS. GOLPHIN: Thank you.

5 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:

6 Okay. So hearing that no one else
7 is here for public comment, this
8 concludes the public hearing of the
9 committee -- oh, sorry. I just
10 wanted to say a few things in
11 conclusion.

12 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: I
13 have a comment.

14 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:

15 I'd like to call on Councilmember
16 Mark Squilla for closing remarks.

17 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA:

18 Thank you, Councilmember Landau.

19 I appreciate all the
20 testimony that was given today and
21 the concerns that we heard. We
22 understand that there were
23 challenges and missteps during the
24 event and that we need as a city to

1 do better. We understand what we
2 believed happened and we need to
3 address those concerns. Whether
4 it's with a combination of
5 planning, policing, but also us as
6 Councilmembers need to be involved
7 also in that process.

8 We understand Ty worked
9 very hard. Change is difficult
10 sometimes. We know there was some
11 challenges with people not wanting
12 to go to the Parkway because they
13 wanted to go to the Gayborhood, so
14 we maybe should have been more
15 prepared and aware of the folks
16 that weren't going to go to the
17 Parkway.

18 I was around when we
19 used to have those events down at
20 Penn's Landing. So we know even at
21 those events, when people did go to
22 Penn's Landing, that eventually
23 they would end up back into the
24 Gayborhood. So there were some

1 missteps. And I think it's
2 important to recognize and point
3 them out.

4 But I think the
5 challenge for us is to make sure in
6 the planning process, not only
7 holding accountability to the
8 things that happened, but also
9 planning and preparing for the
10 future, whether the next year's
11 event going to be on the Parkway
12 again, how we address both the
13 Parkway, I was on the Parkway and
14 in the Gayborhood that day, and
15 seeing a lot of both the good
16 things and the bad things that
17 happened.

18 So it's important that
19 we address them, have a plan going
20 forward of how we as a city not
21 only treat the Parkway event, but
22 then how do we treat the Gayborhood
23 during the Pride Festival. And I
24 think we also will need to be

1 accountable working with not only
2 special events, but the planners of
3 the events if Ty is working to do
4 that again next year, and how we
5 make it better for the people who
6 are there, but also better for the
7 City of Philadelphia.

8 The City of Philadelphia
9 did a lot of great things in 2026.
10 This was not one of them. And we
11 need to learn from it and we need
12 to have solutions moving forward.
13 So thank you.

14 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:

15 Thank you so much. And I just
16 wanted to add a couple of things.
17 I wanted to thank everyone who's
18 here. It was a very long day.
19 Appreciate that. Thank my
20 colleagues, all the LGBTQ
21 organizations, advocates,
22 organizers, community leaders who
23 came here and shared their
24 expertise and to the public who

1 gave us their experiences.

2 I want to thank Police
3 Commissioner Bethel, Jazelle Jones
4 and Tito Valdes from the Parker
5 Administration, and also make sure
6 that everybody knows that
7 Commissioner Bethel stuck around
8 and listened to every single bit of
9 testimony here is very important.

10 I do believe we are
11 going to get beyond this. I never
12 said in the beginning -- I forgot
13 to say that I didn't make it from
14 the Parkway. I was on the Parkway
15 until 7:00 at night. I felt very
16 done and did not go back to the
17 Gayborhood.

18 But I want to make sure
19 that we highlight something that we
20 just heard a couple of folks ago,
21 that somehow the tenor of what was
22 going on with the police started in
23 the beginning. I was on the float
24 with Councilmember Gauthier, with

1 Naiymah Sanchez and some others.
2 And when our float got to the
3 Parkway and pulled over, we were
4 trying to just get our belongings
5 off of it. It had been a long day,
6 figure out where was -- the police
7 response to us, including with a
8 white shirt who came up to us and
9 said, you have to move now, you
10 have to move now, you have to move
11 now, was so aggressive. We had
12 just arrived to the beginning of
13 the Parkway.

14 And for us, and I've
15 talked to Naiymah about this, this
16 set the tone of what we can now see
17 was the end of Pride. That's what
18 was so concerning, as if they were
19 annoyed and frustrated they even
20 had to be at this event. So the
21 testimony that we heard with people
22 in the Gayborhood being put and
23 kettled through this maze, not
24 being able to get out, then

1 suddenly motorcycles and police and
2 police officers are coming after
3 them is just sheerly terrifying.
4 And I'm so sorry for them, to
5 everybody for the trauma that they
6 endured.

7 But I too believe that
8 we're going to get beyond this. We
9 will definitely circulate the
10 demands that we heard through our
11 first panel of Jacen, Naiymah and
12 Chris. We're going to circulate
13 that to the police and the
14 administration. We are going to
15 definitely memorialize everything
16 else we heard and asks and requests
17 of the administration.

18 And this doesn't stop
19 today. There is no doubt that we
20 will build on this to figure out
21 how we work for next year, how we
22 can make this a safe event and a
23 celebratory event for all of us,
24 and to make sure that we are

Committee on Legislative Oversight

1 continuing to work on rebuilding
2 and strengthening police community
3 relations because it's essential.
4 And it also has to -- the police
5 have to meet the community halfway
6 so they understand that the
7 community's requests and
8 expectations are met in this
9 process as well. So we will put
10 all of this into practice. Thank
11 you so much for being here. Thank
12 you for staying for such a long
13 day. Appreciate you so much.

14 I have one more thing
15 I'm supposed to say, which is this
16 concludes the public hearing of the
17 Committee of Legislative Oversight.
18 This committee will stand in recess
19 until the call of the Chair. Thank
20 you all very much.

21 (Applause.)

22 - - -

23 Committee on Legislative
24 Oversight concluded at 2:00 p.m.)

Committee on Legislative Oversight

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

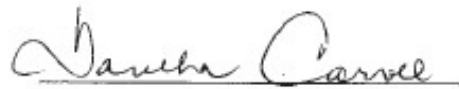
2 I, hereby certify that the proceedings
3 and evidence noted are contained fully and
4 accurately in the stenographic notes taken
5 by me in the foregoing matter, and that
6 this is a correct transcript of the same.
7

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TANEHA CARROLL
Court Reporter - Notary Public

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unless under the direct control and/or
supervision of the certifying reporter.)

\$ \$10 59:6 \$20 169:13 \$30 169:13 \$438,000 74:2 \$85,000 74:1 - -30 100:18 1 1 126:11 130:9 10 68:23 100% 98:11 133:3 11:00 48:10 11:15 48:14 11th 70:10 12-hour 265:23 1200 53:12 55:9 60:13 228:7 12:00 48:12 71:15 269:3 12:30 71:15 12th 44:2 60:9 131:14,19,23 132:3 146:5,20 201:10 229:18,23 13th 44:3 66:17,19 110:14 127:21 128:13 145:12 197:4 201:13 202:12 229:18 230:1 265:18 14- 133:17 15 239:14 15- 133:17 150 143:22 144:9 1500 63:10 152 166:3 16 241:18 16-year-old 57:23 133:17	1625 228:8 1693 215:10 16th 41:15 71:11 85:9 17th 123:20 18 205:19,23 220:13 18-year-old 220:3 1900 63:11 1930 205:10 1959 160:3 1960s 161:23 215:24 1980s 161:12 1986 30:22 1990s 162:19 1991 159:10 163:9 1996 101:4 1999 164:8 1st 99:13 2 2 125:22 127:4 130:9 131:8 20 205:22,24 20-something-year-old 31:7 20-year-plus 244:13 200 63:12 160:5 2000 31:16 2000s 206:17 2002 163:1 2008 163:16 2009 236:5 2013 239:5 2015 164:17 2016 38:8 2017 95:20 2020 231:4 251:10 2020s 165:24	2021 167:8 2022 166:14 255:12 262:14 2024 143:6 2025 46:21,23 2026 2:3 4:22 101:3 130:22 168:18 252:15 274:9 2026-related 91:16 20th 163:4 217:14 21 127:10 243:2,6,7 23-year-old 246:14 25 205:24 207:23 25-year-old 159:4 250 76:13 93:21 26% 28:11 260650 4:7,12 29:3 81:9 90:18 29 39:17 2:00 48:22 49:1 269:4 278:24 2:30 142:24 2nd 269:4 3 3 262:14 30 65:9 100:17 30-degree 99:11 30-second 118:22 31 241:17 355 73:24 365 95:14 190:20 261:4 3:00 49:6 126:14 3:30 115:3 4 4 262:14 400 50:15 42-year- 169:2 46th 258:5
--	---	--

4th 40:3 93:20 123:20 139:3 255:5 5 5 2:3 262:14 50 202:16 50-plus 230:3 500 133:9 553 117:16 118:7 5:00 233:9 5:30 49:18 239:12 262:20 5:50 49:21 6 60 101:9 60,000 94:22 63 71:24 6:00 262:20 6:55 51:7 6ABC 255:6 7 7 168:18 252:15 70 101:9 7:00 146:7,13 252:18 262:20 275:15 7:30 51:11 79:6 146:15 7th 5:18 14:20 15:12 123:5 171:10 220:1,21 222:9 226:18 229:14,15 233:9 245:8 264:13 8 86 38:10 8:00 51:19 9 90s 13:12 206:16	95 99:11 99.9% 140:11 9:30 70:11 146:5,19 A a.m. 48:10 Abdullah 238:17 ability 245:20 absolutely 98:7 127:11 133:12 147:22 156:11 201:2 abuse 72:16,18 73:11 220:19 249:19 250:18 251:3 abused 161:19 abusing 203:20 academic 258:11 academy 64:17 77:2 164:11 accept 67:2,7 170:19 205:6 211:9 acceptable 98:10 245:1,4 accepted 208:5 accepting 165:2 212:10 263:7 access 84:10 169:12 accessibility 86:13 87:18 88:9 93:10 95:2 97:5 accessible 82:15 90:1 96:16 271:3 accommodate 96:15 169:9 accommodations 20:19 accountability 9:6 10:8 19:13 86:9 88:8 148:9 169:24 170:14 174:22 175:6 177:17 188:21 189:14 193:12 194:1 212:10, 14 213:10,11 232:23 251:8 263:6,10,23 273:7 accountable 170:8 192:10 219:19 257:18 259:16 274:1 accounts 11:16 12:23 accused 192:12 acknowledge 23:6 26:16 40:19 78:16 174:19 258:3	acknowledging 2:8 87:10 165:10 acknowledgment 173:17 act 7:17 159:5 163:10 167:7 action 34:22 58:10 67:5 134:11 137:10 141:17,18 152:20 164:16 189:9,21,22 212:12 213:11,12 actions 17:12 61:7 168:16 209:18 253:8 activate 36:6 119:13 155:7 activation 43:11 active 211:24 activist 162:18 219:9 226:3 activity 48:18 52:24 68:10 76:17 86:9 128:21 actual 25:15 ADA 93:9 add 62:22 155:11 173:14 221:9 242:20 274:16 added 220:10 addition 10:1 94:8 additional 46:6 51:10 55:10 58:5 72:13 98:3 111:18 124:1 131:16 209:14 address 23:16 24:3 34:1 82:22 99:20,22 109:15 118:9 168:23 272:3 273:12,19 addressed 99:21 193:22 addressing 61:10 73:11 106:7 adjustments 40:15 41:3 105:3 administration 5:21 10:3,10 11:2 17:16 18:10 109:5 188:12,18 270:23 275:5 277:14,17 Administration's 83:2 85:18 admission 250:8 admit 67:9 122:24 admitting 114:13
--	--	--

adult 13:1 70:18 214:17 adults 55:17,22 61:23 72:8 205:17 206:4 207:23 210:16 212:24 213:16,18 advance 9:18 11:3 82:12 88:5 254:17 adversarially 160:23 adversity 215:7 advisory 85:14 163:5 190:16 193:1 advocacy 80:24 advocate 184:10 219:12 advocates 6:16 82:10 85:4 163:12 176:12 177:6 190:9 191:1 274:21 Affairs 10:14 29:10 35:7 73:3, 13 81:6 82:3 83:14 85:15 98:18 104:5 111:13 164:20 178:11 184:5 191:1 197:11 255:19 Affection 187:21 affirmatively 80:20 affirming 165:3 afforded 231:22 afraid 203:6,7 249:17 African 216:16 aftermath 146:10 afternoon 126:11 168:6 178:3 198:11 204:10 219:7 238:22 240:22 244:7 age 166:2 169:16 202:22 205:24 agencies 83:11 92:17,21 216:6 agent 50:17 136:12 aggression 15:21 264:10 aggressive 4:20 7:1 115:18 147:15 161:14 162:11 167:7 179:14 184:1 240:9 276:11 agitation 12:4 264:11 agree 139:23	agreed 37:24 ahead 24:12 36:11 74:6,8 109:16 Ahmad 3:18,19 4:3 20:8,11 Aids 270:5 air 101:11 alarming 234:22 Alas 215:6 alcohol 127:24 128:1 133:15 253:21 alcove 55:8 Alicia 260:10,18 alike 97:13 alive 159:15 All-star 93:18 alley-oop 119:19 120:9,14,17 alleyway 222:16 230:6 234:6, 14 235:5 Alliance 33:23 244:18 allowed 131:6,8 132:6 180:21 197:13 226:14,15,16 234:20 237:1 239:17,21 240:13 allowing 96:13 177:22 alluded 22:9 ally 26:7,9 224:13 249:8 allyship 13:22 alma 241:22 alongside 161:2 alternatives 150:11 Amendment 76:17 America 76:13 93:19,21 95:20,21 amount 143:24 analysis 98:2 and/or 94:4 anger 206:7 angles 63:15 angry 6:24	animals 235:7 251:21 announce 16:16 annoyed 276:19 annual 95:22 96:10 answers 6:12 17:3,18,22 anti-bias 192:3 anti-gay 161:24 anti-lgbtq+ 192:13 anticipate 125:5,7 126:6,15, 19 237:24 262:9,10 anticipated 262:22 apartment 229:16 233:11 239:14 apologies 16:9 apologize 47:5,21 54:14 71:23 72:1 138:7 148:5 224:23 apology 20:16 148:11 225:12 apparent 9:1 Apparently 260:21 appearance 195:20 appeared 269:1 Applause 55:24 100:22 117:13 122:15 132:7 135:3 144:13 149:1 178:1 189:1 196:7 197:23 204:5 213:21 218:3 225:21 228:13 235:23 238:10 240:18 243:21 246:9 249:3 252:3 257:20 260:5 267:11 270:15 278:21 applications 93:7 applied 95:14 154:2 190:4 applies 195:17 apply 186:19 appointed 21:2 appointing 4:3 appreciated 188:10 approach 38:2,3 approached 29:11 157:21 180:11 198:19 218:13 228:20 238:19 244:4 252:11 260:12
--	--	--

267:17 approved 96:1 131:17 April 123:20 arc 68:16 209:4 247:11 arcing 68:24 69:2,8 area 41:21 45:8 60:7,8,9,22 62:17 64:6 71:8,20 110:23 137:24 139:19 156:22 157:3 164:15 172:22 185:14 205:7 216:17 217:10 230:11 areas 135:12 arguably 166:13 argued 165:7 array 151:1 arrest 57:20,22 70:2,5,22 130:4 146:5,19 173:5 arrested 57:23 70:9 206:21 arresting 71:2 206:3 220:24 arrests 69:21 71:4,9 153:13 191:9 205:22 arrived 276:12 Art 268:19 269:24 artists 176:12 Asa 218:10 219:8 asks 277:16 aspect 91:2 aspects 81:19 aspires 8:10 assaulted 58:14 252:16 assemble 215:20 asset 160:19 assets 125:12 140:1 142:3 assigned 134:9 183:8,16 192:5 assist 84:8 92:6 assistance 187:16 223:9 associate 142:23 association 174:7 244:20	assume 207:9 234:18 assumptions 110:18 112:20 attack 78:24 attacked 159:21 attacks 167:7 225:1 attempt 166:14 223:13 attempting 236:17 252:19 attend 11:10 37:17 62:12 74:24 75:6 185:24 253:12 265:10 268:16,24 269:8 attendance 2:16,17 96:6 262:23 attendants 222:21 attended 222:9 224:7 229:7 235:13 239:4 246:12 248:4 attendee 236:4 267:3 attendees 94:23 95:3 222:15 223:1,4,14,20 252:22 253:17 256:24 257:4,9 attending 40:2 45:16 84:12 attention 97:1 164:5 239:23 Attic 131:12,18 132:9,11 204:19 210:10,17 212:20 213:13 attorneys 112:16 ATV 64:22 ATVS 64:23 audible 209:4 audience 121:20 215:4 August 2:3 Auntie 173:9 authorities 265:12 authority 9:3 69:11,12 99:15 107:17 137:3 193:9,13 194:8 216:20 266:14 authorized 8:12 authorizing 4:12 availability 139:22 avoid 141:13 143:5	awaiting 254:20 award-winning 163:18 aware 127:19 254:15 269:16 272:15 awareness 257:15 B back 13:14 30:1 34:23 35:10 37:4 44:21,22 49:4 66:7,15 71:16 79:10 105:15 114:3 121:23 122:1 123:9 124:9,12 125:1,2,8,14,24 126:20 138:20 140:3 144:21 147:4 197:22 214:20 217:1 221:5 224:17 232:16 233:19 236:18,23 237:9,17 252:22 262:13 272:23 275:16 backdrop 39:7 47:14 143:4,9 background 30:12 72:6 254:22 backs 158:14 bad 103:12 128:24 214:1 273:16 badge 266:7 baffled 175:22 banality 253:23 bands 202:10 banned 172:15 banning 18:7 bar 18:22 70:16 217:3 226:18 Barkley 238:18 240:21,23 barometer 152:24 barricade 110:15 140:15 201:22 252:20 barricaded 8:24 134:24 269:5 barricades 34:24 66:3 67:1,2 110:11 135:9 137:7 139:15 145:19 150:8 200:8 229:24 230:2 269:13,21 barrier 42:19 136:5 248:8 barriers 39:4 42:14
---	---	---

bars 66:17 127:9 133:16 161:11,18 162:8 167:3 185:13 194:15 208:11 242:17 243:2 269:3,9 Bartlett 149:9 157:19 158:4,5, 20 base 25:18 based 141:4 172:16 basic 138:20 185:2 basis 53:19 55:15 154:12 156:1 basketball 54:15 Bastille 38:8 bat 235:17 batons 226:22 bazookas 246:3 beacon 23:14 bear 10:3 beautiful 220:4 began 222:21 230:19 232:6 251:14 begin 5:12 17:21 27:6 29:20 87:2 109:21 121:10 160:22 179:7 214:15 beginning 102:19,24 275:12, 23 276:12 begins 189:15 begs 217:16 behaved 225:13 behaving 231:12 behavior 61:11 103:12,21 107:8,9 110:16 116:10 117:23 129:9,21 152:14,16 170:20 182:9 184:2 185:12,18 187:2 behavioral 25:13 belabor 60:10 belief 124:15 believed 184:16 272:2 Bellevue 159:9 belong 131:21 132:4,5 257:5,9	belonging 89:10 178:24 194:18 belongings 276:4 belongs 175:10 Ben 95:12 Bender 252:9 beneath 194:21 196:4 Benjamin 94:14 95:16 Bennett 218:12 226:1,2 Berlin 39:16 Bethel 5:22 23:20 28:18 29:5, 21,22 46:22 47:4,18 52:1 53:11 54:4,9 55:3 56:1,9 81:14 86:4 90:21 97:18,19 101:5,18 104:1,18 105:14 106:21 107:13,23 108:9,14 109:12,17 110:3 111:10 112:10 114:4 117:14 118:1,6 120:5,16,22 122:8,17 124:20 126:22 127:16 132:8 133:23 136:2 139:17 140:18 144:2,14 146:12,23 151:7 152:5,12 154:4 157:9 165:6,19 166:20 167:21 188:13 227:13 228:2 245:13 275:3,7 Bethel's 90:24 Bethell 205:21 bias 22:18 109:1 183:17 192:13 251:5 big 38:23 40:3,4 68:3 117:15 biggest 27:9 bike 173:1 252:20 bikes 65:4,7,9,15,19 135:5 141:3 201:5 252:21 biological 50:17,24 136:12 birthed 175:15 bit 30:10 62:23 275:8 black 7:12 18:16,21 19:3,23 25:22 50:13 55:16,23 160:10 162:9 171:22,23 173:15 176:4 178:8 179:10 180:4,9 181:11 183:2,4 185:19 186:14 187:7 190:6,20 195:9 199:13 200:13 203:6 206:19 207:1 215:19	216:23 217:5,11,16,20 218:1 219:10,11 221:13 235:19 241:10 242:17 246:18 248:15 257:3,8 268:23 Black-owned 217:3 blacked 208:12 blame 242:14 blaming 205:12 206:2 blanket 189:13 blended 45:13 block 39:5 42:15 45:1 53:12 55:9 66:11 135:15 160:5 228:7 248:10 blockage 223:3 blocked 9:9 135:18 269:4 blocking 42:2,11 44:2 45:7 141:5 230:10 243:4 bloodied 253:5 Blossom 255:4 blueprint 41:24 blurred 52:14 53:3 63:9 250:16 board 23:13 54:16 boards 193:2 bodies 199:13 200:14 215:19 219:2 243:17 body 119:8 132:19 177:24 193:14 body- 190:2 body-worn 104:8 119:11,13 bollards 66:10 bombs 182:23 books 214:20 boom 262:23 born 100:6 borne 77:10 bottles 156:8 bottom 13:6 Bowl 237:21
---	--	--

Bowman 157:20 159:3 178:2, 7 189:2 Bowman's 268:9 box 192:7 Bradley's 222:11 brass 167:22 break 58:1,20 137:6 211:5 breathe 196:5 breathes 243:15 breathing 242:7 breezeway 129:13 Brett 252:9 bricks 224:18 bridge 102:1 Bridgeforth 252:10 257:21,22 Brighton 267:24 bring 13:4 25:12 214:21 224:24 250:1 bringing 20:13 brings 15:5 broad 71:12 115:6,16 159:19 237:20 broaden 165:14 179:18 broken 66:2 147:21,22 152:22 153:7,8 Brooks 16:18,21,22 22:9 80:22 158:10 178:5 brother 117:6 brotherhood 117:7,9 Brotherly 187:20 brought 84:15 135:11 163:20 166:2 228:4 255:11 Brown 7:12 19:3,23 171:23,24 173:15 176:4 179:10 180:10 185:20 186:14 187:8 190:6 195:9 200:14 203:6 206:19 221:13 235:19 241:11 248:15 257:3,8 260:11,24 261:1 268:23 brunt 25:23	brush 39:21 brushed 38:6 brutality 14:4,7 161:21 246:16 248:14 brutalized 58:13 250:24 bubble 226:19 budget 36:10 73:19 203:15 build 78:6 87:21 89:23 96:14 167:1,10 207:6 277:20 build-up 56:11,24 building 19:11 56:12 60:2 87:2 131:13 212:22 229:17 built 22:19 50:2 87:7 bullies 214:17 bunch 199:3 235:6,11 burial 216:16 buried 194:24 212:2 burst 226:20 Bush 159:8 business 85:2 129:15 149:19 187:13 businesses 82:9 83:12 171:20 190:22 194:16 195:15 224:6 268:18,22 269:11 buzzer 214:6 C C.B. 57:17 cadets 25:16 165:9 café 160:4,6 call 2:15 16:15 28:24 62:9 72:8 116:7 149:6 157:17 184:8 187:17 198:8 218:8 220:2 228:15 238:14 244:1 252:6 260:9 261:20 270:7 271:15 278:19 called 2:19 4:1 73:2 120:9 173:2 206:24 207:2 calling 32:12 148:20 168:21 240:7 265:13	calls 46:6 57:17 124:1 149:12 calm 139:1 calmly 233:15 Camac 142:22 200:11 202:10, 11 205:9 216:2 230:7 239:16 camera 119:8,12,13 190:3 cameras 104:8 215:22 cans 235:17 capacity 138:15 236:3 captain 124:17 129:5 134:18 137:5 160:9 161:23 captains 40:20 capture 175:16 249:16 captured 30:16 73:10 car 38:17 39:2,5 42:15 67:13 70:17 201:11 215:17 232:1,5, 7,11 care 14:18 23:4 24:22 40:5 175:18 228:1 266:2 career 154:14 carefully 249:9 cares 27:23 188:18 carjacking 70:12,15 Carpet 93:19 carried 10:24 14:16 carry 265:7,9 carrying 181:12 195:2 cars 60:21 129:16 135:17 173:4 202:6 248:12 case 57:21 70:8 120:11 137:9 162:24 cases 60:19 72:24 126:1 259:9 category 107:12 202:23 cattle 176:8 248:9 caused 141:6,8,15 causing 51:16 caution 139:24 celebrants 222:15
---	--	--

celebrate 176:16 187:23 196:5 221:4 223:15,21 224:5 236:12 259:18 262:17 celebrated 168:19 celebrating 55:23 232:2 236:16 238:1 celebration 14:1 15:4 84:4, 17,24 89:24 181:18 192:18 220:17 238:9 251:12 celebrations 5:17 9:14 10:16 14:15 17:6 83:8,15 84:14 93:22 96:10 228:11 229:8,9 celebratory 152:3,10 277:23 cell 130:23 censorship 217:19 center 19:11 24:2 30:22 40:18 55:14 57:15 75:21 131:12,19 158:22 161:5 204:20 210:17 212:20 213:13 215:23 centered 75:20 121:1 centers 175:23 central 40:13 41:7 71:17 88:2 centralized 76:8 century 163:5 217:14 ceremonies 10:16 chair 2:20 5:9 16:20,23 20:3,7, 12 21:14 35:12 80:18 102:15 105:19 114:20 121:10 122:12 149:12 278:19 Chairman 26:24 Chairperson 29:24 80:17 90:9 challenge 8:6 49:15 128:18 175:4 273:5 challenges 13:17 49:7 82:23 271:23 272:11 championing 131:18 championship 15:4 chance 40:8 Chancellor 222:17 252:17 change 10:12 15:1 19:5 24:14 32:16 34:19 37:6 69:15 135:24	147:10,11 152:13 188:23 200:16 204:1,9 206:9 213:12 224:17 232:24 235:20 247:16 272:9 changed 30:13 69:17 181:8 209:7 chaos 209:15 250:22 chapter 33:21 110:4 164:15 chapters 164:18 charge 105:23 132:19 246:24 charged 246:21 charging 64:4 247:23 Charles 163:17 chasing 64:22 check 192:7 chemical 50:24 136:12 Cherry 255:3 Chestnut 131:14,20 132:3 228:8 Chicago 164:19 chief 75:24 134:18 137:2,3,7 139:8 141:18 247:1,18 chief's 247:11 child 57:22 58:12 children 55:21 214:17 242:10, 14 250:17 chirping 59:21 choice 171:8 195:21 choices 135:20 140:16 choose 177:17,18,20 251:20 252:1 chooses 210:22 choosing 213:5 chose 203:4 254:18 chosen 8:12 181:6 194:24 207:7 208:2 Chris 149:8 157:18 158:5,19 168:5 171:10 277:12 Christian 252:8,14 261:12	Christiana 244:3 246:11 Christopher 226:9,11 Circa 215:24 circle 249:8 circles 42:12 circulate 277:9,12 cis-presenting 237:5 citations 191:9 cities 254:24 citizen 193:3 citizens 167:6 177:1 203:21 245:2,12 city 4:12,16 7:16 8:3 17:15 19:6,17,21 21:2 22:3 23:3,9 27:14 28:11 29:7,17 30:22 40:18 41:14 53:20 55:14 57:16 71:22 75:21 81:6,14 82:7,14, 20 83:10,22 84:2 85:16 86:19 89:12 90:14,16 91:17 92:4,16 94:3,20 96:18,23 115:8 122:23 131:15 132:5 160:14 161:5 162:3 168:6 169:2 171:15 172:7,9 173:14 175:22 178:15 187:19,20 189:19 190:18 191:17,23 194:4,7 197:17 199:15 205:15 207:14 210:1 212:19 213:8,20 215:8 224:10 232:3 233:4 235:14,24 236:14 237:15,24 240:15 241:13,24 247:21 253:14 254:6,14 255:16 256:5,19,21 257:4,8,11 258:1 259:10,15 271:24 273:20 274:7,8 city's 14:23 15:14 81:21 82:4 91:4 92:14 95:7 96:9 122:19 164:20 236:8 citywide 88:20 Civic 244:20 civil 9:24 15:7 159:23 180:24 191:2 civilians 225:3 251:3 claim 247:1 claimed 228:7 claiming 174:6
---	---	--

claims 9:12 179:4 clarification 46:20 clarify 69:22 146:1 205:18 clarity 53:22 classes 64:18 Classic 93:23 clear 7:16,19 18:12,23 44:18 86:15 134:21 146:8 149:22 174:8 179:5 192:16 210:4 211:11 223:24 225:8 227:15 236:23 237:6 239:22 246:24 247:14,17 248:13 271:1 clearing 236:20 Clerk 2:20,24 3:4,7,11,14,17 4:11 29:4 149:8 157:18 198:13 214:5 218:10 228:17 238:16 244:2 252:8 260:10,18 climate 102:12 106:2 119:21 122:3 238:6 climbed 61:3 climbing 201:22 235:16 237:23 clip 47:13 54:21,23 116:20 118:18 clips 108:20 close 94:19 212:6 248:6 269:3,12 closed 60:14 217:4 248:7 269:5 closet 217:2 closing 271:16 closure 95:9 closures 92:8 clubs 172:16 185:14 Co-chair 168:7 co-chairs 166:15 coach 54:16 code 18:6,11 coffee 160:7,11 coherent 208:20	coincidence 215:20 cold 100:5,17 102:7 collaboration 82:24 87:4 88:14 96:24 collaborative 85:21 93:14 colleague 16:12 106:4,7 colleagues 5:13 15:17 81:13 90:20 103:13 155:18 159:2 164:24 274:20 collect 170:16 collecting 109:2 collection 191:4 194:15 collective 83:9 177:16 196:10 collectively 23:24 college 233:6 colloquially 215:14 color 26:1 132:24 162:15 169:3 173:8,22 colorism 23:12 Colt 164:8 combination 272:4 comfortable 99:16 coming-of-age 207:24 coming-out 206:17 command 166:18 190:1 commend 28:18 114:8 comment 6:1 144:9 198:7,9 214:3 234:17 261:5 267:16 271:7,13 commenters 218:9 238:15 260:9 comments 182:16 183:9 196:21 198:14 218:6 241:6 270:18 commercial 128:20 Commish 108:7 119:19 Commission 122:19 163:6 178:10 commissioner 5:22 23:20 27:23 28:15,18 29:5,14,21,23	31:17 32:1 33:17,19 35:3,5,6, 8,11 40:16 41:2 46:22 47:4,18 52:1 53:11 54:4,9 55:3 56:1,9 69:13,14 76:5,18 78:4 81:13 86:4 90:21,24 97:18,19 101:5, 18 104:1,18 105:14 106:21 107:13,23 108:9,14 109:12,17 110:3 111:10,23 112:10 114:2, 4 117:14 118:1,6 120:5,10,16, 22 121:4 122:8,13,17,21 124:20 126:18,22 127:16 129:6 130:20 132:8 133:23 136:2 139:17 140:18 144:2,14 146:12,23 148:17 149:17 151:7 152:5,12 154:4 157:9 163:8,16 165:5,19 166:20 167:21 178:9 188:13 202:9 203:14 205:20 225:18 227:12 228:2 245:12 261:9 275:3,7 Commissioner's 249:10 commitment 76:14 81:22 83:2 85:18 97:4 174:12 177:15 commitments 174:15 committed 87:12 89:10 96:19 committee 2:4 3:23 4:4,5,13 20:22 30:5 33:11,14,16 81:3 85:14 90:11 105:19 158:7 165:22 166:1,10,23 168:8 176:22 177:2 178:4 271:9 278:17,18,23 common 161:11 248:5 communicated 108:18 111:9 263:19 communication 78:1 83:24 84:5 86:14 87:17 88:17 147:20 157:4 237:15 communications 262:6 263:3 communities 82:16 89:20 160:15 170:14 175:20 185:23 193:22 254:1 257:10 community 5:24 6:12,16 7:11 10:15 12:18,21 13:8,19 14:4 17:19 19:11 24:22 25:21 26:9 31:5,6,15,22,24 32:3,14 33:10 36:19 37:20 52:19 57:8 79:1 81:1,22 82:6,10 83:13,18 84:1, 6,10,11,23 85:3,12,19 86:10, 19 87:14,22,24 88:11 89:9,13
---	---	---

90:4 91:6 94:1 96:7 102:22 103:3,6,11,24 109:6 110:20 111:3 127:8,11 131:5 132:16 134:5,7 145:16 147:19 148:6 155:9 158:13,21 160:19 163:11,15 165:23 166:6 167:11 172:12 178:4,14 179:3, 18 180:6,7,17 181:2,3,15 182:14 183:7,17 185:2 187:15 188:9,16,19 195:7 198:4 200:2 204:17 205:14 206:6,13,14 207:3,8,12 208:1 209:24 212:15 213:6,14 218:24 219:3, 12,13 222:6 223:15 224:11,14, 15,23 226:20 227:4,11,14,18 233:5 235:3 238:4 246:18,20 247:10,23 248:16,18 253:11, 13 254:3,8,19 257:13 258:13, 17 261:17,20 264:12 265:2 274:22 278:2,5 community's 161:11 278:7 community-based 88:22 community-oriented 213:17 compare 191:18 compared 237:11 250:19 competency 88:16 192:3 competent 15:9 competing 15:8 complainant 72:23 complaint 72:14 184:6,15 189:7 190:3 237:13 249:23 complaints 36:8 72:11,12 73:3,5,7 104:4 191:10 193:15 complete 40:17 76:3 118:23 227:19 complexity 92:11 compliant 66:2 75:13 250:21 251:2 component 64:24 65:11 components 98:22 142:5 199:16 comport 77:13 comprehensive 88:18 compressing 208:23	concealing 9:2 concentration 217:5 concern 51:16 115:24 152:4, 11 167:9 183:13 188:22 207:17 250:9 254:2,12 concerned 180:20 212:5 237:22 concerns 9:11 10:24 84:21 87:10 110:9,10 171:7 173:24 174:4 179:9 181:20 185:13 195:5 223:4 258:19 271:21 272:3 concert 93:20 concluded 278:24 concludes 271:8 278:16 conclusion 232:19 271:11 conclusions 190:12 conditions 8:2 10:22 12:1 152:13 226:8 condone 215:8 conduct 10:5 19:1 70:10 180:22 186:10 188:24 189:11 190:1 191:21 192:10 conducting 88:20 confidence 27:21 41:6 157:7 187:13 confident 41:4 155:13 Confidentiality 189:11 confirm 245:13 conflating 146:9 confrontation 201:16 confused 55:1 56:8 241:3 confusing 116:7 Congo 215:15 216:13 congregate 132:2,6 200:17 congregated 216:13 congregating 200:18 connect 215:22 connected 83:5	connection 84:1 consciously 167:17 consciousness 223:6 consequences 187:10 188:23 193:20 194:11 consideration 23:18 considerations 87:19 considered 102:22 103:10 consistent 55:15 179:15 180:9 consistently 89:18 186:2 constant 34:17 constantly 43:3 constituent 11:16 constituents 176:11 constitutional 216:10 constitutionally 159:23 consulted 10:21 contact 92:5 contacted 184:3 249:21 contained 176:7 200:4 containers 253:20 containment 187:1 contempt 183:15 context 62:23 114:16 115:12 118:3 176:1 continually 203:18 continuation 171:13 continue 28:12 55:5 77:16 88:4 89:22 97:7 172:3 184:4 197:15 199:19 211:4 259:5 continued 87:13,20 96:5 162:5 continues 162:7 175:19 239:11 continuing 48:23 60:7 84:19 89:13 278:1 continuous 129:20 196:24
---	--	---

continuum 58:3 contradicting 123:7 contradictory 124:22 control 4:17 46:2 60:23,24 62:16 63:5,12 94:6 95:6 129:1, 2 138:13 147:9 152:15 161:10 167:13,16 175:16 247:4 controlled 12:9 161:3 200:5 227:17 251:19 convene 27:1 convened 84:24 convenience 177:20 convening 204:12 converge 61:21 convergence 141:9 convergent 129:8 converging 62:15 conversation 13:5 30:20 31:3,21 44:22 54:24 58:15 61:8 63:1 64:9 68:12 71:1 72:11 75:3 86:22 89:6 114:23 116:2 121:10 134:6 144:18,22 155:11 178:21 270:22 conversations 18:3 31:10 34:18 35:20 36:1 68:9 85:1 87:6 140:4 174:24 177:4 188:14 189:20 210:6,9 coordinate 124:4 coordinated 76:9 93:13 97:9 256:1 coordinates 92:12 coordinating 42:23 94:9 coordination 10:4 83:21 88:10 92:19 94:19 216:4,5,6 coordinator 255:10 cop 31:5 32:23 41:1 184:2 cops 11:18 68:6 173:1 199:3 230:3,4,10 233:14,24 234:2, 10,19,22 235:9,17 corner 70:13,16 110:15 145:5 corners 246:24	cornerstone 147:18 corralled 241:12,13 correct 124:16 191:23 corrective 189:9 correctly 151:21 193:5 corrupt 247:15 cost 9:23 36:8,10 73:16,17 203:15 costing 203:1 Costs 73:21 Council 2:9,10 4:2,13 7:16 26:10 57:18 189:19 190:16 194:4,7 207:18 222:5 236:1 254:6 259:7 Councilman 2:2,22 3:9,21 4:24 16:11 20:2 26:15,22 28:21 29:13 51:21,23 53:21 54:7,12 55:11 56:3 57:13 80:10,19 97:17 100:1,23 101:6,14,24 104:11 105:13 107:10,21 108:6,11,16 109:14, 23 111:6 112:7 113:10 114:1,6 117:20 118:4 119:16 120:6,8, 18 121:3 122:11 149:15 151:22 152:7 153:15 155:19, 24 156:14 157:11 271:12,17 Councilmember 3:4,8,12,15, 18 4:3 5:4,5 16:17,21,24 20:5, 8,13 22:8 25:6 26:17 27:2 46:15 80:22 81:11 90:19 98:12 102:14,18 114:20 115:21 121:8,9 159:17 177:11 178:5 199:7 219:15 221:20 268:7 270:20 271:15,18 275:24 Councilmembers 168:6 177:12 204:11 272:6 Councilors 215:6 Councilpeople 218:16 Councilperson 149:12 Councilwoman 3:2,19 5:8 16:2,22 20:11 33:7 46:19,24 47:22 75:2 122:16 126:12,17, 23 127:1,17 128:22 130:19 133:4,20 134:2 135:4 139:12 140:12,19 143:16 144:8,16 145:18 146:17 147:1 149:2,10	151:9,17 157:14,23 196:8,19 197:24 204:3,6 213:22 218:4 221:21 225:22 228:14,22 238:11,21 240:19 243:22 244:6 252:4 260:6,14,20 267:12,19 270:16 271:5,14 274:14 counter 206:16 counterparts 238:8 countless 12:17 75:7 120:23 250:22 country 22:12 23:8,9 175:14 199:18 208:18 259:10 couple 57:2 209:8 240:4 274:16 275:20 courage 219:16 220:4,6 courtyard 230:8 courtyards 43:13 cover 100:20 covering 182:18 coverings 247:8 CPOC 72:14 236:2,7 crackdowns 161:14 crafting 27:3 Cram 35:11 crashed 265:12 create 33:8,21 50:5 68:16 82:23 136:4 153:7 194:4 205:16 211:2 213:10 created 67:2 75:22 86:23 135:23,24 163:17 208:24 creates 37:19 49:14 153:6 213:12 creating 33:3 209:4 credentialing 266:5 credentials 266:23 credibly 192:12 crime 28:10 159:22 cringing 121:23 crises 259:9
---	--	--

crisis 258:12 cross 102:1 Crow 216:1 crowd 4:17 12:8 38:10 51:4,14 57:24 58:23 62:19 63:5,12 69:8,9 71:19 86:6 128:24 137:23,24 138:12 139:19 181:24 186:9 crowded 8:1 209:13 crowds 8:22 9:18 68:18 71:13 185:15 250:20 crucial 174:23 cruising 161:14 crying 232:9 culminated 162:23 cultural 88:16 192:2 culture 89:9 116:22,24 117:3 118:2,5,10,13 165:1 181:1 200:16 curious 102:19 103:16 current 166:12 209:6 cursed 156:8 custody 163:2 customarily 40:23 58:18 65:6 customary 49:1 65:18 Cycling 93:23	162:17 186:7 266:1 dangers 254:20 Daniel 228:19 Danny 236:1 dared 201:22 data 191:4 263:3 day 7:2 13:21 18:15 22:20 26:5 30:13,14 34:8,14,21 35:2,21, 23 38:8 46:11,12 48:10 49:16 51:18 94:23 98:9 99:11 103:2, 9,13,20 117:17 118:14 124:19 125:23 127:24 142:16 145:14, 21 150:1 159:16,18 162:7 171:5 198:4 200:9 202:6 204:20 221:7 225:7,8,10 236:12 241:1 242:18 243:20 253:9,15 254:3,9,17 255:7 258:24 261:23 265:15,23 273:14 274:18 276:5 278:13 daylight 115:6,16 days 6:13 12:15 34:21 200:8 227:24 240:4 de-escalate 154:6,8,10 170:10 245:20 de-escalates 63:19 68:18 de-escalating 155:16,17 de-escalation 153:22 162:12 190:2 192:4 209:10 234:15 251:7 de-escalator 155:3 deadlines 192:17 deal 53:17 57:15 62:14 71:13 dealers 161:3,6 dealing 182:24 221:12 269:10 dealt 57:13 dear 173:9 219:14 261:24 death 26:4 173:8 decade 255:14 decades 9:20 14:5 19:6 163:7 171:14 decided 39:13 200:6 231:17 259:3	decides 247:6 decision 31:20 62:18 67:7 113:6 134:19 139:13,16 208:21 decision-making 258:14 decisions 52:5 135:20 150:9 151:2,5,20 189:24 211:1 259:12 deck 142:6 deconstruct 23:22 deconstructed 25:18 dedicated 95:4 deep 7:8 deep-rooted 248:22 deeply 12:24 17:11 19:13 181:5 defacing 253:18 defeat 40:9 defensive 34:12 Define 54:8 degree 100:18 217:22 dehumanize 175:16 dehumanized 238:5 dehumanizes 181:1 deliver 193:24 delivering 170:13 demand 176:23 demanded 6:12 14:10 223:1 demanding 173:4 223:22 demands 175:11 213:11 277:10 Democratic 258:4 demographic 160:13 demographics 191:16 demonize 7:20 demonized 102:5,8 demonstrated 207:14 demonstrating 212:11
D		
D.C. 163:19 255:4,5 daily 54:19 99:17,18 242:7 243:15 245:5 Dales 35:6 111:24 damaged 14:20 damages 179:16 damned 202:17 dance 128:7 221:3 dancing 127:14,15 133:22 199:7 215:16 dangerous 129:9 135:2		

denied 212:20 dense 8:22 denying 119:17 department 4:21 6:5 9:8 10:2 13:18 17:13,17 18:4,9 25:14 29:6 31:19 32:3 33:5,22 34:2 70:7 73:18 78:22 86:3 92:22, 23,24 93:1 109:20 113:5 116:22,23 117:4 119:22 120:20 122:4 136:15 150:22 152:1,8 155:15 160:24 161:5 162:5,23 165:8 166:11,19,21, 24 167:18,21 168:17 170:8 182:7 190:23 210:2,7,14,19 211:16 212:6 247:15 249:19 255:20 department's 151:4 164:24 165:7 departmental 197:8 departments 10:5 38:13 82:21 83:22 85:17 92:17 93:3 245:11 254:14 255:17,22 256:2,10,19 257:15,17 depend 185:4 depending 92:10 110:12 187:4 depends 83:9 depicted 97:24 deployed 4:16 103:1,10 227:4 deployment 9:16 43:5 49:22 189:24 191:10 deployments 38:22 191:5 deputy 33:19 35:4 41:2 76:6 122:21 129:6 132:10 165:5 Derwin 181:6 descend 200:1 216:12 descended 56:15 199:23 202:3 describe 12:7 153:17,21 162:15 183:5 describing 110:17,22 130:18 131:22 226:8 description 123:4	deserve 176:14 213:7 217:12 238:6 251:17 deserves 176:15 213:6 deserving 175:18 design 176:3 designed 9:21 175:15 193:24 desire 86:17 despair 227:2 destination 174:12 detail 51:4 71:16 97:1 125:15 126:13 136:20,21 137:15 details 64:22 92:9 determination 113:1 152:19 determine 15:1 74:14 94:2 112:2 152:1,8 191:20 195:22 determined 104:9 137:8 deterrent 42:9 68:17 developed 10:22 89:19 166:16 developing 88:18 165:21 dialogue 84:20 87:8 died 163:1 245:8 difference 24:7 75:11 differences 160:16 differently 180:11,12,13 difficult 16:8 156:24 183:5 272:9 dignity 88:1 89:15 175:12 180:2 181:21 185:3 195:22 diligence 132:14 254:7 diligently 6:7 dinner 229:22 230:13 Diore 252:24 direct 18:2 76:4 233:21 direction 121:6 Directive 166:3 directly 6:3 85:19 159:10 179:13 215:22 237:21 259:1	Director 29:8,9 81:5,15 90:15, 22 158:20 164:21 204:19 261:3 dirt 252:21 disabilities 179:20 disability 190:8 191:1 disaggregated 191:14 disagree 138:2 144:3 disappear 195:5 disappointed 253:7 disarming 138:13 disciplinary 99:4,23 113:5 189:4 discipline 113:24 disclaimer 16:12 disclose 53:5 disclosed 53:7 discomfort 175:10 discriminate 251:5 discrimination 32:10 172:14 discriminatory 171:19 discuss 77:24 185:6 194:6 discussed 189:5 discussing 174:21 discussion 86:2 discussions 46:1,3 86:16 123:23,24 disengaging 156:3 disgusted 183:7 dismantle 22:15 disobey 167:18 disorderly 70:10 disparities 179:12 191:23 disparity 187:9 dispersed 50:18 display 214:18 264:21 disproportionately 171:22
--	---	--

disregarded 238:4	drinking 67:17 160:11 253:21	effectively 10:24 75:17
disrespect 72:1,7 184:20	drive 32:16,17 38:17 42:22 52:4	effort 25:2
disrespectful 32:24 144:20 179:15 184:2 188:6	driving 232:4	efforts 19:5 83:10 87:20 88:3, 12,16 89:14 175:3
disruptions 150:6	drove 38:9	elected 13:2 21:2
disruptive 185:11,21	drug 161:3,6	electric 68:16
distinguished 44:19	drugs 162:21	element 138:12
distributed 11:4	due 112:11,13 132:13 166:18 254:7	elevate 82:17
district 54:17 98:21 131:7 208:10	dust 170:16	Em 218:11 226:2
distrust 206:12	duties 99:18	email 11:5
disturbed 17:11	duty 39:22 52:15 53:4 58:7,9 106:24 107:7,9 118:16 211:24 249:1	emails 262:6
disturbing 18:15	DVIC 215:23	embark 33:2
diverse 82:16	dynamic 49:13 160:19	embarrassment 264:23
diversity 83:17 90:2 166:8		emergencies 222:23
divest 216:23		Emergency 255:17
divided 181:18		emeritus 158:20
Division 40:14		emotional 251:6
DJ 66:18 130:24		emphasized 87:23 89:18
DJS 128:7 202:11		employees 186:16 190:22
document 184:9		EMS 255:20
documented 8:18		encounter 65:16 184:22
documents 93:11		encountered 9:9 242:4
dollars 251:4 263:17		encountering 24:20
doors 205:9 208:14		encounters 167:5
doubt 277:19		encourage 192:11
downplay 7:21		end 13:21,22 34:15 78:9 97:22 119:9 142:16 148:16 179:8 234:14 245:23 265:4 272:23 276:17
downtown 54:17 130:9 241:20 242:11,15 243:14		ended 123:6 146:7 151:9 195:6 256:15
dozen 222:19		endemic 161:22
dozens 11:8 116:18 230:2 248:2		endured 14:5 277:6
draft 95:21		energy 259:6
dress 18:5,11		enforcement 7:10,21 14:12 86:8,20 87:21 100:20 102:13 106:3 179:17 182:4 185:7 186:22 187:7 190:4 191:22 193:10 199:21 206:13 245:18
drew 173:9		
drill 217:24		
drinkers 160:7		

E
Eagle 229:9
Eagles 235:14 237:19
earlier 73:2 87:16 144:23 167:1 172:12 174:17 209:3
early 13:12 31:16 45:23 49:8 108:18 123:21 126:16 161:12 162:19 165:24 206:17,23
 earmuffs 100:21
earning 116:3
ears 248:20
easier 145:20
easily 111:15
easy 49:23 119:20 124:23 245:9
echelon 76:2
Ed 163:9
edge 187:9
Education 105:19
effect 21:19 182:21
effective 77:15 78:7 153:11 170:3 209:9

enforcement's 245:19 enforcing 218:17 engage 119:5 156:7,11 253:11 engagement 37:21 82:12 84:1 87:17 88:19 96:8 163:4 engaging 152:16 154:17 234:9 engines 233:24 England 164:18 enhance 33:9 95:5 enhancing 88:17 enormously 8:1 enslaved 215:12 216:12 ensure 27:12,15 74:18 76:7,10 82:13 91:23 93:11 97:8 149:24 216:20 254:7 ensuring 83:3 91:9 entails 13:20 entering 188:8 enters 179:24 195:18 entertainment 96:7 208:10 entire 29:15 41:24 79:11 81:24 179:3 181:3,24 182:13 186:9, 20 188:16 264:18,24 265:23 entities 42:4 77:23 142:4 174:5 175:8,11 entitled 217:17 entity 98:23 entry 172:15 environment 113:20 equal 178:23 186:20,21 238:8 equally 182:12 195:17 equitable 178:17 equitably 190:5 equity 13:19 190:15 194:20 era 161:13 206:18 215:7 eradicate 161:8 erase 240:16 249:14	Erin 229:10 235:14 Err 228:3 escalate 240:1 escalated 9:15 12:9 escalating 167:23 170:9 234:10 escalation 167:5 essential 6:2 278:3 essentially 234:5 235:11 establish 14:22 194:11 established 82:17 95:9 establishing 88:13 89:1 establishments 186:4 191:20 evaluate 86:1 89:2 evening 6:19 12:1 205:1 208:7 209:20 event 11:17 13:24 15:5 23:1,5 24:5,10,18 35:17 36:15,16,18, 20 37:13 39:23 40:4 41:17 42:17,18 43:10,17,19 44:7 47:8 48:17 49:12 50:19 57:1 67:23,24 68:5 73:20 74:3,11, 12 76:1,9 77:1 79:22 81:18 83:10,19 84:20 85:4,23 86:20 89:7 91:7,24 92:3,11,13 94:5, 20,21 95:2,8,13,17 96:12 97:11 109:7 110:5 124:3 125:9,10 133:10 134:10 146:22 151:12 152:3,10 205:14 222:10 223:19 235:9 250:11 256:21 257:1 265:5,10, 16 266:7,24 269:22 271:24 273:11,21 276:20 277:22,23 event's 96:5 123:22 events 4:18 7:23 15:12 19:10 27:14 28:13 29:8 37:3 39:13 44:20 45:21 49:16 66:21 67:19 74:15,16 75:7,23 77:5 81:16 84:12 90:15 91:9,12,16,18,21 92:6,14,20 93:6,12,16 94:1,12 95:11,19 96:19,22 97:8 136:5 142:19 151:14 153:24 168:17 190:18 224:12 225:5 233:6 235:13 248:3 253:13 255:3,19, 24 268:20 269:9 270:3 272:19, 21 274:2,3	eventually 180:23 231:16 272:22 everybody's 129:24 everyone's 58:21 evidence 130:13 264:3 evolving 48:10 exacerbated 264:20 exacerbates 238:3 exact 180:19 examine 9:11 189:24 examining 4:15 65:5 168:15 exceeds 94:22 excellence 97:6 excessive 174:1 222:24 exchange 124:3 excited 225:14 exclude 177:3 Excluding 175:2 exclusionary 174:9 excuse 8:7 100:19 189:13 201:2 excuses 34:12 224:20,21 225:15 247:18 249:11 264:2 execute 139:10,11 executed 94:18 97:9 execution 83:20 92:19 138:17 256:3 executive 29:9 79:10 81:5 204:19 261:3 exercise 170:12 exercising 9:3 exist 11:20 160:12 176:16 192:22 193:7 197:4,18,20 226:17 227:23 240:13 existed 217:6 existence 8:5 217:18 240:16 existing 164:17 exists 173:17
--	--	--

exit 9:1 239:21 240:13 exited 233:11 exits 230:10 expand 33:13 84:9 expanded 87:18 95:1 96:2 expanding 37:18 88:8,15 111:21 176:24 expansive 111:13 expect 17:3,21 124:24 166:24 246:13 expectation 19:15 147:3 expectations 278:8 expected 148:3 170:17 249:20 262:23 expecting 180:1 experience 7:7 11:7 95:3 137:8 138:5 159:24 162:10 175:20 181:14 187:8 214:21 226:5 232:20 233:8 236:6,17 237:4 258:12 259:1 experienced 5:16 159:13,15 171:15 183:24 220:20 229:13 230:23 246:15 261:14 experiences 32:6 82:18 85:5 86:11 134:13 162:16 275:1 experiencing 179:23 180:7 249:18 expertise 274:24 explain 8:11 10:10 108:17 115:5 224:21 explanation 230:18 231:11 explore 160:17 exploring 88:21 explosive 50:19 136:11 expose 113:13 184:19 exposed 179:9 express 183:14 229:10 235:15 261:15 expressed 84:22 264:14 expressing 159:22 192:13	expression 17:5 83:16 expressions 121:21 extends 82:24 extent 23:8 external 104:4 extraordinary 6:15 extreme 185:10 extremely 46:13 exuberance 226:19 eye 235:18 253:17,19	Fan 93:17 fans 75:12 237:20 fantastic 148:8 Fashion 131:7 fault 131:1 fear 17:8 176:17 181:17 195:2 206:7,9 209:14 216:11 220:19, 20 226:24 227:2,17 250:15 feared 184:18 featured 94:24 features 15:20 feel 7:5 21:22 67:20 103:7 116:1,5 180:14 181:3 183:10 187:22 189:15 195:10,13 206:8 221:6 224:15 243:11 259:11,18 feeling 147:16 feels 83:4 183:5 238:4 240:14 250:5 267:1 fellow 171:12 177:23 fellowship 169:18 172:13,24 173:12 felt 11:17,20 12:5,6 21:20 52:14 69:4 172:23 226:19 239:23 241:16 244:15 266:1,2 275:15 fencing 46:2 festival 27:16 36:24 37:14 43:8 49:3 81:20 93:18,20 94:13,17 95:16,20 96:21 169:7,12 202:7 252:16 255:11 256:5,15 261:14 262:17 269:22 273:23 festivals 93:24 254:23 269:23 festivities 4:23 39:8 fiasco 219:24 field 48:5 64:21 FIFA 21:6 24:6 50:15 75:9,11, 12 76:12 93:17 250:20 fight 58:9 115:7 fighting 55:7 60:6 75:15 115:3 127:14 129:13 153:3,4,6,7
F		
face 25:23 26:4 100:21 101:12 247:8 faced 21:20 25:21 159:14 160:2 172:17 259:3 faces 9:2 52:21 182:18 facial 121:21 facilitates 256:22 facing 49:7 177:8 246:4 258:21 fact 79:19 124:14 140:24 165:3 198:23 199:5 201:17 257:14 262:21 263:7 factor 22:10 74:6 facts 14:23 28:9 factually 262:24 failed 10:17 14:24 227:13 257:12 failure 205:3,13 fainting 223:7 fair 19:8 189:12 Fairfield 265:18 fairly 9:12 faith 23:19 203:11 fall 61:6 107:11 familiar 170:15 192:20 family 207:7 208:2 261:21		

182:8 185:10 206:3 250:14,17 fights 9:9 58:5 figure 59:9,12 61:24 62:4 106:17 115:21 116:21 117:11 243:9,10 276:6 277:20 figured 224:10 figuring 28:7 file 249:17 filed 184:14 filled 7:2 160:6 final 153:16 finally 6:6 201:21 237:1 251:15 find 35:12 66:9 102:10 134:15 148:1 153:11 172:11 173:12 204:21 208:2 finding 256:8 findings 193:18 194:10 finish 51:20 fire 92:23 94:5 136:15 251:9 255:20 Fireworks 93:21 firsthand 12:23 180:8 flag 173:16,23 174:10 flags 132:18 179:8 194:19,22 196:1,4 223:24 flash 53:16 246:2 flexibility 139:9 float 47:1,3 275:23 276:2 floor 31:18 foam 202:13 focus 45:23 91:7 focused 88:6 120:24 121:5 123:21 178:20 210:9 folks 19:24 37:9 41:21 45:11 48:7 50:2 52:6 53:2 59:10,11, 20 63:22 65:2,24 75:6 78:15 98:15 102:4 110:18 122:4 125:19 126:2,19 128:1 138:4 140:23 141:10,15,21 142:12 143:14 148:24 152:15,22	153:3 154:23 168:21 171:24 177:5,7 197:5 206:19 209:23 210:6 218:1 268:23 269:8 272:15 275:20 follow 134:11 251:9 266:21 foot 252:21 footage 190:3 footprint 37:16 95:1,9 96:2 FOP 112:16 force 7:1 92:15 93:6 119:3,5 134:22 135:1 148:23 171:8 209:5 225:6 234:16 254:9 forced 51:2 forcing 246:22 forefront 13:5 foremost 98:1 109:18 219:6 forget 192:8 forgot 275:12 formal 163:3 184:6 190:16 formed 163:6 164:15 forms 259:22 forthrightness 215:9 forward 5:15 20:14 28:16,20 30:17 46:9 56:21 57:6 74:4 75:19 85:21 88:3 114:15,21 147:13 148:4 150:14 157:7 166:17 259:14 263:24 273:20 274:12 foster 82:11 fostering 89:11 found 110:5 169:16 172:21 foundation 87:3 founder 261:3 Fourth 192:1 fragmented 208:19 Fran 35:5 France 38:9 Frank 160:23 Frankie 222:10	Franklin 94:14 95:12,16 free 17:5 19:8 169:14 172:3 215:12 217:18 248:2 251:17 259:18,20 271:2 Freedmen 216:13 freedom 194:18 freedoms 176:14 freely 215:20 friend 81:10 219:14 226:24 237:2 239:13 friend's 229:16 233:11 236:18 237:10 friendly 167:11 friends 12:20 159:1,12,21 168:8 169:15 220:18 221:2 239:19 261:12 frightened 7:4 front 24:2 76:20 141:24 142:1 168:11 frustrated 121:15 276:19 frustration 194:2 frustrations 84:22 full 27:21 41:6 49:11 112:24 142:6 190:10 247:8 249:7 253:19 257:15 fully 69:3 72:4 154:3 155:12, 13 254:15 256:6 fun 127:10 220:17 235:2 fund 73:21 251:4 funding 131:16 212:21 fusion 215:23 future 87:15 88:2 96:15 177:4 210:24 239:11 246:7 254:11 259:23 273:10 G gained 223:6 gallery 168:9 Gambrel 260:11,19 game 24:6 144:11 216:9
--	--	---

garage 60:16,18,22 127:13 garbage 199:4 Garland 161:17 gate 71:19 gather 9:18 14:10 54:19 55:14 115:10,11 176:15 186:15 226:15 gathered 9:22 187:4 gathering 15:3 85:11 115:13 152:2,9 188:9 200:3 215:13 Gauthier 275:24 gave 78:22 109:24 113:16 132:19 218:19 275:1 gay 33:23 161:18 163:18 164:9,16 181:11 183:1,2 Gayborhood 6:5,18 7:6 9:19, 22 14:1 18:22 19:2 30:23 37:4, 11 40:24 41:1,11 44:1,9,16 45:1,15 48:13,19,21 49:5,11 51:3 52:9,20 56:16 57:9 63:4 67:23 71:8 74:13,19 78:15,24 123:10 124:9,12 125:9 126:10, 16 127:7 136:20 142:9 145:3, 12 150:19 162:19 163:2 167:3 168:20 169:5,18 172:11 174:1, 7 179:2,24 182:20 183:23 186:20 191:7 194:14 197:3,16, 20,21 199:24 202:5 203:8 205:8 206:20 207:1 208:9,15 215:19 216:24 217:3,8 221:4, 5,14 222:11 223:17,20 232:18 236:13,16 238:2 240:8,12 242:6 243:1,4 244:14 248:3 254:21 255:12 256:12,14 262:16,18,24 265:15 266:16 268:5,8 270:10 272:13,24 273:14,22 275:17 276:22 gender 191:14 general 135:7 222:16 generations 14:9 22:13 gentlemen 32:19 35:22 38:15 43:7 44:15 50:13 52:13 71:13 gentrified 169:8 genuine 169:23 George 159:8	Germantown 197:5 get all 24:16 Gilbert 164:8 girls 231:24 232:8 give 13:8 36:4 69:2 77:5 99:14 107:19 108:21 109:7 198:3 218:21,22 224:21 giving 20:1 78:11 glad 245:12 globe 23:10 gloves 100:24 goal 33:21 45:14 63:13 80:4,5 110:4 130:2,4 138:7 139:18 142:11 145:17 164:17 177:16 goals 88:1 goddamnit 263:15 Golphin 267:23,24 271:4 good 2:12 5:11 20:5 28:15 29:13,23 30:3 40:8 48:13 50:1 59:18 74:21 80:16 90:8 132:21,22 139:15 145:14,21 155:15 158:4,19 166:22 168:5 178:2 204:10 216:9 218:15 219:7 220:12 238:22 240:22 244:7 273:15 goons 245:3 gotcha 121:17 Gottschall 228:18 233:1 government 8:9 9:3 10:18 15:10 82:8,20 83:5 258:16 Governor 178:10 grace 78:12 218:11,23 222:4 graduating 164:10 grandfathered 73:20 grapple 21:23 grateful 233:7 Gray 228:18 229:3,4 great 43:21 48:5,8 155:3 165:19 167:9 243:20 274:9 greater 27:17 42:8 85:7 87:19	Greek 125:18,19 127:2 green 42:12 grew 14:6 204:15 grief 181:12 ground 8:23 210:19 216:16 253:4 261:15 262:1 265:14 group 12:5 50:10 51:1 54:2,5 56:13,14 57:3 63:23 65:21 77:18 78:6 150:17 161:1 166:2 180:21 186:24 194:5 231:19 232:5 237:5 groups 54:18 65:1 130:14 161:9 grow 213:17 grown 165:8 205:12 206:6 growth 37:23 96:5,16 guess 113:23 128:22 139:2 220:22 240:7 guests 171:17 178:6 guidance 134:8 guidances 262:7 guide 33:4 89:22 guns 246:3 Guy 228:19 235:24 236:1 guys 147:6 224:16 233:18,19 242:11 243:8
H		
H.W. 159:8 half 217:14 halfway 278:5 Hall 41:14 162:3 254:14 256:19 halls 173:21 hand 253:6 handle 145:7 256:13 hang 196:2 203:7 hanging 61:4 206:18 235:1 happen 17:20 19:19 28:8,17,		

19 45:22 69:19 113:6 123:15 143:7,8 147:12 150:4 154:11 157:8 174:19 184:17 203:3 239:10 253:23 262:11,12 266:17 happened 6:22 12:7 14:19 17:22 19:16 21:18 28:1 34:10, 14 47:2,23 105:20 108:1,3,8 115:19 119:8,9 123:5 131:23 142:24 143:3 150:3 177:5 179:6 183:20 184:9 200:24 203:1 204:24 207:13 209:19 227:10 249:14 250:3 258:10 264:5,7,16,19 268:4 269:18 272:2 273:8,17 happening 42:17,18 52:7 69:4 78:14 115:15 134:6 146:9 147:12 200:21 262:18 269:14 270:24 happy 25:8 81:20 90:6 132:9 Har 16:20 harass 161:10 harassed 143:20 200:13 206:21 226:11 harassing 19:23 harassment 14:7 18:21 161:20 162:1 172:18 259:20 hard 13:18 36:21 43:9 52:22 60:3 167:10 212:16 245:4 256:8 272:9 hard-fought 163:11 harm 59:2 69:22 142:14 143:12 171:15 175:2 179:13 180:8 211:8 harmed 170:17 harmful 19:1,14 69:16 harsher 162:4 Hartman 2:14 4:8 28:24 149:5 157:16 198:5,7 218:7 228:15 238:13 243:24 252:6 260:8 he/him 204:13 240:24 244:12 he/him/his 158:6 257:23 he/they 214:14 252:14 heading 229:21	headline 177:14 healing 148:13,14 181:14 health 21:15,17 23:3 25:11,13 92:24 Healy 35:5 hear 5:24 6:2 13:16 15:16 44:13 47:2 72:5 80:18 87:9 101:6 109:4 141:4 150:7 183:6 211:13 218:24 225:14 242:22 261:11 heard 6:14,23 7:3 12:16,19,22 89:4 136:16 162:6 171:10 172:7 182:15,17,20 203:14 205:15 209:3 211:11,15,18,19, 22,24 218:18 224:19 225:17 227:3 241:2,5 242:2 249:12 261:7 271:21 275:20 276:21 277:10,16 hearing 3:24 4:5 5:7,23 6:8,10 7:19 11:4,14 14:20 15:22 17:1, 2 20:10,14 27:1,5 102:16 123:2 149:23 150:15 151:6 156:17 158:8 171:11 177:14 178:20 203:11 204:12 211:6 213:9 216:9 232:21 254:5 258:8 259:14 271:6,8 278:16 hearings 4:14 213:10 heart 27:22 180:16 heat 222:24 heavy 11:22 Heifetz 160:3,8 height 158:17 held 7:20 45:20 123:19 192:9 236:10 239:18 254:23 257:18 hell 61:24 helm 166:21 helmets 234:1 helped 166:7 helpful 148:12 helping 27:1 84:9 126:3 helps 94:2 Henderson 198:16,21,22	herded 176:9 235:7 herding 248:9 Hewitt 218:11 222:3,4 hey 103:17 107:17 111:4 120:18 122:2 133:1 139:2 145:9 266:9 hide 17:24 264:2 high 54:15 63:15 higher 76:2 137:4 highest 11:1 highlight 44:12,13 241:4 275:19 highlights 237:13 highly 50:20 highway 99:10 101:8 hill 23:15 hinted 153:19 hip 253:5 historic 167:13 historical 40:22 176:1 historically 127:21 208:16 253:10 history 14:8,13,17 31:1,13 35:17 36:13,22 77:6,8 83:17 89:8 105:16 154:24 155:8 165:17 166:22 175:14 207:5, 13,16 212:17 213:4 227:20 228:4 240:16 249:7 262:13 263:2 hit 60:17 155:20 hitting 101:11 HIV 169:15 hold 4:14 15:14 170:7 214:3 219:18 259:15 261:23 holding 6:9 202:1 214:2 232:21 266:22 273:7 home 132:3 196:5 232:4 237:10 243:8 252:20 Homeland 255:21 homelessness 179:23
--	---	--

homicide 142:22 Homo 172:21 homophobia 248:22 homophobic 247:16 honest 55:1 230:22 249:24 honestly 241:3 honored 158:24 hope 13:15 23:23 34:15 74:8 195:6 232:22 259:14 271:1 hoped 163:23 hoping 181:13 horrible 221:2 horribly 227:6 horrified 13:13 horrifying 250:5 261:22 262:5 horse 63:13,18 64:1,2,3 138:9, 11 246:22 247:5,6 250:16 horses 8:19,20 63:2,3,10 65:19 135:12 138:10 141:2 159:20 176:9 201:6 230:21 247:2 251:16,18 host 92:2 95:14 hostage 202:1 hosted 85:9 95:18 hostile 159:21 238:5 hostilely 160:20 hostility 167:24 Hosting 96:11 hotel 159:9 236:18,24 237:10 265:17,21,24 hour 2:6,13 101:9 hours 6:13 199:2 house 215:5 huddle 147:9 151:11,14,15,19 Human 21:15 122:20 humanely 238:7 humanity 221:18 humans 135:10 227:16	Humoresque 160:4 hundreds 22:13 57:9 67:11 91:12 129:14 132:22 hurt 58:11 Hut 172:21 I ICE 18:1 101:17 245:3 idea 98:8 217:1 ideal 153:17,20 identified 33:24 87:14 104:22 117:18 211:14 identify 14:23 57:8 82:22 85:6 105:1,11 109:19 110:20 220:14 identifying 59:17 87:11 88:23 identities 180:19 identity 17:5,24 191:15 195:20 ignorance 227:19 ignore 24:1 175:11,13 182:7 illegible 224:22 images 18:15 19:21 imagined 220:16 immediately 98:18 192:14 231:14 233:13 immensely 216:18 impact 21:17,24 38:20 140:7 171:22 247:21 impacted 6:3 impacting 22:5 impacts 174:14 implement 163:23 implementation 170:3 192:16 197:1,9 implementations 76:11 implemented 95:11 171:20 implicit 22:18 25:1	implore 228:2 importance 7:22 28:1 84:19 91:7 important 11:11 16:10 17:4 20:14 27:5 39:22 42:6 52:15 61:16 74:6 83:16 86:24 91:14 114:17 157:5 196:24 218:24 273:2,18 275:9 importantly 16:13 131:11 158:12 187:18 impose 193:19 impossible 189:16 235:4 impressed 245:19 improve 86:1 95:1 improved 87:17 improvement 85:7 87:12 inaction 189:17 inappropriate 107:6 184:1 inaudible 219:21 incensed 227:12 inception 256:2 incident 18:23 19:14 50:9 55:20 105:20,22,23 108:7 134:11 136:18 176:23 269:18 incidents 51:8 52:4 182:3 185:15,16 249:16 270:24 include 8:19 88:13 92:21 173:20 174:15,24 190:19 191:8 included 161:13 223:5 includes 14:9 92:15 170:2 176:24 179:19 including 5:21 22:17 86:6 93:17 94:5,12 165:22 167:6 210:7 276:7 inclusion 87:20 88:8 178:17 inclusive 82:12 174:11 income 195:20 incomplete 173:19 inconsistencies 261:7
---	--	--

increase 48:24 49:9 increased 37:22 increases 209:15 239:8 increasing 96:8 incredible 32:6 158:13 220:4 incredibly 256:8 independence 193:10 independent 189:22 213:18 independently 193:19 indicating 51:24 130:23 indicators 89:2 indictment 61:22 individual 31:12 61:3 181:23 191:17 210:21 individual's 70:17 individualized 170:23 174:18 individuals 32:11 39:12 64:13 65:14 67:15 68:12 70:18 74:20 117:17 160:15 174:24 186:11 211:7,17,21,23 216:7 inflicted 31:14 influence 183:18 influx 48:20 256:14 262:15 informal 207:7 information 85:10 104:2 107:20 108:24 109:2 113:14, 16 114:22 155:2 191:13 informed 189:6 infrastructure 37:18 96:4 inherently 180:22 182:14 Initially 132:14 initiating 51:13 initiatives 88:23 injured 39:17 152:23 injuries 159:11 innovations 166:3 inperson 45:19 85:10 123:18 inside 60:18 232:16	insights 36:5 Inspections 93:4 inspector 40:19 75:24 134:18 instances 222:13 instigate 239:24 instinct 116:11 instituted 76:18 institutional 197:8 267:5 institutionally 162:2 institutions 175:8 176:2,18 207:9 212:18 213:2 216:5 263:16 instructions 134:10 266:21 insulated 42:19 insurance 92:2 intelligence 124:3 intend 184:4 intended 211:8 intends 10:11 intense 164:12 231:3 intensifies 239:8 intent 149:24 169:24 intention 78:13 109:5 247:20 interact 166:5 interacted 236:20 interaction 183:22 interactions 6:4 86:13 166:22 181:19 191:6,11 interchangeably 204:14 261:2 intercommunity 264:8 interesting 241:1 interface 163:14 internal 35:7 73:2,13 98:18 104:5 111:12 165:1,12 184:5 212:6 internally 99:21 105:4 interrogated 223:21	intersection 229:19,22,24 230:4 intersectional 22:4 intersections 236:21 interview 112:15 249:22 interwoven 261:18 intimidate 11:21 223:14 240:15 250:8 intimidated 14:12 intimidating 63:21,23 intimidation 15:21 17:8 171:3 209:10 222:14 250:10 251:24 259:21 intoxicated 234:9 intoxication 185:11 introduce 173:22 introduced 81:9 90:19 introducing 209:14 invade 11:19 investigate 111:12 176:22 investigated 189:7 investigating 98:19 investigation 73:14 99:2 104:20 105:4 108:2,4 111:22 112:18 113:13,19 118:23 169:21,23 212:7 254:6 investigations 193:16 investment 88:11 invited 178:6 190:11 inviting 11:6 involved 70:19 272:6 involvement 174:20 involves 235:18 involving 9:14 Isaiah 26:24 issue 16:14 18:8 57:6 86:23 182:9,11 187:5,6 193:16 215:17 235:20 issues 49:19 52:10 63:5 70:3
---	--	--

75:14 109:10 122:23 141:6 258:21	June 5:18 14:19 15:12 17:15 85:9 123:5,20 168:18 171:9 187:24 220:1,21 222:9 226:18 229:14,15 233:9 237:18 245:8 252:15 264:13,23	knowing 109:10 114:21 175:24 262:3,14
J	justice 170:1,4 174:23 175:7 177:19	L
Jacen 108:22 157:19 159:3 171:12 177:23 178:7 196:23 200:19 268:9 277:11	justifications 102:11	labeled 177:6 258:19
James 252:9 257:22	justify 101:2	labor 172:4
January 99:13	juvenile 61:6 70:19 202:18	lack 17:15 31:9 236:8 237:14
Jasper 198:17 204:13	juveniles 70:1,4,9,23 72:2,5 202:16 205:19	ladies 32:18 35:21 38:15 43:7 44:14 50:13 52:13 71:12
Jazelle 29:7 74:10 75:4 81:16 90:13 136:16 150:18 275:3	K	lady 61:2
Jazelle's 46:8	keeping 14:14 245:23	Landau 3:1,2 5:4,6,8 16:2,24 20:13 25:7 27:3 30:4 46:15,19, 24 80:18 81:11 90:10,19 102:14,18 114:20 115:21 121:9 122:16 126:17 127:1 130:19 133:20 134:2 135:4 139:12 140:12 143:16 144:8 145:18 146:17 147:1 149:2,10 151:10 157:14,23 158:7 159:17 177:11 196:8,19 197:24 204:3,6 213:22 218:4 219:15 221:20,21 225:22 228:14,22 238:11,21 240:19 243:22 244:6 252:4 260:6,14, 20 267:12,19 270:16 271:5,14, 18 274:14
Jazmyn 198:15,22 204:4	Kendra 16:17 22:9	Landing 36:24 37:1 124:10 236:11 272:20,22
Jim 215:24	Kenyatta 2:10	lang 52:24
job 28:16 43:21 53:4 62:1,4 69:22 72:15 75:5 76:23 79:21 126:18,20,23,24 133:2,3 154:21 155:16 182:10,11 197:13 214:1 227:9 243:10	kettle 201:8	language 18:6 53:1 264:11
jobs 72:15,17,22	kettled 227:1 239:16,24 276:23	large 7:23 15:2 41:19 56:13,14 71:21 126:6 130:14 152:1,9 153:24
Joe's 241:21	kettling 67:3 141:5 231:7,15	large-scale 85:22 254:22
John 163:8	Kevin 29:4,22 81:14 90:21 165:6	larger 37:16 178:22 183:12
Johnson 2:10 4:2	key 38:4 77:20 85:12 87:5 93:5	largest 57:3 83:7 93:16
join 35:14	Khalif 218:10,15 219:8	lasting 21:19 174:13
joined 81:12 90:20 159:1	kid 31:7	late 163:4
joining 164:17	kids 55:6,13,18 57:7 58:5,6,19 59:8 60:2,5 62:15 69:23 71:21, 24 72:20 129:12,15,17 130:22 131:2,6 133:10,17 146:15 202:21 242:12,23 250:13	Latin 242:19
Jones 29:7 81:16 90:8,13 136:16 150:18 156:18 157:13 275:3	kill 38:18	laugh 246:4
Josh 178:10	killed 38:10 39:17	laughing 235:10
journalist 226:7	kind 30:10,19 38:6 136:17 153:18 210:13 259:6	law 7:9,20 14:12 86:20 87:21 100:20 102:12 106:2 179:17
joy 7:3 181:16 195:2 220:18 238:9	kinds 255:23 259:8	
judgment 183:18	knee 253:5	
Judy 161:17	knew 24:13 31:4,5 32:19,23 41:1 123:8,10 125:1,2 135:10 140:2 203:2	
July 13:22 39:16 40:3 93:20 139:3 255:5	knocked 58:13	
jump 80:14 117:15		
jumped 58:6		

182:3 199:21 206:13 245:18, 19 lawyer 230:24 layers 73:23 119:14,15 136:7 139:6 lead 101:11 129:3 257:17 leader 20:3 158:10 185:2 258:4,5 leaders 6:16 19:2,4 82:10 85:3 165:18 190:8,21 216:19 219:1 274:22 leadership 16:14 40:18 41:7 84:2 85:15 138:23 165:22 167:20 175:22 184:3 198:3 205:3 210:8 214:19 237:16 leading 38:11 46:16 115:17 161:18 173:21 leads 35:4 148:10 League 164:16 learn 13:17 27:11 52:18 89:14 213:3 274:11 learned 10:11 27:10 156:16 160:8 207:12,16 212:13 251:10 learning 212:17 leave 19:18 20:17 195:1,7 201:24 223:23 229:21 230:11 232:1,10,13 234:21 239:17 246:13 269:2 leaving 176:1 186:6 led 19:4 27:4 75:24 83:20 86:3 151:1 159:11 left 53:9 63:7 162:3 193:23 226:17 253:17 leg 136:6 legacy 175:19 legal 230:23 231:1,2 legislation 27:4 Legislative 2:4 4:6,13 81:3 90:12 168:7 178:3 278:17,23 legit 56:8 legitimate 56:10	Lehigh 255:8 lens 21:16 22:5 25:11 lesbian 163:18 220:14 Lesborhood 270:7,8,13 lessons 13:16 27:10 212:12 Let alone 234:16 level 94:3 195:22 254:9 levels 11:2 40:7 191:10 Lewis 244:3 246:10 LGBT 10:13 86:19 158:21 164:14,20,22 165:7,14,21 167:6 197:10 240:16 LGBT- 167:10 LGBTQ 4:22 25:21 26:8 29:10 83:14 160:1,12,21,24 161:6,21 162:9 163:15 164:6 167:3,24 178:11 190:24 204:16,20 206:10 208:17 210:15 213:14 216:19 217:21 241:10 243:16 244:23 248:18 255:19 274:20 LGBTQ+ 6:12 7:11 10:17 11:1,19 12:18 13:2 14:8 31:22 79:1 81:5,22 82:3,5,8,19 83:18 85:1,15 87:22 88:16,18,20 89:13 90:3,22 91:5 155:9 171:16 173:18 178:14 179:2, 10 180:10,16 185:20 187:8,24 188:19 190:6,15 192:2 195:10 197:3,12 LGBTQ-SENSITIVITY 164:2 liaison 32:2 33:9,20 78:4,5 82:5 163:19 165:7,21 166:1, 10,23 Liam 198:17 204:9,13 liberation 173:19 liberties 9:24 Liberty 131:9 228:9 licenses 92:1 93:4 lie 28:9 lieutenant 129:5 life 22:1 32:7 181:8 233:4 264:18	lifetime 13:2 159:13 light 243:18 lights 269:5 limited 209:13 limits 153:12 Lindsay 228:18 233:2 238:16 239:2 lip 25:15 list 205:20 225:5 listen 59:18 86:24 108:15 116:8 120:17 132:9,13 133:24 144:16 145:9 248:20 listened 172:9 249:8 275:8 listening 28:7 85:19 88:21 108:19 109:3 114:18,23 115:24 146:3 180:5 199:2 246:7 literally 234:12 265:5 live 197:5,6 202:10 215:6 259:19 lived 26:2 233:3 264:17 lives 174:14 219:10 243:15 259:20 living 242:7 local 245:10 location 38:1 94:24 locations 191:11 locking 150:11 Locust 12:13 66:20 71:11 110:14 127:21 128:13 216:3 222:18 236:19 237:8 265:18 logical 256:16 logistical 145:22 logistics 46:1 124:4 255:2,10 long 61:18 71:14 79:7 100:6, 12 101:15 105:16 108:8 122:18 146:21 147:23 148:7 153:1 196:12 264:17 274:18 276:5 278:12 long-term 37:23 96:13
--	--	---

longer 13:23 170:19 187:5 198:15 205:6 260:21 longstanding 175:4 longtime 158:22 lookback 141:16 looked 24:4 233:22 266:19 lose 62:16 187:12,13 211:4 loss 143:1 181:8 lost 18:14 116:6 240:3 243:12 lot 31:20 33:13,14 35:24 42:20 78:8 100:24 108:23 116:4,17 128:3,20 144:17 156:5 214:8 218:18,19,20 235:13 268:20 270:23 273:15 274:9 love 176:16 178:13,14 187:20 214:3 233:4 low-level 237:12 loyal 117:8 Lozada 3:5 lumped 161:5 lunch 206:15 luxury 118:18,20 M machine 246:3 Madam 20:3 122:12 Maddie 233:10 235:12 made 7:15 8:8 24:9 41:5 67:6 72:23 75:10 95:19 127:19 137:5 140:22 141:10 150:9 151:2 180:14 224:15 241:2 247:1,19 259:13 263:8 Madison 228:17 229:4 magnified 257:2,6 maintain 8:4 36:22 136:23 maintaining 84:4 138:18 major 27:14 94:11 95:11 151:14 190:18 254:23 make 20:15 22:7 28:12,16 31:19 36:21 39:23 40:15 42:24	43:1 44:17 52:5 58:10,21 62:17 67:20 70:21 71:4,9 73:3 75:5 77:14 78:18 79:12,16 80:2 99:24 105:2 107:1 110:17 112:12,20,24 113:4,5,18 130:3 138:1 142:10,12,13 144:19 151:16,19 152:19 153:12 174:15 175:8 177:7 183:9,10 203:5 206:1 210:24 235:21 245:4 249:1 263:11 269:6 271:2 273:5 274:5 275:5,13,18 277:22,24 makes 181:2 240:12 makeup 24:8 45:11 making 11:13 23:5 34:12 61:9, 21 79:5 84:7 154:17 198:9 249:11 259:16 man 35:10 104:15 183:3 219:11 manage 126:3 153:10 194:1 205:14 managed 176:8 255:8 management 46:2 86:7 93:8 255:18 258:13 managing 105:10 170:12 mandate 257:12 manner 97:11 mansplain 248:17 manufacturer 69:1 Marathon 95:22 march 41:10 81:19 91:3 94:13, 16 95:15 96:21 marched 222:20 marches 268:16,17 269:1 marginal 161:9 marginalized 257:10 258:18 mark 155:20 226:7 244:3,12 271:16 Market 41:13,14 70:11 71:11 142:17,20 146:6,20 244:17 marketing 185:9 marshals 145:7	Mart 268:20 269:24 mask 100:7 103:18 105:8 106:11 107:11,16 119:11 masked 19:22 211:12 masking 18:4 masks 17:23 18:7 50:21 72:21 97:18,24 98:5,9 99:8,12,20 100:15 102:5,9 104:15 110:22 111:1,19 112:21 117:18,21 118:24 119:4 120:24 121:1,5 167:19 226:21 230:20 245:13 mass 50:9 72:20 136:17 245:1 Massey 33:17 35:8 78:4 mater 241:22 maternal 23:3 matter 98:19 102:6,7 172:13 219:10 247:21 matters 7:24 182:6 189:4 207:20 213:9 Matthews 181:6 Mayor 89:17 162:3 163:8 188:11 Mayor's 10:3 82:2 85:14,16 190:23 maze 276:23 Mccormick 238:17 239:1,2 249:4 Mcgillin's 185:16 186:17 meaningful 82:11 87:3 89:11 178:16 189:21 192:2 means 9:1 14:15 23:21 24:21 87:10 207:21 263:10 meant 72:6 181:15 206:20 234:18 measurable 89:1 measure 181:14 191:24 measured 15:13 194:20 196:1,3 measures 86:10 176:3 mechanized 50:8 51:1 64:24 65:1,21
--	--	---

media 11:6 62:7,8 203:4 mediator 121:12 medical 95:5 222:22 223:9 239:23 meet 77:17 101:7 194:5 219:22 278:5 meeting 85:12 188:20 meetings 45:19,23 92:13 123:19,21 192:23 209:24 255:15 261:9 Mel 160:3 member 12:17 159:4 207:17 244:17 members 2:16 5:13 12:21 30:5 33:10 80:12 81:2 83:13 84:12,22 85:20 86:10 87:14 90:11 158:7 166:6 178:4 183:6 187:16 219:1 258:17 261:20 memorable 84:17 memorialize 277:15 men 34:1 36:16,18 40:13 41:18 44:4 51:17 70:6 77:5 99:7 104:7,22 105:10 107:3 110:24 111:18 112:14 113:7 117:16 138:22 143:4 145:13 148:21 155:14,23 237:6 menacing 226:21 mental 24:8 mentioned 137:6 163:10 mercy 233:20 merging 124:5 Meridian 39:4 42:13 60:15 message 226:13 messages 25:1 messaging 68:2 met 34:4 110:4,20 172:14 233:13 254:8 278:8 method 209:12 methodically 64:1 methods 12:9 metro 255:16	metropolitan 254:24 Mia 220:2,13 221:8 244:2 249:5 Miartv 249:6 Michael 15:23 113:15 127:20 198:17 214:14 mid-century 217:6 midnight 51:20 Midtown 185:9 186:18 191:7 240:6,11 mighty 192:20 migrate 123:11 Mike 66:18 miles 101:9 mind 13:23 14:17 39:19 206:1 mind-boggling 124:6 mine 237:12 minimal 208:12 minimize 63:14 minor 9:4 65:17 Minority 158:10 minors 225:4 minute 32:8 176:20 200:23 minutes 198:15 199:1 218:21 239:15 261:16 MIRT 50:9 64:16 98:22 136:9 141:23 missing 77:21,23 mission 82:11 91:23 210:20 missteps 41:6 271:23 273:1 mistake 47:7 mistakes 263:8 mittens 100:14 MLB 93:18 mob 53:16 234:2 mobs 246:2 mocked 223:23	mode 138:17 model 93:14 95:8 163:20 166:1 moment 147:10 151:1 153:5 157:2 173:22 207:24 224:1 moments 20:1 121:17 174:13 238:8 momentum 96:15 166:17 money 131:11 202:24 203:16, 17,19 monitoring 20:20 month 39:16 81:23 83:1 264:24 months 10:8 24:12 209:8 211:10 212:7 Moore 57:17 morning 2:12 5:11 20:6 29:2, 14,24 30:3 80:17 90:9 130:10 158:5,19 219:7 220:12 222:8 Morris 162:24 173:9 motor 140:8 motorbikes 64:15,20 65:11 motorcycle 8:20,21 134:23 138:5 motorcycles 101:20 135:6,8, 17 139:14 140:10,13,20 141:1 277:1 mounted 8:19,20 250:7 move 30:17 37:8 46:9 49:3 50:1,7 51:2,3,6,14 52:6 55:7 57:19,24 58:19,23 59:1,15 62:24 63:3 64:1,6 65:1,2 66:1, 6 68:18 69:8 70:14 75:21 76:1 96:1 98:21 117:21 125:16 129:7 130:2,5 131:19 134:5 137:12,13,15,24 138:15,16,18, 19,24 139:2,5,18 140:17 141:20 153:9,10,14 166:16 170:17 189:19 223:2 233:15, 19 256:5 259:13 266:9 276:9, 10 moved 44:10 48:16 60:22 61:3 64:14,16 71:18 75:15,16 125:10,11 140:11,13,24 200:15 239:5
--	---	---

movement 38:1 97:21 219:10 251:14 movements 53:2 moves 50:11 142:11 moving 8:21 19:17 37:13 41:18 47:9 48:7 49:21 56:21 57:6 64:10,13 69:5,9,18 71:22 74:4 75:19 88:3 114:15,21 136:24 141:21 143:13 145:13 146:14 148:4 150:14 198:6 208:22 274:12 multiple 37:15 51:8 119:14 123:7 136:7 139:6 233:14 254:13 256:18 257:10,14 multiple-ton 39:1 multitude 91:15 Mummers 125:22 127:3 235:14 253:14 municipal 94:7 255:22 murdered 181:7 231:5 music 127:10,19 130:23 235:2 N Naiymah 157:19 159:2 168:3, 12 173:11 276:1,15 277:11 named 179:13 names 32:13,20 265:13 narrative 235:21 nation 38:13 264:24 national 178:16 255:3 nationally 95:18 nature 9:6 27:14 navigate 184:7 necessarily 151:3 165:2 necessitate 234:24 needed 34:1 84:2 96:4 142:2 165:11 239:22 needing 187:16 242:11 negative 116:10 neighborhood 9:15 17:14	160:13 180:15 185:8 188:8 192:6 195:19 226:12 244:18, 23 neighborhoods 167:16 208:17 217:13 neighbors 12:20 168:9 176:10 200:15 244:16,24 network 165:11 NFL 95:20 Nice 38:8 night 51:21 70:11 71:14 146:5 186:5 205:2 226:18 227:11 237:11 242:18,19,20 269:3 275:15 nightlife 179:21 187:14 190:9, 22 nightly 226:12 241:13 242:8 Nizah 162:24 173:9 no-mercy 234:17 nodded 80:20 non-binary 148:23 179:19 190:8,21 246:19 248:16 non-black 25:24 216:19 non-violent 159:7 nonbinary 195:12 norm 246:17 normal 64:4 norms 22:21 north 41:13,15 230:8 Northeast 197:7 Nos 173:5 notably 91:13 note 2:5,13 3:22 20:16 164:7 165:16 253:12 noted 164:21 Notice 217:19 noticed 226:21 nuisance 227:16 number 6:15 38:19 41:20 109:18,22 122:22 126:7 145:2	234:21 249:13 261:16 numerous 46:6 93:24 124:1 165:18 Nurya 238:17 O O'ROURKE 26:17 80:23 obligated 103:8 105:22 obligation 7:17 197:11 obligations 15:9 observation 193:13 observe 107:5 observed 159:10 observing 230:24 231:1,2 obtain 91:24 occasion 123:13 occasions 253:16,22 occur 259:9 occurred 70:24 124:2 146:19 182:3 191:12 217:24 occurring 46:7 occurs 70:15 185:22 offenses 206:22 offer 85:7 100:3 172:3 190:1 offering 223:9 offers 37:17 office 6:14 10:13,19 11:4 12:16 82:3,4,20 83:14,23 84:3, 18 85:16 88:4 89:23 91:11,17 92:12 94:10 96:17 97:7 163:22 190:24 197:10 255:17,18,19 officer 12:10 68:11,15,20 69:5 101:8,16 103:17 104:12,13,14 105:7 106:10,11 107:15,17 108:12,13 112:4,9 116:16 164:9,16 183:14,23 184:18 192:5,12 227:7 231:17 232:15 233:18 237:3,6 244:16 246:21 247:9 250:5 252:17,23 officer's 183:18
---	--	--

officers 8:20,21 9:1,8 18:1 19:22 24:17 33:23 41:20,23 42:7 64:10,13,19 72:21 79:24 97:24 98:4,5,8,20 99:10 102:20,21 103:1,9,12,15,20, 21,23 105:2 107:5 109:19,22 110:6 116:9,12,19 119:2,5 134:9 140:21 143:22 144:1,9 145:2,4 148:20,21 149:3 153:23 154:5,14,15,17 156:3,7 161:20 164:1,6,13,14,23 165:10 166:4 180:20 182:10, 15,17 186:3 192:7 199:21 211:12,17 222:7,20,24 223:8, 12 225:1 226:21 230:20 232:6 236:21 247:7 250:7 251:1,4 252:21 253:8,19 266:8 277:2 official 13:3 163:13 236:7 249:13,23 officials 169:2 offset 143:7 onboarding 192:8 one's 182:6 one-off 18:24 one-size-fits-all 170:22 one-stop 91:19 ongoing 76:14 80:24 86:9 91:4 onsite 94:10 open 60:13 84:4 114:12 131:12 237:8 240:5,10 246:23 248:12 253:20 270:2 opened 205:9 opening 5:6 openly 164:9 183:2,14 259:19 operated 41:8 110:9 175:5 operation 110:7 operational 92:9 93:11 94:11 97:5 134:8 138:11 operations 86:6 opinion 234:15 opportunities 37:20 82:22 85:6,24 87:11,15 88:24 211:2	opportunity 27:8,11 81:8 86:24 90:5,17 97:14 170:10 188:11 204:22 219:22 opposite 165:4 oppression 26:3 optics 9:5 177:18 option 245:9 256:7 order 4:1 8:4 22:15 78:22 138:19,20 orders 138:21 ordinance 215:11 organization 79:2,4 210:12 organizations 82:9 85:2 191:2 210:10 274:21 organize 263:12 organized 44:7 76:9 78:19 172:1 organizer 74:17 95:13 133:9 151:12 219:9 267:3 organizers 43:20 46:9 83:10, 21 84:6 86:21 91:24 92:7,13 94:20 96:14 97:12 126:2 151:18 190:7 274:22 originally 258:22 Orr 252:9,13,14 othered 183:11 outcomes 86:8 outed 208:13 outer 52:8 outlines 166:4 outreach 7:15 overlook 22:8 overly 4:19 268:8,11 overmilitarized 245:10 overpolice 257:16 overpoliced 18:18 162:10 270:4,9 overpolicing 147:14 160:2 171:21 206:10 254:2 269:13 270:14	overpriced 172:20 overrode 134:19 oversees 78:5 oversight 2:5 4:6,14 76:3 81:4 90:12 166:11 168:8 170:2 176:24 177:2 178:3 193:3,12, 14 278:17,24 overview 82:2 86:5 91:11 overwhelming 254:16 owe 225:11 owned 160:4 owners 85:2 187:13 195:16 ownership 174:6 P p.m. 48:12,22 49:1 233:9 239:12 252:18 278:24 package 18:2 packed 12:2 paddy 230:21 paid 176:18 203:19 223:19 263:16 pain 246:14 painful 7:8 123:2 148:2 painted 12:23 241:15 pandemic 236:10 panel 5:24 16:15 20:10 26:21 29:1 80:13 148:8 149:6 157:17 169:1 196:14 277:11 panelist 171:12 177:23 panelists 15:18 parade 99:13 101:10 115:14 125:24 253:15,16 255:4,5,7 parades 94:1 254:23 parents 176:12 220:8 park 125:19 161:16,17 216:15, 17 parked 201:11 Parker 5:20 188:17 275:4
--	---	--

Parker's 188:12 parking 127:13 parks 93:2 169:17 Parkway 37:9,14 38:23 40:5 41:16 42:12 43:4,8 44:11 45:22,24 46:17,18 47:10,11,16 48:2,6,15,16,17 49:13 50:1,6 51:18 59:5,7,8 63:3 74:12,24 84:18 94:15,17 95:7,12,17 96:12 123:23 125:11,12 126:8 139:3 142:8 151:13 202:24 247:24 256:6,16 266:17,18,20, 22 272:12,17 273:11,13,21 275:14 276:3,13 part 11:12 18:1 36:20 37:7 38:7 45:10 56:21 58:3 66:4,5 67:8,20 68:3,4,14,21 71:7 75:19 76:13,23 96:2 98:10 102:23 104:19 105:3 111:23 133:2 143:2 150:20 161:1 181:2 245:14 participants 85:4 87:23 190:11 participated 255:15 participating 159:6 216:8 participation 37:21 84:10 partiers 246:1 parties 157:6 229:11 partners 83:11 88:5 93:5 94:20 partnership 80:24 87:13 88:12 89:20 91:5 partnerships 97:3 parts 10:2 22:6 party 75:4 130:17 202:14 partying 130:16,17 pass 5:5 26:18 102:14,17 114:19 121:8 214:4 237:2 passed 10:9 215:11 passing 245:17 passionate 177:6 past 74:23 77:13 117:21 183:21 195:3 209:8 224:8	263:4 268:10 path 85:21 210:22 247:6 pathways 82:23 patience 158:1 patrol 35:13 99:10 101:8 173:4 215:17 patronize 172:23 patronized 162:8 patrons 160:10 185:19 186:16 208:13 pattern 18:24 239:11 Patty's 253:15 pause 13:10 pay 202:23 peace 172:22 245:23 peaceful 159:6 pedestrian 48:24 49:10 125:15 peers 169:19 Penn's 36:23 37:1 124:10 236:11 272:20,22 pennies 224:18 people 6:10,17,23 7:3 8:22 9:21 10:17 11:20 12:11 14:9 17:10 21:20 25:4,22 32:5 35:13 37:16 38:6,10,16,18 39:20 41:20 42:3 43:17 44:6, 20 45:4 48:20 51:6 52:11,17, 19 53:5,14,19 54:3,5,8,18,23 56:15,24 57:4,12,14,15 58:24 59:13,16 60:5,15 61:19,23 62:6 63:18,24 64:5 65:17 66:6 67:4,11,20,22 69:2,3,24 70:1 72:2,7,24 75:10 76:20 77:21 84:16 100:8 101:2 102:4 107:2 109:6,9 111:15 115:1,2,7,10, 13,16 116:4,17 117:9 118:7,8 119:23 120:1,12,15 122:2 123:8 124:8 125:1 126:7 127:9,12 128:7,8,14,23 129:8, 11,16 130:15 132:12,15,23 133:6 135:13 136:23 137:21 138:2,9,13 139:3 140:7,11 141:3,10 142:19 143:17 146:15 147:3,14 148:23 150:7,	19 153:14 160:2,12,24 161:7, 21 162:9,21 170:17 171:23 175:3,17 177:3,20 179:20,21, 22 180:10 183:1,8,15 184:12, 13,16 186:5,15 187:8,24 194:21 195:1,10,12 197:3 198:10 199:22 201:14,24 203:6 204:21 205:13 206:11 208:24 209:12 211:3 213:7 214:8 216:23 217:11 218:19 221:14 223:21,23 225:7 226:14 231:7,20 235:1,15,19 236:11,15 238:1 241:9,10,11 242:1,3,17 248:11 249:17 251:24 256:14 257:17 258:8 262:7,15,19 263:15 264:6 272:11,21 274:5 276:21 people's 11:14 76:22 215:4 perception 109:8,24 120:12 170:13 172:16 perfect 33:7 34:20 79:9 225:8, 10 perfectly 196:15 performing 247:3 period 199:15 210:20 permanent 190:14 permissible 209:6,9 permission 220:7 permit 93:7 94:9 150:17,21 192:11 permits 92:1 permitted 93:13 94:15 96:22 156:22 permitting 91:20 92:8,18 perpetrated 199:12 perplexing 123:3 persisted 162:1 person 13:7 21:1 25:24 50:3 61:5 105:7,24 106:6 107:15 114:9 122:22 169:11 184:23 195:18 196:3 198:8 210:21,23 239:18,22 personal 181:5 236:6,17 262:1
---	--	--

personally 12:19 268:15 personnel 48:20 50:8 142:8 189:3 persons 105:11 perspective 270:12 perspectives 86:12 87:2 pervades 23:12 phenomenon 100:7,16 101:17 Philadelphia 4:17,21 6:11 8:10 9:7 17:12 19:4,7,20 23:15 25:5 28:11 29:6,18,22 73:18 81:7 86:2 90:16 91:22 92:22, 23 93:23 94:12,16 95:15,22 96:20 115:9 119:24 120:1 122:24 131:16 158:24 159:5 161:23 163:21,22 164:15 168:16 170:7 173:13 174:2 178:8,13 180:4 181:11 183:4 187:19,23 188:4 190:19 192:23,24 193:1,2 196:2 205:5 206:11 207:15 216:1 217:7 221:11 224:7 229:6 239:4,6 240:14 246:12 248:23 255:6 257:11 258:1,6 264:18 265:1 267:9 268:2 274:7,8 Philadelphia's 5:17 7:10 14:8 17:18 82:5,19 83:7 89:12 90:3 93:2,16 179:1 180:16 204:16 Philadelphian 83:3 172:10 183:13 204:15 212:4 217:17, 20 Philadelphians 7:13 15:6 18:17 25:23 162:14 168:1,19 169:9 171:16 176:5 179:11 197:12 215:13 Phillips 3:8,9 26:19,22 28:22 57:13 149:13,15 151:22 152:7 153:15 156:14 157:11 Philly 54:20 95:14 190:20 197:6 226:4,7 231:6 233:3 255:8,10 257:2,7 261:4 268:13 270:5 Philly's 13:7 phone 124:1 130:24 phones 222:8	photo 46:14 47:22,24 photographs 6:21 12:22 physical 72:16 234:16 physically 161:19 223:13 PIAA 54:16 pick 129:19 234:12 picking 224:18 Picnic 127:2 picture 12:24 46:21 241:15 pictures 43:14 47:9 253:6 Pier 169:7,12 pit 226:23 pivot 151:16 157:1 pivotal 173:21 174:13 pizza 172:20 place 8:15 11:19 17:14 94:14 110:21 131:9 148:15 169:5,10 189:10 219:24 221:15 227:1 245:24 250:10 251:14 places 57:18 131:10 plain 65:7 plan 39:7 74:14 78:17 95:6 124:16,18 134:12,17 135:22, 23,24 136:1,4 147:5,6 166:16 192:16 205:14 237:18 254:15 257:16 258:22 273:19 planned 44:7 56:20 123:12,16 150:5 163:24 planner 75:5 planners 274:2 planning 10:20 14:24 27:13 35:19 39:19 40:11 42:23 45:18,24 75:23 76:2 78:2,17 81:18 83:19 87:16 88:3 91:8, 20 92:12 97:2 123:23 124:4 190:17 200:22 205:4 236:9 237:14 263:21,23 272:5 273:6, 9 plans 92:7 93:8,9,10 136:4 platform 219:17 played 10:20	playing 16:1 47:17 53:10 playthings 226:23 pleaded 237:2 pleading 237:9 plot 243:12 pockets 71:21 point 12:3 38:11 44:17 46:20 56:19 60:12 62:24 64:14 92:5 112:23 122:22 128:11 133:13 137:1,14,19 140:23 146:18 201:4 205:7 228:6 230:12 232:8 250:4 273:2 pointed 165:18,20 pointing 221:1 249:12 points 233:10 poles 237:23 police 4:21 5:21 6:4 9:7 10:2 11:22 13:18 14:3,7,13 15:20 17:13,17 18:3,9 19:1 24:4,5,16 25:13 29:5,6,23 31:18 32:2 36:10 38:12 73:18 79:21 81:13 86:3 90:21 92:22 94:5 104:12, 13 105:18 115:18 116:22,23 117:3 119:22 122:3 135:17 144:4 150:21 153:23 159:11, 20,21 160:5,17,21 161:7,20 162:22 163:1,5,15 164:9,11,13 166:11,21 167:5,15,24 168:16 170:7,24 171:8 172:18 174:3 175:14,23 176:2 177:2 182:7 183:23 184:3 185:24 187:16 188:12 190:23 191:5,18 193:3 199:20 200:10 207:15 210:1,7, 19 212:5 220:18,23 221:7,11 222:7,13 224:12,14,19 225:13 226:10 227:12 228:1 230:15, 20 231:7 232:14 237:15 239:7, 24 240:9 242:12 244:22 245:2, 11 246:16,21 247:14,18 249:9, 13,18 250:17 251:1,16,22 252:1,17,23 253:11,24 254:16 255:16 268:5 275:2,22 276:6 277:1,2,13 278:2,4 police-lgbtq 158:23 policed 180:12 241:11,12 268:8,11 polices 145:15,16
--	---	--

policies 18:4 33:6 82:13 154:9,11 189:8 policing 13:20 22:17 144:6 147:15,19 155:9 162:4,11 167:11 174:1 175:21 177:21 179:16 181:1 187:3 188:6 189:23 199:15,17 205:5 242:16 272:5 policy 18:6,11 32:18 33:3,8 68:15,22 69:13,15,17 72:19 75:23 98:11,16 99:9 105:2,12 107:4,7 118:9 122:10 161:24 167:13,18 188:22 209:6 258:14 political 17:6 177:19 184:24 217:21 238:5 porta 66:21 Portions 51:4 posed 256:18 position 98:24 107:24 116:3 121:13 141:24 142:2 184:21 228:3 236:7 267:5 positions 80:2 96:12 positive 163:3,14 165:2 possibly 17:20 post 236:19 posted 215:18 potential 50:17 209:15 potentially 143:11 148:10 156:20 186:7 229:21 potties 66:22 pounds 63:11 power 166:12 177:1 193:10 219:17 261:19 Powerpoint 15:24 205:22 PP 173:4 PPD 160:3 254:9 257:12 PPD's 245:14 practically 24:16 practice 245:5 278:10 practices 82:13 171:19,21 174:2 190:2	praise 59:19,20 predecessors 215:11 predicted 49:14 165:12 predominantly 18:21 185:19 231:20 257:3,8 preferred 209:11 premier 95:17 Prep 241:21 preparation 17:16 24:9,11 prepare 24:21 150:22 prepared 79:16 136:8,13,18 150:24 236:15 272:15 preparing 273:9 presence 2:9 11:22 16:17 20:4 26:17 115:18 170:24 171:2 239:7 240:9 254:16 present 2:18,23 3:3,10,20,24 6:18 21:11 181:22 presentation 15:19 37:6 247:19 presents 8:7 President 2:9,10 4:2 30:2 159:8 178:8 180:3 181:10 183:3 press 65:8 146:2 pressures 164:13 presumption 186:8 preteen 169:4 pretty 58:22 65:3 69:10 196:14 235:4 prevalent 207:4 prevent 189:10 254:19 preventable 209:17,20 210:3 prevented 184:22 265:22 preventing 251:7 Pride 4:22 5:17 6:14 7:6 8:6 10:20 12:16 13:21 14:6 15:3 17:4,6 18:23 19:10 27:16 34:7 36:14,16 37:3 39:10,12,13,24 41:10,12,17 42:17 43:24 44:8 45:9,20 47:8 48:17 49:11	55:16,23 57:1 67:21,23 77:1,6 78:13 81:19,23 83:1,6,15,20 84:12,14 86:5 87:16 88:15 89:8,24 91:2 94:13,16 95:14, 15 96:11,20 124:11 132:18 133:7 134:9 142:18,23 146:6, 10,13,16 154:3,21,24 155:1 156:2 168:20 169:6 173:23 178:9,21 179:6,7,9 180:4 181:7,9,11 183:4,20 188:10 189:23 190:20 192:18 195:1,6, 7,24 197:19 200:24 202:24 204:24 207:13,21 208:19 217:24 219:20,21 220:1,15 221:4 222:15 223:23 224:5,7, 12 226:5 228:10 229:7 232:3, 18 233:6 235:9 236:4,9,10 238:2 239:4 240:4 243:1 246:12 247:23 248:2,4 249:7 251:12 252:16 254:10 255:9, 11 257:4,9 258:10,24 261:4 264:23 265:3,4 266:16 273:23 276:17 Pride's 37:22 Pride-related 222:10 primarily 18:16 primary 82:4 92:5 principle 89:21 prior 45:20 134:12 142:17 priorities 88:7 priority 186:19 256:20 257:1,6 privacy 191:17 privilege 168:11 204:18 231:22 privileged 98:23 237:4 248:19 problem 38:14,16 75:10 145:9 176:7 186:9 188:1 193:6 201:18 problematic 117:24 problems 172:5 problemsolve 149:21 problemsolving 149:19 proceed 41:12 158:3 213:24 214:11,12 222:1 225:24 229:1 238:23 244:10 267:21
--	---	---

process 37:8 38:12 40:12 41:19 45:14 49:8 59:15 66:4 67:8,10 70:14 73:13 75:16,20 78:19 89:5 94:2,9 98:17 99:5, 23 110:5 112:11,12,14,15,17, 18 118:15 129:12 136:7 137:20 138:16,24 139:5,7 142:10 143:14 144:24 148:15 150:21 170:1 184:5 189:12 192:17 193:24 211:19,20 272:7 273:6 278:9 processes 27:13,18 76:11 113:21 151:4 Processing 227:10 proclaiming 246:23 produce 18:11 193:11 producer 256:21 266:6 production 91:20 255:2 productive 121:7 professional 254:21 professionalism 96:24 professionals 205:12 profiled 195:14 profiling 171:4,9 217:19 profit 247:22 program 154:7 programming 96:6 212:23 programs 37:19 progress 89:2 progressing 251:11 prohibited 215:12 promise 26:20 121:4 188:21 promised 10:6 promises 18:13 promote 89:15 250:12 promoted 180:15 promotion 240:5,10 pronoun 31:9 pronounced 253:1	pronouns 158:2,6 168:14 198:23 204:8,13 214:12 220:14 221:24 225:24 226:3 229:1,4 233:3 236:2 238:23 239:3 240:24 244:9 246:11 252:15 257:23 260:23 261:1 267:21 268:1 proof 194:19 proper 107:2 properly 79:23 93:12 145:1 150:24 property 152:18 175:17 203:23 253:18 proportionate 8:14 proposal 203:15 proposed 96:1 256:4 protect 8:15 9:21 15:10 41:24 143:19 167:14 176:18 183:8 189:12 207:10 208:13 212:8 224:3 247:24 250:12 257:13 267:7 protected 159:23 161:4 183:10 195:10 208:8 protecting 40:1 43:18 191:16 203:23 protection 40:7 143:22 178:24 186:24 256:23 protects 246:6 protest 15:4 17:7 34:9 77:10 159:7,24 163:10 231:8 protested 172:2 protests 231:1,4 protocols 88:17 proud 204:14 219:11 proven 95:7 provide 17:18 80:13 82:2 91:11 114:16 236:23 267:15 provided 86:4 134:8 223:10 PTSD 159:16 public 4:5,18 5:14 6:1 7:22,23, 24 8:5,16 9:10 10:6 11:5 15:2, 7 21:3,14,16,17 22:2,3 25:11 46:3 81:18 83:11 85:23 86:7,	12 87:24 91:1 92:24 93:9 95:5 97:4 106:15 113:20 121:14 123:24 152:3,11 153:24 165:15 170:12,14 175:24 178:17 182:5 185:12 186:13, 19,21 187:6 188:1 189:6,15 190:15 191:4 192:17 193:20 194:2,10 195:16 198:7,9,24 199:20 203:22 208:20 214:3, 22 218:9 222:16 238:14 248:1, 24 251:21 252:7 260:9 264:22 267:15 271:7,8 274:24 278:16 publicity 170:5 publicly 189:5 Puerto 125:23 pull 50:5 pulled 46:14 55:18 276:3 pulling 220:24 puppets 235:11 purchased 131:14 purpose 14:22 52:12 64:11 79:5 175:7 purposely 53:3 201:7 pursue 184:5 pursuing 210:23 push 51:14 62:19 130:6 144:20 201:12 pushed 8:23 128:23 234:5 252:23 253:4 261:24 pushing 72:16 73:9 220:23 252:22 265:13 put 6:8 16:10 24:1 42:18 65:3 66:10,12 69:24 73:22 74:2 77:17 79:24 109:6 116:3 118:3 119:10 121:13 135:7 139:14 201:17 220:19 221:17 243:18 264:20 268:6 270:11 276:22 278:9 puts 269:24 putting 16:24 40:6 109:8 201:5 219:2
--	---	---

Q		
queer 7:12 13:1,7 14:4 17:9,19 19:2,3,23 32:21 171:24 176:4 216:23 217:5,11 219:11 226:3 227:18 235:18 238:1 240:15 241:9 242:1 246:15,19 268:23 queer-owned 224:6 question 55:2 57:5 66:7,14 75:10 107:22 121:2 144:6 153:16 171:6 172:6,8 186:13 187:22 193:8 217:15 questioning 177:24 193:23 questions 9:4,5 80:15 90:6 97:16 109:3 134:3 145:23 149:13 151:24 196:13,17 256:11,17 quick 20:16 157:4 quickly 27:7 141:22 153:9 157:1 213:23 226:20 237:19 quorum 3:23 quote 11:23 226:6 233:21	ramming 225:1 Ramsey 31:17 32:1 76:18 163:17,21 rarely 36:14,15 RCO 244:17 reach 187:10 265:6 reaches 248:19 reactions 209:19 reactive 208:19 read 4:9 ready 224:16 263:17 real 25:14 26:12 232:23 realities 177:9 realize 203:24 208:3 realized 67:5 69:1 226:24 realizing 68:1 reason 167:8 173:13 197:19 223:2 241:7 reasons 37:15 reassessment 147:6 reassured 19:19 rebuilding 88:7 278:1 rec 57:14 recall 174:4 recalled 162:18 recalling 12:10 receive 185:2 187:3 193:14 195:23 received 11:8 72:12,13 191:21 receiving 169:14 Recent 167:2 recently 34:4 39:15 75:22 167:8 223:6 recess 278:18 reclaimed 33:1 recognition 185:1	recognizable 179:2 recognize 33:12 67:9 69:15 141:12 192:19 273:2 recognized 84:18 95:19 182:19 217:23 231:14 recognizes 16:20 20:4,7 83:14 recommend 194:6 recommendation 100:4 recommendations 88:6 170:4 193:17,21 194:12 196:11 record 3:22 11:12 16:10 29:19 134:4 149:23 204:8 214:16 222:1 259:5 260:23 267:21 Recreation 93:3 recruiting 210:18 recruitment 210:13 recruits 164:1 rectified 13:12 Red 93:18 redeveloped 169:8 reduced 145:2 reducing 209:16 reflect 85:24 226:6 reflective 82:15 90:2 reflects 83:1 refuse 213:3 refused 202:23 248:20 refuses 191:24 regard 104:19 regressing 251:11 regular 53:19 154:12 156:1 regulation 251:6 reiterate 17:2 related 72:14,19 222:23 relates 69:21 100:4 102:3 107:3 136:19 268:4
R		
race 22:9,11 23:7,11 191:14 195:20 201:12 races 93:24 racism 171:8 173:17,24 248:22 racist 199:16 247:16 rack 252:20 radar 268:6 radicals 177:7 raided 160:6 raids 161:10,18 167:2 rainbow 173:16 179:8 194:19 196:1 raised 179:11 181:20 raises 183:12 raising 131:11		

relations 122:20 158:23 278:3 relationship 7:9 86:18 160:22 179:16 245:17 relationships 40:22 82:7 89:11 165:14 184:21 185:1 relegated 40:12 relevant 83:22 191:15 relief 245:7 relocation 45:24 123:22 rely 42:1 134:12 207:6 208:8 remain 88:2 89:10 remaining 87:12 remains 83:23 96:19 remarkably 180:9 remarks 5:6 20:9 26:19 176:21 271:16 remember 21:4 37:10,12 206:16 remembers 206:15 remind 21:12 102:4 214:7 221:10,16 reminded 195:4 reminder 14:3 251:13 remiss 258:2 remove 9:23 199:16 removed 68:21 192:14 Ren 173:2 Rendell 163:9 reopened 7:7 repair 147:24 repeat 63:8 188:20 228:4 260:17 repeated 261:8 repeatedly 194:12 212:19 repeating 64:11 213:5 report 76:5 103:8 104:12,17 105:22 107:9 249:18,20 reported 103:12 108:12	reporting 103:21 184:18 191:4 reports 4:19 18:20 48:3,4 103:20 167:2 170:16 193:17 249:13 represent 6:17 179:4 194:17 representation 33:15 Representative 29:7 81:15 90:14 91:18 96:18 representatives 5:20 85:13 92:16 represented 216:18 265:1 representing 85:17 represents 34:7 170:24 171:2 requested 94:4 requests 277:16 278:7 require 79:24 154:9 189:20,21 191:3 192:1,15 194:9 required 92:2 94:4 154:10 requirements 92:8 requires 80:1 178:19 186:21 Rescue 136:14 researching 165:17 reset 78:2 resident 188:5 229:5 236:4 257:24 268:2,13 residents 6:15 11:1 12:17 82:8,19 85:3 97:12 179:22 186:16 187:12 190:9 195:14 244:14 259:11,17 267:9 resign 228:3 resistance 14:6 65:17 231:10 resolution 4:7,10,11 5:3 29:2 81:9 90:18 198:12 resolve 86:23 resolving 122:23 resource 83:24 88:24 resources 94:7 respect 89:15 138:3 144:17 148:18 175:12 267:1	respected 83:4 195:13 respectfully 166:5 168:13 182:12 267:8 respond 8:4 87:9 182:5 258:16 responded 10:23 30:14 response 3:6,13,16 8:8 9:20 11:5 14:24 15:15 35:24 36:2 50:10 61:17 62:13 84:21 185:24 187:3 196:18 244:22 249:10 276:7 responses 11:8 191:19 194:10 responsibility 8:3 10:4,14 50:4 76:21 104:24 106:9,18 107:1 154:19 182:4 212:11 214:5 responsible 92:18 106:6 245:22 responsive 8:9 82:14 rest 102:15 187:2 188:2 265:24 restorative 170:1 174:22 177:19 restore 14:21 121:13 restraint 181:21 restroom 128:9 result 4:19 22:21 27:18 28:5 resulting 253:4 resume 71:16 retaliation 153:5 184:20 retired 245:15 return 181:10 196:5 returned 181:9,12,13 revealed 205:4 reverted 167:12 review 10:7 34:23 67:5 94:2 95:24 141:17 189:22,23 193:15 reviewing 20:21 reviews 93:6
--	---	--

revisionist 30:24 revitalization 166:15 revving 233:24 rhythm 58:18 Rican 125:23 rider 247:4,5 ridiculous 201:1 riding 101:23 134:23 rights 15:8 76:22 180:24 185:3 191:2 216:10 rim 52:8 riot 159:11 219:20 risk 209:1 215:7 Rittenhouse 161:15 217:9 River 161:16 Rivera 244:2 Rizzo 160:9,23 161:24 162:3 road 92:7 95:9 248:10 roads 248:8 roadways 9:10 robbery 162:22 Roberts 244:3,11,12 Robinson 198:18 214:13,14 role 10:19 14:14,16 190:16 roles 76:21 154:19 roll 2:15 rolling 200:22 room 32:11 59:10,11 62:4 66:16 98:12 216:8 250:4,10 rooted 34:8,9 89:8 route 236:23 routinely 206:20 264:16 rowdy 229:12 237:19 rows 233:23 Rue 5:4,6 25:7 27:2 46:15 103:17 106:12,13,14 219:15 221:20	ruining 243:14 rule 218:18 ruled 226:10 run 45:4 63:18 140:16 266:23 running 12:12 64:2 105:18 122:19 S sacred 227:24 saddened 253:7 safe 7:5 14:15 23:5 45:8,16 58:21 75:5 79:5,22 80:3,6 89:24 92:2,19 93:12 96:16 138:1 142:13 150:1 173:11 181:3 187:22 205:16 217:12 221:6,15 224:11 228:1 242:3 244:15 259:18 277:22 safeguards 8:15 safely 94:18 97:10 142:11 196:6 224:5 safer 224:15 safest 256:7 safety 7:22,24 8:5 9:10 15:7 21:16 22:2,3 35:18 38:5 46:3 81:18 83:11 86:8,13 87:24 88:22 91:2 93:9 95:6 97:4 123:24 136:4 137:21,22 139:20 152:4,11 170:21,22 174:17 175:24 176:3 177:16 178:18 180:23 182:5 185:12 186:13,15,19,21 187:6 188:1 190:15 194:18 195:16 199:20 203:22 204:21 208:20 216:20 223:3 224:24 240:2 250:12,13 256:23 259:24 260:3 Sanchez 157:19 159:2 168:4, 13 196:22 276:1 sand 173:10 sanitation 38:24 42:22 45:6 94:6 Sansom 160:5 Sappho 265:20 sat 98:12 159:19 199:1	satchel 42:5 scapegoat 214:17 scared 148:24 239:10 250:2 scenes 31:11 34:17 scheduled 45:19 123:18 school 54:15 105:18,21 241:20 Schuylkill 161:16 scientist 217:22 scope 92:10 scraped 253:5 screening 95:4 secondary 137:12 section 215:18 secure 75:6 security 43:15 95:4 171:1 255:21 sees 74:9 120:2 Segal 226:7 select 129:20 sense 69:2 235:22 241:2 248:5 261:18 269:6 sensitive 72:3 109:9 separate 74:15,16 123:13 129:11 September 159:10 sergeant 68:19 129:4 249:21 seriousness 7:15 servant 21:3 servants 248:1,24 251:22 serve 21:3 82:16 89:21 90:13 117:10 119:23,24 178:7 183:16 210:12,15,18 224:3 227:14 serves 33:18 82:4 91:19 92:4 97:11 179:3 service 25:15 29:17 214:22 services 21:15 82:14 94:3
--	---	--

serving 24:23 204:18 set 66:19 74:18 125:14 126:13 127:20 133:7 136:22 137:4,16 276:16 set-up 62:9 sets 136:11 setting 43:22 62:3 96:17 126:9 200:11 setup 42:11 43:7 44:1 sex 161:2,5 172:17 shape 175:19 Shapiro's 178:10 share 5:16 11:7,15 30:10 34:13 51:9 52:3 61:17 91:14 155:2 177:22 180:19 233:8 258:9 shared 6:21 36:13 51:11 62:21 86:11,17 88:1 110:8 124:21 140:9 144:23 154:21 172:12 174:16 205:21 263:6,22 274:23 sharing 47:19 sharpest 187:9 she/her 168:14 198:22 220:15 222:4 229:5 233:2 239:3 249:5 she/they 246:11 sheer 234:21 sheerly 277:3 shield 101:21 shift 35:23 38:14 137:18,19,20 234:23 shifted 125:11 152:2,9 shifting 142:7 shirt 276:8 shocked 261:11 shooting 129:22,23 142:17 143:6 269:17 shop 91:19 200:11 Shops 228:9 short 258:24	short-lived 166:18 shot 118:22 shoulder 234:13 shout-out 108:21 shoving 72:17 73:9 show 7:1 11:18 47:13 52:16, 17 55:9 60:4 61:13 62:20 63:7 69:7 71:5 93:19 97:21 128:2,5 129:18 156:4 167:22 209:5 224:22 250:1 showed 18:16 68:10 73:1 111:16 128:3 227:19 showing 52:21 166:1 shows 167:9 shut 131:9 202:5,12 229:23 230:1,9 259:12 shuttered 217:7 shutting 49:20 230:17,19 side 64:7 234:5 253:12 sidewalk 65:4 134:24 135:5,7, 8 139:14 140:10,14 141:6 233:17 234:3 sidewalks 12:2 39:5 150:12 201:5 248:8 signage 208:12 223:24 signature 96:10 signed 258:9 260:16 significant 49:9 101:12 136:10 141:6 143:1,24 208:17 signs 235:16 silence 189:14 212:8,9 silent 251:2 similar 44:1 45:9 125:17 163:23 187:2 189:10 191:21, 22 similarities 160:17 simple 20:24 226:14 simply 9:23 183:19 188:7 194:1 205:1 207:10 213:4 259:19	sincere 188:14 singing 235:1 single 275:8 sir 2:12 20:6 30:3 114:5 152:6 157:10 sirens 65:22 Sisterly 187:21 sit 31:11,12 32:8,11 41:22 66:4 98:6 111:15 112:1,19 113:11, 15 132:12 133:4,24 145:11 168:11 169:20 site 92:7 93:7 sitting 58:15 132:24 244:8 situation 9:14 59:23 63:19 106:23 112:3 139:1 153:13,20 170:9 231:8,9 232:13 234:11 situations 141:14 147:8 187:15 245:21 251:20 size 92:10 sizes 97:9 skill 137:4 skip 61:14 slamming 232:6 slice 172:20 slide 16:4 35:15 36:12 37:7 38:5,7 39:9 40:10 41:9 42:10 43:6,23 44:24 45:17 46:11 47:11 48:9 51:7 52:2 64:8 68:8 69:20 71:6 72:10 73:15 74:7 75:18 123:17 slides 71:6 224:22 slight 64:4 slogan 212:9 slow 30:9 slowed 132:16 slowly 234:19 small 110:23 249:12 Smith 107:18 113:16 so-called 215:4 social 11:6 19:5 62:7,8 168:1
--	--	---

203:4 society 22:6 23:13 soft 38:20 solace 169:16 sold 128:1 solely 42:1 solution 247:11 solution-based 241:5 solutions 26:12 89:19 172:4 274:12 solutions-focused 85:11 Something's 145:6 son 181:6 194:24 sooner 203:24 sort 215:8 sound 68:17 150:1 sounds 192:20 250:24 South 125:20 127:3 128:17,23 167:4 226:4 268:2,10,12,14, 18,19 269:4,8,14,23,24 271:1 southbound 12:12 sovereign 267:8 space 11:18 13:8 31:8 32:9 34:11,13 37:24 42:16,20 43:11 50:22,23 53:15 57:5,12 64:15, 17 70:1 77:11 96:3 110:7 111:2 130:6,7 209:13 210:13 212:23 242:4,7 243:15 266:14 spaces 23:6 168:2 173:18 205:17 208:24 217:5,12 span 255:14 speak 81:17,20 158:15 188:11,15 199:1 214:9 215:5 219:16 220:8,10 226:4 259:4 speaking 236:3 244:21 257:24 258:23 special 29:8 75:23 81:16 90:15 91:18,21 92:6,14,20 93:6 96:18 255:18 274:2 specialized 98:23	specific 18:6 39:11 134:3,11 155:23 specifically 6:11 17:7 19:9 39:10 134:15 138:22 242:17 spent 171:13 180:5 spicy 56:7 spirit 11:13 114:12 163:20 220:5 spoke 91:1,4 164:12 261:13 sponsor 5:3 sponsored 215:3 spread 200:9 spurred 15:22 Square 161:15 168:22 215:14, 15 216:14,15,17 217:9 244:19 squeezing 141:9 Squilla 3:12 20:5 270:21 271:12,16,17 St 241:21 253:15 staff 6:7 43:15 staffing 49:5 51:2 65:10 73:22,23 Stafford 40:16 stakeholders 77:20 84:7 85:13 88:15 stalled 166:15 stand 58:11 79:13 99:6 178:12 278:18 standard 15:11,13 205:4 standards 166:12 211:9 standing 67:12 106:10 110:14 145:4 155:6 180:6 188:7 233:14 stands 213:13 Stanford 35:3 76:5 staring 235:10 start 2:8 5:7 15:23 20:23 30:18 35:15 41:11 51:5,9,19 52:5 65:2 77:18 121:2 126:13 132:17 146:14 148:13,20 171:9 228:24	started 2:7 12:10 30:21 35:21 46:11 51:18 163:4 200:13 211:21 275:22 starting 25:16 48:18,19 49:19 62:16 152:14 starts 46:12 state 29:19 158:1 204:7 214:11,16 221:22,23 225:23 228:24 238:22 244:8 260:22 267:20 state- 215:2 stated 250:6 statement 100:3 statements 182:21 station 117:16 stationed 44:5 stay 25:9 100:8,12,13 stayed 130:8 staying 5:23 178:6 262:20 265:17 278:12 steadfast 97:3 stem 171:18 step 114:3 151:3 208:1 213:2 steps 30:17 77:19 sticking 158:11 214:1 stigma 169:13 Stimpy 173:2 Stonewall 226:10 Stonewall/dewey's 206:15 stop 51:22 56:5 67:13 80:9 107:8 154:15 179:14 184:11 201:23 215:16 254:19 277:18 stop-and-frisk 206:23 stopped 206:21 stops 166:7 191:8 stores 128:19 storied 36:13 stories 12:14,19 13:9,16 180:8 story 11:7 30:21 183:19
---	--	---

250:23 straight 238:7 244:24 stranger 266:13 strategic 166:16 strategies 86:7 153:22 154:1, 2 157:1 167:12 strategy 4:15 88:19 162:13 208:21 Stratford 159:9 street 38:18 41:13,14,15 44:3 52:8 56:19 66:7,9,13,14,17 67:12,13 70:21 71:10,11,12 125:20,22 127:3,4 128:17,23 135:15,19 142:18,20 159:20 160:5 167:4 172:19 197:4 200:11 201:10,12 202:11,12 203:9 222:17,18 223:3,22 224:2 226:9,11 228:9 229:10, 18 230:7 233:12 234:4,7 235:16 236:19 237:20,23 239:17 250:14 252:18 268:10, 14,19 269:8,15,23,24 271:1 streets 8:1,24 15:6 45:4 49:21 93:1 194:15 240:6,10 243:4 248:6 strength 83:17 90:3 strengthen 82:6 86:18 87:15 194:7 211:3 strengthening 88:10 278:2 strikes 139:4 stripes 173:15 strong 97:2 167:20 stronger 37:17 88:13 strongest 89:19 structural 22:21 structure 193:9 structured 205:17 structures 22:17,19 88:14 190:1 192:22 193:4,7 194:8 struggling 71:20 stuck 182:16 232:10 275:7 student 158:22	students 176:13 studying 258:12 stuff 116:6 156:5 264:19 stunt 170:5 style 162:4 subjected 188:6 submit 145:23 subpoena 177:1 subtracted 220:11 success 83:9 96:13 successes 167:1 successful 91:9 92:3 successfully 43:2 84:15 93:15 94:18 95:10,18 97:10 suddenly 277:1 suffered 175:1 suffering 175:2 269:11 suggest 143:17 suicide 164:8,12 summary 206:22 summed 196:14 summer 91:16 93:17 Sunday 74:3 168:18 222:9 232:19 Super 237:21 superb 28:14 supervision 104:23 supervisor 104:21 105:9 106:8,19,24 107:19 112:5 supervisor's 104:24 Supervisors 192:9 support 23:23 25:12 83:24 84:11 91:13 94:11 96:4 148:18 165:11 166:8 168:15 169:21 204:21 210:22 213:16 256:6 258:7 supported 84:3 93:15 263:1 supporting 85:20 89:14 96:20 224:6	supportive 133:3 supports 37:23 83:15 suppose 206:22 supposed 7:2 28:6 54:13 63:17 79:17 99:8 119:3,6 156:12 187:19 194:17 207:11 227:8 278:15 surging 53:20 57:16 surprise 124:13 surprised 37:2 253:9 surrounding 186:3 surveillance 171:3 215:21 217:18 227:18 surveying 48:12 survivor 219:23 survivors 176:13 suspicious 180:22 182:14 sustainable 88:24 switched 217:8 swore 227:14 symbol 194:16 systemic 248:21 254:13 systemically 247:15 systems 23:22 175:4,15 184:8 207:8 211:4
T		
table 29:12 77:22,24 79:18,19 157:22 198:20 218:14 228:21 238:20 244:5 252:12 260:13 267:18 tactics 4:15,20 8:12,18 9:17 13:11 147:10 takeaways 87:5 91:15 takes 41:19 42:20 216:4 247:6 taking 55:8 60:16 61:7 129:15 talk 30:7,12,13,15 34:3,23 35:18,20,23 36:7 40:14 46:10 50:12 53:17 59:23 74:10 116:8 129:10 199:5 216:9 259:24		

talked 31:1 67:4 73:24 134:22 140:6 146:18 230:15 276:15 talking 54:10 72:4 76:19 77:18 132:11 133:16 155:22 215:24 216:1 231:2 target 39:14 248:13,14 targeted 14:11 18:20 195:11 targets 38:20 39:11 Taron 238:17 240:23 tased 68:13 247:13 taser 12:11 68:23 209:5 247:10 tasers 221:1 227:3 247:12 tasing 68:11 69:4 Task 92:14 93:6 tasked 197:14 taught 122:4 207:5,8 Tavern 205:9 tax 251:3 263:17 taxpayers 176:11 teacher 105:21 121:22 teaches 154:8 team 29:15 33:18 42:24 46:7,8 50:9,10 64:16 73:12 75:24 79:11 92:4 111:24 124:7 125:14 136:9 141:23 teams 255:2,13 256:1,10 teenagers 54:10,11 206:2 telling 62:2 106:5 108:22 120:11 128:2 171:14 233:15 tells 250:23 Temple 233:7 ten 45:18 123:18 229:6 tenor 275:21 tense 187:15 245:20 tension 77:9 155:5 181:19 terrible 26:2 219:24 terribly 268:11	terrified 143:19 terrify 135:12 terrifying 135:2 277:3 terror 225:5,6 terrorizing 245:2 test 169:15 testified 172:1 testify 29:1 81:8 90:5,17 97:14 198:11 testifying 5:22 testimony 4:7 29:20 80:11,14 91:1,3,6 102:24 111:8 123:1 134:20 143:23 156:18 158:3,9 181:4 222:2 229:2 238:24 244:10 246:8 252:7 267:22 271:20 275:9 276:21 thanking 5:12 Thanksgiving 255:7 there'd 136:17 there'll 113:23 they/he 261:1 they/them 226:2 236:1 268:1 thing 7:16 40:3 55:15 59:18 66:12 67:3 100:7 117:11,22 119:18 130:21 131:1 132:21, 22 147:16 148:12,17 199:6 200:6 246:6 263:5 266:4,6 278:14 things 21:24 28:3 30:7 35:1 38:4 39:6,18 42:5 44:6 45:2 47:10,12,15 48:5,6 51:15 67:19 76:15 78:8,14 79:8,9 100:14 107:6 111:12 112:22 113:8,20 135:14 141:21 142:6 147:11 150:3,12 155:11 156:9, 16 166:17 168:24 202:2 204:1 218:19 227:6 241:4 261:6,10 262:8 263:12,18,20 264:4,9,15 267:6 271:10 273:8,16 274:9, 16 thinking 67:24 184:11 Thomas 2:2,21,22 3:21 4:24 5:9 16:11,23 20:2 26:15,24 28:21 29:13,24 51:21,23 53:21	54:7,12 55:11 56:3 80:10,17, 19 90:10 97:17 100:1,23 101:14,24 104:11 105:13 107:10,21 108:6,11,16 109:14, 23 111:6 112:7 114:1,6 117:20 118:4 119:16 120:8,18 121:3 122:11 155:19 199:8 thought 28:2 47:6 155:21 201:3 thoughtful 97:2 196:11 thoughtfully 6:8 thousand 56:14 thousands 84:15 208:23 threat 162:20 176:6 182:1 threatened 173:5 threatening 247:9 269:12 threatens 180:23 threats 46:4 Thrift 270:5 thrive 227:21 throw 234:12 throwing 120:14 thrown 156:9 thunder 139:4 ticket 169:14 tighter 208:24 time 21:6,10 24:15 31:24 32:9 33:4,12,24 37:12 48:8 50:5 54:18 61:18 62:13 74:21 77:11 78:11 79:7 99:1 100:12 101:15 105:1,17 108:8 115:4 122:18 139:20 141:20 147:23 160:1 164:10,21 165:6 173:3 188:3 201:4 202:15 212:17 213:2 215:15 216:22 217:8 218:20 222:12 223:11 225:20 228:12 240:23 258:24 timeline 45:18 51:13 214:2 times 21:5 45:11 50:14 64:20, 21 77:1,7 120:23 123:8 147:17 154:23 253:2,3 255:13 261:24 Timoney 163:8
---	--	---

title 4:9 184:24 185:5 titles 261:19 Tito 29:9 77:17 81:4 90:22 275:4 Tito's 91:3 today 2:3 4:4 5:14 9:12 10:9 11:10,11 13:9 14:22 15:15,22 17:22 19:15 27:7 30:6 72:14 78:21 81:12 90:5,20 97:14 98:6 123:1 140:5 155:13,15 156:16 158:14 162:6 166:19 168:10,12,15 169:20 175:21 177:22 189:18 198:12 204:17 205:11 209:3 220:6 224:19 225:18 236:3 237:12 241:6 244:21 249:16 257:24 258:15, 23 261:5 271:20 277:19 today's 5:3,7 7:19 11:3 14:14 17:2 20:10 54:24 114:22 178:20 258:8 told 7:7 18:5 30:20 31:24 45:3 60:12 98:13 111:14 122:9,10 201:21 209:22 230:17 232:16 233:17 234:2 250:20 265:20 tolerance 165:12 167:23 186:24 tolerant 165:9 tone 62:3 122:1 266:11 276:16 tools 251:23 toothless 166:13 top 13:23 60:19 61:4 71:7 total 72:12 74:2 tour 88:21 tourists 25:3 town 173:20 tractor 39:3 traffic 12:12 46:1 49:10 70:20 93:8 94:6 95:6 125:16 136:20, 21,23 137:15 138:12 208:22 246:23 trailer 39:3 trained 50:20 107:4 122:5 137:16 153:23 154:5 156:13 160:18	training 25:15 77:3 134:12 139:6 155:17 156:13 164:2 166:9 192:4,6 197:1 251:6 trainings 192:24 trampled 250:15 trans 148:22 162:14,21 169:3 171:24 221:13 246:19 248:16 transgender 7:13 162:13 166:6 172:10 173:7 176:5 179:19 190:7,21 195:12 204:15 transition 27:11 transitional-age 206:4 207:22 translate 165:13 transparency 19:12 85:8 transparent 169:22 trapped 227:5 235:6 trash 235:16 trauma 21:19 31:14 77:12 154:24 159:13 246:14 259:2 277:5 traumas 215:6 traumatic 16:8 traumatized 13:24 143:21 250:3 traumatizing 138:6 treat 33:5 180:21 187:24 273:21,22 treated 31:6 160:20,24 175:17 180:1 181:22,24 184:14 186:6 194:21 238:6 265:3 267:8 treating 31:22 182:13 trigger 16:4 77:12 triggered 250:17 triggers 155:8 trot 64:5 247:3 trouble 246:3 troubling 12:24 truck 38:9 42:15	trucks 38:24 39:1 42:22 45:7 true 8:18 9:6 11:14 32:10 169:24 170:2 263:1 Trump 245:3 trust 14:20 87:7,21 88:7 116:4, 5 121:14 147:19 178:23 183:17 187:12 195:16 211:5 225:16 trusted 220:6 truth 147:2 169:4 175:7 178:19 219:17,18 246:17 258:9 263:14,18 turn 65:15,24 70:19 71:16 78:14 144:10 168:2 181:17 turned 164:5 220:18 227:2 turning 65:21 two-hour 85:10 two-minute 214:1 218:17 Ty 272:8 274:3 type 101:21 120:20 types 39:8 229:10 typically 94:22 Tyrell 260:11,24
U		
U-BAHN 185:17 186:17 U.S. 161:22 ultimately 60:14 113:4 128:21 129:3 142:15 202:4 unarmed 245:11 unknownst 202:9 uncomfortable 141:11 175:9 177:8 underage 160:7 undergo 164:2 undermines 175:6 underscore 236:8 understand 10:19 19:16,17 24:19 26:10 34:7 39:20 54:1, 15 55:13,20 63:21 68:7 69:3		

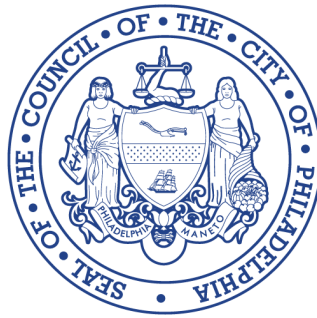
72:4 77:8 85:5 87:1 106:1 111:7 115:2,12 119:22 138:8, 14 154:18,23 155:4,12 156:23 160:18 182:2 189:3 207:19,20 209:7 210:15 224:9 247:4 255:23 264:3,4 269:20 270:1 271:22 272:1,8 278:6	upset 160:9 urgent 186:14 urinals 128:8 use-of-force 191:9 utilized 193:5 utilizing 95:8	victory 163:11 video 16:1 21:21 47:17,24 53:10,23 54:2 55:10,19 60:1, 11,17 61:1,13 62:21 64:12 65:14 68:10 69:6 73:1 97:22 103:15 104:6 111:17,21 114:24 118:21 128:3,5 156:2 241:15 250:16 264:2 268:9 videos 6:20 12:22 36:2,3 51:10 52:13 53:6 55:5 60:4 62:22,24 63:8,9 65:23 73:1,10 97:23 108:20 128:3 129:18,20 156:4 171:5 199:11 228:6 249:15 250:22 262:4 view 106:15 Village 185:9 186:18 191:7 240:6,11 violate 98:16 violated 189:8 violation 72:19 104:10,14 118:8 violations 119:2 violence 17:8 159:14 162:20 171:4 182:8 199:11 201:9,14 215:2,3 222:14 259:21 264:8 268:3 violent 28:10 152:16 161:17 185:22 201:16 264:11 virtual 45:19 123:19 visibility 37:22 96:9 visible 12:4 83:8 226:16 227:23 vision 80:8 visit 159:7 visited 13:24 visitor 188:5 visitors 97:13 176:6 179:22 180:14 187:21 195:15 259:17 vocal 158:13 voice 214:24 248:19 258:13 voiced 173:23 voiceless 215:1
understanding 32:13 134:16 155:6 209:2 understands 23:21 27:24 28:2 understood 34:6 146:24 208:5 underway 48:14,15 49:12 78:8 undesirables 161:2 unequal 185:7 187:7 unexpected 124:14 unfairly 7:20 unfolded 208:18 unfortunate 142:21 205:2 unhelpful 236:22 uniform 107:2 221:17 253:20 uniformed 222:6 uniforms 245:14 unimportant 258:20 unique 261:17 unit 95:5 163:19,23 unlawful 182:8 unlike 230:22 232:20 unnecessary 167:4 183:24 209:1 264:10 270:6 unnoticed 81:2 unpack 22:24 23:1 30:9 unsafe 8:2 12:3,5,6 unusual 12:13 unwavering 81:21 upcoming 93:22 upper 71:7	V Val's 268:15 269:1,2 270:6 Valdes 29:9 80:16,21 275:4 Valdez 81:4 90:23 Valley 255:9 valued 83:4 values 227:20 vehicle 42:2 45:5 208:22 224:24 vehicle-ramming 46:4 vehicles 38:24 44:2 45:7 225:2 vendors 43:12 venue 24:14 95:17 195:21 223:12 venues 185:18,23 186:6,18 verbal 72:18 73:10 verbalized 16:7 verbally 161:19 223:13 version 124:16,18 134:17 206:23 versions 192:21 versus 24:5,10 25:4 vibrant 19:8 84:16 Vice- 80:17 Vice-chair 2:24 5:2 30:4 90:10 158:6 victim 166:8 victimized 58:8 victims 215:1 219:23	

voices 11:12 82:18 134:7 volume 7:14 48:24 volunteer 36:17 166:10 volunteers 43:16 83:12 145:8 voters 176:11 W wagons 230:21 wait 152:21 waiting 239:13,15 wake 163:9 walk 31:8 35:1 65:16 232:17 234:13 239:20 241:21,23 248:11 walked 119:9,10 173:3 229:15 walking 111:1 118:14 128:14 172:19 196:4 206:24 208:14 235:8 265:22 wall 60:21 Wallace 231:5 Walnut 44:3 52:7 53:12 54:6 55:9 60:8,9,13 70:21 71:10 131:23 228:8 229:17,23 230:1 233:12,23 234:6 239:14,16 Walter 231:4 wanted 11:10 137:6 221:3 247:22 258:15 259:3,4 261:15 270:11 271:10 272:13 274:16, 17 wanting 272:11 war 26:2 Ward 258:3,4,5 warm 100:9,12,13 warn 254:19 warning 16:5 218:1 warrior 219:15 Washington 163:19 168:21 215:14 216:15,17 244:19 255:4 watch 106:3 253:19	watched 53:24 72:24 180:10 181:16,17,19 195:1 234:8,11 watching 20:20 21:21 23:4 110:15 114:24 115:7 116:20 168:10 177:13 262:4 Wawa 93:19 ways 229:20 230:5 weak 214:18 weakness 50:6 weapon 143:11 weaponized 22:11 23:7 weapons 225:3 wear 99:12,15 100:5,9,24 wearing 72:20,21 98:8 99:8,20 102:5,9 111:19 117:18 167:19 weather 100:18 101:2 webinar 20:18 website 212:3 Wednesday 2:3 week 18:19 weekend 86:5 89:7 95:23 181:7 183:20,21 195:3 200:12, 14 216:2 268:10 Weiss 66:18 127:20 welcomed 244:15 welcoming 25:3 90:1 174:8 well-known 9:17 well-trained 137:17 wellness 88:22 west 41:13 168:22 197:6 217:6 231:5 244:19 whatnot 269:21 wheel 101:9 white 160:10 231:20 237:5 276:8 who've 56:24 whoa 121:23 Whoever's 221:23	whomever 133:5 wielding 226:22 wife 244:13 William 158:21 win 237:21 wind 128:22 windows 152:21 153:7,8 208:11 232:7 wise 158:13 witnessed 12:8 205:11 222:12 223:12 239:9 247:8 253:22 264:9 witnesses 29:11 105:21 157:21 198:19 218:8,13 228:16,20 238:19 244:1,4 252:11 260:12 267:17 woman 39:17 169:3 173:7 223:5 234:8 246:15 247:9 women 34:1 36:17,19 40:13 41:18 44:4 51:17 70:6 77:6 99:7 104:7,23 105:10 107:4 110:24 111:19 112:14 113:7 117:16 138:22 143:4 145:13 148:22 155:14,23 162:15 wonderful 21:6 196:20 wondering 116:9 Woody's 202:13 word 32:21,22 72:3 214:4 260:3 words 18:12 102:21 199:23 220:8,9,20 236:5 work 19:9 23:24 25:8 26:11 33:13 34:5 35:4,14 36:17 42:20 50:15 53:16 69:24 82:24 89:22,23 98:21 99:18 136:15 148:14 165:19 167:10 212:16 236:2 255:24 263:16 277:21 278:1 worked 6:7 36:21 40:24 147:18 245:15 255:1,13 272:8 worker 172:17 188:5 workers 161:2,6 179:21 187:14 190:10 195:15
--	---	---

working 69:12 74:16 82:6 88:4 141:19 143:9 148:4 157:6 265:23 274:1,3 workplace 20:18 works 21:1 82:21 world 19:22 25:4 153:18 258:21 world-class 19:21 96:17 worn 17:23 101:19,20 worse 184:23 245:24 worst 162:20 249:6 worth 217:22 219:4 wound 7:8 wow 116:11 wrap 176:20 writing 12:1 145:24 written 190:13 192:15 194:9 wrong 26:5 103:7,16 106:4,8, 13,16 109:24 111:4 112:6 114:10 117:1,5 120:3 227:6 wrongs 19:18 wrote 11:16 Wynnefield 214:15 X XII 54:17 Y year 28:4 43:24 44:9 45:6,10 47:1,7 68:1 74:5 79:15 80:7,8 81:24 83:13 84:3 91:13 145:5, 6 146:6 149:22 150:16 157:8 181:5,9 188:2 194:23,24 195:6 200:12 203:18 239:5,6,9 257:13 263:8 274:4 277:21 year's 27:15 81:19 84:13 91:2 236:9 273:10 years 13:11 22:14 27:17 32:4 57:2 63:13 71:24 74:22 124:11 142:16 162:2 164:4 165:20 167:10 171:14 179:12 180:5	202:17 217:4 220:13 224:8 229:7 241:17 243:2 245:16 248:5 258:11 263:4 266:4 269:17,19 yelled 223:8 265:19 yelling 222:21 227:3 232:7 yellow 42:14 yield 177:23 197:22 228:11 York 164:18 young 3:15 31:7 52:10,17,18 53:5,14,19 54:2,5,8,11,18,23 56:14,24 57:4,7,11,14,15 58:23 59:13,16 60:4,15 61:2,5, 19,22 62:5 63:24 64:5,18 69:24 70:1,9 72:7 102:4 115:1, 2,7,9,13,16 127:12 129:10 130:14 132:11,15,23 133:6 137:21 142:19 146:15 150:6 169:16 179:21 202:21 204:21 205:13,17 206:18 207:23 210:16,21,23 211:2 212:24 213:7,15 223:5 231:24 234:8 250:13 younger 165:9 youth 87:19 88:19 131:12,19 204:20 207:22 210:15,17 212:20 213:13,15 youth-serving 210:11 Youtuber 249:5 Z zero-sum 144:11	
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City of Philadelphia

*City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
402 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107*



Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, August 5, 2026

10:00 AM

Room 400, City Hall

Committee on Legislative Oversight

The Public Hearing, open to the public, will hear testimony on the following items:

260650

Resolution Authorizing the City Council Committee on Legislative Oversight to hold hearings examining the strategy and tactics deployed by the City of Philadelphia for crowd control during and following public events, as a result of reports of overly aggressive tactics used by the Philadelphia Police Department following the 2026 LGBTQ Pride festivities.

Attachments: [Signature26065000](#)

Copies of the foregoing items are available in the Office of the Chief Clerk of the Council, Room 402, City Hall or at <https://phila.legistar.com/>.