

1
2 COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
3 PUBLIC HEARING BEFORE JOINT COMMITTEES ON
4 LAW & GOVERNMENT AND HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

5 - - -
6 Room 400, City Hall
7 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
8 Wednesday, December 9, 1998
9 11:00 a.m.
10 - - -

11 - - -
12 WELFARE REFORM HEARINGS
13 - - -
14

15
16 PRESENT: COUNCILMAN DAVID COHEN, Chair
17 COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE BLACKWELL
18 COUNCILWOMAN MARIAN B. TASCIO
19 COUNCILMAN ANGEL L. ORTIZ
20 RICHARD T. MARIANO
21 COUNCILMAN FRANK RIZZO

22
23 VINCENT VARALLO ASSOCIATES, INC.
24 Registered Professional Reporters
25 Eleven Penn Center, Suite 600
Philadelphia, PA 19103
(215) 561-2220

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 I N D E X

3		Page
4	General Auditor Robert Casey, Jr.	4
5	Marva West, PA Social Services Union.	50
6	Talmadge Bellow, PA Social Services Union . . .	62
7	Joe Morelli, Vice President, Institutional Advancement, Peirce Junior College.	76
8	Arun Prabhakaran.	89
9	Forum Committee for the Black Radical Congress	
10	Rochelle Phillips, Social Supports Coordinator the Friends Neighborhood Guild.	93
11	Leona Smith	109
12	President, National Union of the Homeless Executive Director of the Employment Project	
13	John Austin, Chairman	123
14	Right People Campaign	
15	Lawrence W. Roy, Private Citizen.	128
16	Barbara King, Private Citizen	134
17	Khalefat El, Sergeant-at-Arms	136
18	Right People's Campaign for Human Rights	
19	Paul Smith, Private Citizen	142
20	Timothy Heyward, Private Citizen.	151
21	Joyce Taylor, J.T. Save the Children Assoc.	152

22

23

24

25

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 P R O C E E D I N G S

3 COUNCILMAN COHEN: In view of the press
4 conference being held with respect to Disney Land
5 in the mayor's reception office at this moment,
6 the joint committee on Law & Government and Human
7 Services is going to recess until 11:30 a.m.
8 We're told that the auditor general will be here
9 at that time and the hearing will begin. So this
10 is notice to all members of the committees and to
11 the public generally that the hearing will be
12 recessed for 30 minutes, until 11:30.

13 Thank you.

14 - - -

15 COUNCILMAN COHEN: The joint committees
16 of Law & Government and Health & Human Services is
17 now in session to continue the welfare reform
18 hearings. We're delighted that the first witness
19 this morning is going to be Auditor General Robert
20 Casey, whose reports on this subject have
21 enlightened and alerted Pennsylvanians and
22 Philadelphians in particular of the dangers that
23 face us.

24 Mr. Auditor General, please come
25 forward. He also happens to be the distinguished

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 son of a distinguished father, and we welcome you
3 here to Philadelphia.

4 (Auditor General Robert Casey comes
5 forward.)

6 MR. CASEY: Mr. Chairman, thank you
7 very much for not only inviting us but for making
8 our appearance here possible. I also want to
9 thank your colleague Councilman Ortiz for his
10 help, and I do appreciate this opportunity to
11 testify today about the status of welfare reform
12 in Pennsylvania. And I think that today, I --

13 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Mr. General, may I
14 ask you to please identify yourself first for the
15 record.

16 MR. CASEY: I'm sorry.

17 COUNCILMAN COHEN: It's just a
18 traditional part of the parliamentary procedure
19 here.

20 MR. CASEY: Sure. Robert P. Casey,
21 Jr., Auditor General.

22 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Thank you. Please
23 go ahead, sir.

24 MR. CASEY: But I want to emphasize
25 that although we sit here today in Philadelphia in

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 City Council chambers, in many ways what I say
3 today will speak to individuals in Harrisburg,
4 specifically the governor of Pennsylvania, Tom
5 Ridge and the entire General Assembly. I think
6 it's important for people to understand that prior
7 to my remarks.

8 And I also want to say for the record
9 that we have a prepared statement which I believe
10 the committee has, and I'd respectfully request
11 that that statement be made a part of the record.

12 COUNCILMAN COHEN: It will be, sir.

13 MR. CASEY: And what I'll do is
14 summarize those remarks that I made in the written
15 statement.

16 About 20 years ago, a little over 20
17 years ago, just before he died, Senator Hubert H.
18 Humphrey of Minnesota set forth a moral test for
19 government. And he basically said that the moral
20 test of government is how it treats those in the
21 dawn of life, those in the shadows of life, and
22 those in the twilight of life. That is the moral
23 test which any government, and certainly
24 Pennsylvania state government, must meet. Not
25 just when it feels like it, not just when the

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 budget looks good; it's got to meet that test all
3 of the time.

4 Governor Casey once said, when speaking
5 about Pennsylvania, he said that the family of
6 Pennsylvania must leave no one out and must leave
7 no one behind. And I think when we take both of
8 those statements, they speak to what we're here
9 gathered today to talk about. Because this is a
10 critical issue for the state of Pennsylvania, not
11 just for our largest city, Philadelphia; it's a
12 critical issue for all of the cities, all of the
13 towns, the rural areas of Pennsylvania, that we
14 focus on this issue right now.

15 So what are we talking about here? Let
16 me just step back for a minute to talk about what
17 we're focussed on today. We're talking today --
18 and I know that both members of Council who are
19 here with us today and others who will be here
20 with us today, I know you will understand this,
21 but I think it's important to restate it.

22 We're here today to talk about real
23 life, not some obscure program in Harrisburg, not
24 some discussions simply about case loads and
25 numbers -- we're here to talk about real life.

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 Real life, for example, for a single mother who's
3 struggling to make ends meet, who's struggling to
4 find a job or struggling at the find child care,
5 struggling just every day just to get through the
6 day, to get transportation, to make sure that her
7 children can get to quality child care, to make
8 sure she can work so that she can provide for
9 those children and to love them with peace of
10 mind.

11 So I think that sometimes we get lost
12 in the numbers and the details, and I think it's
13 important to remember who we're talking about when
14 we talk about these issues.

15 There are a lot of people that are
16 going to be affected by this, this looming
17 deadline of March 3rd. Some estimates say it will
18 be as high as 25,000 people just in Philadelphia
19 alone. And, of course, that doesn't include
20 children, that's just the adults.

21 So I'm here today to do a couple of
22 things. But primarily I'm here today to say that
23 Governor Ridge and the General Assembly of
24 Pennsylvania must commit the time and the energy
25 and the resources necessary to make sure that

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 welfare reform really does work.

3 And I noticed in the newspaper over the
4 Thanksgiving holiday, I read stories all over the
5 state about all the time and energy and commitment
6 they brought to stadiums and all the time and
7 energy and committee that he and the legislature
8 over the last four years have brought to corporate
9 tax cuts -- in other words, big corporations get
10 tax cuts every year. So if they can spend all of
11 that time on stadiums and corporate tax cuts and
12 stay up late at night and lobby people, find the
13 resources, drink the coffee, do everything they
14 can to focus on an issue like that, they can bring
15 the same dedication and the same energy and zeal
16 to finding the right solutions to welfare reform.

17 I think the families in this state
18 would like to read a story about the governor and
19 legislature staying up late at night, worrying
20 about and focussing on and solving the problems
21 that we takes face in welfare reform. But in the
22 last couple months, the silence from Harrisburg on
23 this issues has been deafening. And I think it's
24 about time that they spoke directly to this
25 issue.

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 So I'm here to propose some solutions.

3 I don't, nor does my department have all of the
4 answers. We are not as expert as some who may
5 testify before this committee, but I think we have
6 some practical solutions which focus on the
7 problems of that single mother that I talked about
8 before.

9 First of all, let me say what we're
10 doing in a practical way that I think will have an
11 impact on this issue. There are two performance
12 audits which our department is conducting which
13 will have an impact. The first is a performance
14 audit on how we're spending all of that new money
15 that's coming into Pennsylvania. About 1.4
16 billion (with a B) dollars that are spent through
17 the temporary assistance for needy program, the
18 so-called TANF Program, the federal program, and
19 also the related child care development block
20 grant money, how we're spending that for welfare
21 to work, where the money going, who's going to
22 benefit, and how the State is dealing with it.

23 Also, we're doing an audit of the
24 Department of Public Welfare's regulation and
25 oversight of child care in Pennsylvania, and

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform
2 specifically subsidized child care. I'm not going
3 to go into the detail here that's in the
4 statement, but we're doing those two things right
5 now, and we have hope to have the first audit the
6 on TANF and how that money's spent, we hope to
7 have that completed by February of 1999.

8 COUNCILMAN COHEN: And, Mr. General,
9 that's money that's supposed to be dedicated to
10 the welfare reform program?

11 MR. CASEY: That's correct.

12 COUNCILMAN COHEN: It's that?

13 MR. CASEY: That's correct. And I
14 think it's important that someone give an
15 accounting of where that money's going and how
16 it's spent, so we should have answers to that.

17 And I know that Councilman Ortiz, you
18 had a series of questions which you read into the
19 record for Deputy Secretary Heller to answer.
20 Several of those-- and I hope all of those
21 questions, we should be able to answer those in
22 the course of that audit.

23 COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: We have not gotten a
24 response as of yet, as of this date, from Deputy
25 Secretary Heller. We hope that she is much more

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 quicker with the problems of welfare people than
3 she is in responding to the questions that we have
4 given her.

5 MR. CASEY: Well, I know the feeling
6 because in our department, we often don't get
7 responses very quickly from that department, but I
8 don't want to bore you with the details of that.

9 But let me say at the outset, I'm going
10 to make about four recommendations. I think it's
11 important to review those quickly before we get
12 into some more detail.

13 Four recommendations are as follows,
14 and I'll use a lot of shorthand here. But first
15 of all, we think -- I think that the state of
16 Pennsylvania should expand the definition of what
17 constitutes work for those who are subject to the
18 requirements after two years. In other words,
19 after March 3, 1999, what will be the definition
20 of "work." Right now, it's very narrow, it's very
21 restrictive, and it cannot include education and
22 training. I think that's a mistake. So that's
23 recommendation number one.

24 The second one involves the individual
25 assessments by caseworkers. We think that that

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 process has to be improved dramatically. In other
3 words, when a welfare recipient comes before a
4 caseworker employed by the Department of Public
5 Welfare, how is that process going to work? Is
6 that going to be a process which is done by a
7 highly trained person, or is it going to be done
8 by a person who's told by Harrisburg to keep the
9 numbers down no matter what, and I think that's
10 something that we have to look at carefully.

11 We also think legally, legally, that
12 the State cannot sanction someone, take them off
13 the rolls automatically; that they have to conduct
14 by law that individual case by case assessment,
15 and that process we can talk a lot about.

16 COUNCILMAN COHEN: That would seem to
17 me to be something that lawyers call "due
18 process."

19 MR. CASEY: I would think if it's not
20 due process, it's a very close relative of due
21 process, no question about it.

22 Thirdly, we have to as a state
23 eliminate barriers for those who are trying to
24 lift themselves out of poverty or off of
25 dependency. I think the Council and members here

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 are well familiar with those barriers -- child
3 care barriers, which I'll talk about; jobs; all of
4 the barriers that we can focus on.

5 An fourthly and finally, just as a
6 quick review, we think that the State of
7 Pennsylvania, this administration, the Ridge
8 administration, should figure out a way to
9 eliminate or at least reduce the adverse impact of
10 the so-called full family sanction. In other
11 words, when an individual in that family is
12 sanctioned because they have not followed the
13 rules, so to speak, the impact of that can affect
14 an entire family. We think that that should be
15 changed.

16 And now I just want to get into some of
17 the more detail. I know we have a lot of
18 witnesses to follow so I'll try to move quickly.

19 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Well, I think it's
20 very important, General, that you take whatever
21 time is needed --

22 MR. CASEY: Okay.

23 COUNCILMAN COHEN: -- to explain these
24 issues because all hope that the governor would
25 use his position, use what's generally called the

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 "bully pulpit" to explain to the people of
3 Pennsylvania what they face and the steps that
4 ought to be taken to meet it.

5 Everybody would welcome a program that
6 really brings in genuine work pays affordable
7 wages so that people can live in dignity and
8 support their families. And we have found the
9 silence from the governor appalling. And when we
10 have invited him, we've done it consistently, the
11 governor's representatives to explain what the
12 governor's policies are, we have met a brick wall
13 because we've just not been able to get answers.

14 And you, so far as the state level,
15 have been the only voice we've heard calling
16 attention to these problems and doing as you're
17 doing right now, pointing out what's needed. So
18 we need that kind of assistance so that we can to
19 go out into our communities and alert the people
20 so that they can contact their representatives in
21 the General Assembly, both the House and the
22 Senate, and contact the governor's office so we
23 can face something other than the catastrophe
24 beginning in early March.

25 So we welcome you and we don't want you

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 to feel rushed.

3 MR. CASEY: Okay, thank you.

4 COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: 'Cause, after all,
5 it may be your office that's the only place where
6 we might be able to find out where the money
7 really went.

8 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Incidentally, we are
9 going to be joined in the course of these hearing
10 by a number of other members of the two
11 committees. We just came from the mayor's
12 reception room where there was a program dedicated
13 to the coming to Philadelphia of Disney. It
14 promises to deal with certain important aspects of
15 Philadelphia life, but nothing could be as really
16 important as the subject we're talking about here.

17 And I'm David Cohen, Chairman of the
18 Law and Government Committee. Councilwoman Marian
19 Tasco, who's Chairman of the Health & Human
20 Services Committee will be joining us shortly. To
21 my left has been Councilman Ortiz, who's been
22 spearheading the investigation of the situation
23 and trying to bring public attention to the
24 issue. And to my right is Councilman Frank
25 Rizzo. And we will be introducing other members

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform
2 of these two committees as come into the chambers.

3 Thank you, General, please proceed.

4 MR. CASEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

5 As I said before, and I think
6 Councilman Cohen and Councilman and Councilman
7 Rizzo know this, March 3rd is the deadline that we
8 all have to focus on. And those who are receiving
9 assistance at that point in time are required to
10 work 20 hours per week. And I think that if that
11 were to proceed as it's going right now, there
12 would be some very harsh and very onerous results
13 for a lot of families in Pennsylvania.

14 But I think and we think, after looking
15 at this issue carefully, we think that
16 Pennsylvania can avoid that harsh impact by doing
17 a couple of things. First of all, as I said
18 before, expanding that definition of work to
19 include education and training for a limited
20 period of time. That would give people the
21 opportunity to invest their time in something
22 which would be productive, which would enhance
23 their ability to leave dent.

24 And I think it's important to
25 understand the two basic mandates that TANF, the

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 federal law, imposes on states. There are
3 basically two mandates. Because what the other
4 side on this issue will say is, they'll say, Well,
5 if you change the definition of work, you're going
6 to hurt the State's effort, they're going to lose
7 money down the road because they'll be penalized.

8 That's not true for two reasons.

9 Number one, the first mandate is the so-called
10 individual eligibility determinations. In other
11 words, the states decide those. They're given
12 some discretion, some latitude. For example,
13 they're given some discretion as to what is the
14 definition of work. So that gives us an opening,
15 a possibility to work with.

16 The second part of this is what's
17 called the minimum work participation rates. In
18 other words, looking at the aggregate, the
19 aggregate case load of those who are on
20 assistance. That is very strict, under federal
21 law; it's dictated by federal law. We don't have
22 the option to not comply with that -- we have to.

23 But we think that because the State is
24 meeting that obligation, meeting that minimum work
25 participation rate, met it last year, appears to

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 be meeting it this year, and we probably will meet
3 it in the future, the next couple years. Because
4 we're okay there, that gives us a lot of room to
5 work, specifically with that definition of work.

6 So that's an important point, an
7 important legal point of what our room to maneuver
8 is on this issue. Because Pennsylvania's
9 exceeding those rates right now and will do so
10 even if the work definition is expanded.

11 So that's point number one. We think
12 that that's something the State can do, and we
13 think the Ridge administration should act upon
14 that.

15 Secondly, Pennsylvania must do a
16 case-by-case eligibility determination before
17 terminating an individual who is the recipient of
18 welfare benefits. There can be no termination
19 under state law if an individual has made a
20 good-faith effort to try to find work, to try to
21 comply with the rules; and secondly, if there is a
22 good reason why that person has been unsuccessful.
23 If they can meet that test, this state cannot
24 eliminate them from the rolls.

25 Now, we may have some debate about

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 that, but I think that we're on very sound legal
3 ground about the reading of the statute on that
4 issue. So I think that's important.

5 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Do you have any
6 thought, General, with respect to the job?
7 Suppose there are no jobs available? Would that
8 fit if someone has shown by the record that
9 they've sought employment but the private sector
10 just has failed to provide the jobs that are
11 necessary?

12 MR. CASEY: Right. And I think the key
13 there is that it's a good-faith attempt. And I
14 think the focus of most welfare reform programs
15 around the country is the focus on those who, for
16 whatever reason, even those that are well aware of
17 what they're supposed to do, they're well aware of
18 what they're required to do under the law, and
19 they just ignore it, and they don't commit that
20 good-faith effort and they don't have a good
21 reason. And I think that's a small percentage of
22 those out there.

23 Reading the summaries by some other
24 individuals, reading newspaper stories, you would
25 think that there weren't many people who could

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 meet that good-faith test. I think there are a
3 lot of them, and we have to make sure as a state
4 that we objectively look at those people and not
5 make a subjective decision which is driven by a
6 political priority from Harrisburg.

7 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Should there be a
8 responsibility on the part of state to see to it
9 that there are successful outreach programs so
10 that women with small children who may not be able
11 to read the English language, for example, or may
12 suffer from illiteracy, shouldn't the state take
13 steps to make certain that they do whatever's
14 necessary to make sure that people understand the
15 requirements?

16 'Cause we find in Philadelphia
17 frequently that water is shut for nonpayment of
18 bills and that the Water Department just assumes
19 that the people have received the bills, have
20 received the warnings and understand them. And
21 often, when the investigation is made, we find to
22 the contrary.

23 I'm wondering whether that kind of
24 outreach would fit within your definitions as to
25 the requirement of the State to make sure that

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 each case is examined so that if there's any
3 bad-faith finding, it's based on the premise that
4 the people understood what their obligations were
5 but consciously just neglected them or refused to
6 follow them only. And only in such a case, it
7 would seem to me, would there be any justification
8 for taking any action.

9 I must say there even, I'm troubled;
10 I'm troubled by what I think is a total concept
11 foreign to American law and American social
12 policy. If the mother fails to do what's needed,
13 is it right to punish the children? And if you
14 have any thought along those lines, we would
15 certainly welcome them, too.

16 MR. CASEY: Absolutely. And I think it
17 leads into what I was about to say next about the
18 barriers. And you pointed out some of them, not
19 just with welfare reform, but with other issues.

20 The obvious barrier to employment is
21 the scarcity of jobs. I don't think there's
22 anyone who's appeared in this chamber or anywhere
23 else who would say that there are plenty of jobs
24 out there for those who are looking. That's a big
25 problem, and it's a barrier and a hurdle over

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 which some people cannot get over. And I think we
3 have to factor that in when those eligibility are
4 made by DPW. That's on obvious one.

5 The other one, which I know you've
6 heard testimony on is child care, the DPW
7 regulations now, and I'll talk more about those in
8 a minute. But DPW claims now that the new
9 regulations will prevent people from having to be
10 bounced from one child-care system to another
11 within the State-subsidized program. And I hope
12 that happens, I hope they're right about that,
13 that would be an improvement.

14 But right now, we face the problem of a
15 waiting list of about 12,000 people, and at the
16 same time, you have this waiting list. The
17 solution to that by the Department of Public
18 Welfare, the Ridge administration was to say,
19 Well, we're going to increase copayments for those
20 who are receiving child care.

21 In other words, so if you're a single
22 mother with two children who needs child care and
23 you're making about 11,000 bucks a year, under the
24 new regulations, your weekly copayment, the amount
25 you've got to come up with every week, goes from 5

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 bucks a week to 15 bucks. So it's a 200 percent
3 increase. And you just factor that in over a
4 year, and \$520 more has to come off the back of
5 someone who's making 11,000 bucks a year.

6 The rationale and the premise that they
7 make is ridiculous. The premise is, We've got
8 these people over here who are waiting for child
9 care, and we need money to pay for it. And you
10 know who's going to pay for it? You, who's making
11 11,000 bucks a year and has 2 kids.

12 That's ridiculous. It's ridiculous on
13 its face, but it's even -- it's unconscionable
14 when we know right now that we've got hundreds of
15 millions of new dollars coming into this state
16 right now for child care, welfare reform. We've
17 got a budget surplus that would choke a horse
18 right now, and we're telling people in this state,
19 through these regulations, that they've got to pay
20 for that so that someone who's almost as poor as
21 they are or maybe has a little more money than
22 they do can get child care.

23 That's outrageous. A lot of people in
24 this state have spoken against it, and those
25 regulations will go into effect in February unless

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 they're changed.

3 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Councilman Ortiz?

4 COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: You either put food
5 on the table or you pay for the day care.

6 MR. CASEY: Yeah.

7 COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: You've got to make
8 -- the choices that the State is putting are a
9 really, really very bad situation.

10 COUNCILMAN COHEN: And with no shortage
11 of funds for baseball stadiums and football
12 stadiums.

13 MR. CASEY: No. And, you know, people,
14 you know, they stay up all night, you know,
15 drinking the coffee and lobbying and pushing and
16 pulling and finding money and creative financing
17 schemes for stadiums for stadiums or corporate tax
18 cuts or anything else. But when it comes to these
19 people issues, there's silence, there's dodging,
20 there's ducking, and weaving and ignoring. It's
21 outrageous.

22 You know, under the federal standard
23 for child care, the federal "touchstone," I'll
24 call it, is affordability for child care. In
25 other words, we as a government, federal or state,

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 are going to help people with child care based on
3 the issue of affordability. And I think, in this
4 state, lately, even though there's more money
5 spent, overall money spent on child care because
6 of the new wave of federal money, they've actually
7 cut state money. That's another story.

8 But instead of focussing on
9 affordability, the focus seems to be, in state
10 government, number crunching. And I don't think
11 in this state, at any time, but especially when
12 we're trying to move people from welfare to work,
13 I don't think that affordability should take a
14 back seat to number crunching.

15 Another area, which I know you've heard
16 testimony about, which I won't get into too
17 deeply, is transportation, the whole issue of
18 reverse commute for city dwellers to get to jobs
19 in the suburbs. I know that there's been a lot of
20 collaboration in this town about that,
21 private-sector and government agencies working
22 together, and I applaud that. We have to have the
23 same effort statewide on transportation.

24 And then the next barrier is the whole
25 issue of caseworker training. Now, there's been a

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 lot written about this, and I can't say that I've
3 done my own analysis or survey, but just based
4 upon what's on the public record and newspapers
5 and studies about caseworkers in some cases, in
6 some cases, not every case, but in some cases, not
7 knowing the regulations. That's one problem --
8 not being able to communicate answers to those who
9 are looking to them for answers, and also not
10 being able to be reached. So there's a
11 communication breakdown.

12 So you have a situation where someone
13 may not have a good communication with their
14 caseworker, and then guess who decides whether
15 they're going to be cut off from benefits? That
16 caseworker, who, in some cases, may not have been
17 giving them all the information, they may have
18 been hard to reach, they may not have been
19 adequately trained, and all the rest.

20 COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: They may not know
21 the information.

22 MR. CASEY: Exactly, exactly. So we
23 have to focus as a case on state on caseworkers.
24 I guess there's one study showed that 80 percent,
25 80 percent, of the recipients of public assistance

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 that they interviewed in this one study, 80
3 percent did not know that they could get help with
4 child care. Now, that's the kind of communication
5 breakdown that you, Councilman Cohen, that you
6 talked about before, in other issues.

7 The second-to-last issue I want to talk
8 about is the so-called Three Strikes Rule, the
9 full family sanction rule, where, if after the two
10 years, let's just take -- after the two years, if
11 you have a young mother who's got two children and
12 she, for some reason, is in violation and is
13 sanctioned, she loses her benefits for 30 days.
14 And then, say, she gets sanctioned a second time,
15 she loses her benefits for 60 days. In both of
16 those cases, the children are impacted as well.
17 But then on the third violation, she loses
18 benefits forever.

19 Now, I don't think that anyone in this
20 state, no matter what part of the ideological
21 spectrum they come from, thinks that a young child
22 should be sanctioned permanently because of
23 mistakes that their parent made. And you
24 mentioned that -- you made that point before.

25 Many of these families, as you know,

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 and you've heard testimony about this, many of
3 these families are dealing with chronic illnesses
4 -- either a chronic illness that the child has or
5 several children have, or that the parent has, and
6 that's yet another barrier for that family.

7 So I call on today the Ridge
8 administration and the General Assembly to
9 eliminate or at least reduce the adverse impact of
10 that full family sanction.

11 Connecticut -- and we cite in our
12 written testimony a number of other states, what
13 they're doing. Connecticut, the state of
14 Connecticut, in order to mitigate that problem,
15 has provided food and rent vouchers for families.
16 We ought to look at options like that for
17 Pennsylvania so that children do not suffer
18 because of this sanction.

19 And, finally, when we get to the crux
20 of what we're doing here and the crux of what I'm
21 doing here today -- I think it's what you said
22 earlier in your remarks, Mr. Chairman, is that a
23 lot of this is the attention and the focus brought
24 to it.

25 And I think the Ridge administration

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 and all of those individuals what work for the
3 Ridge administration, the governor himself, his
4 front office, his Department of Public Welfare
5 Secretary, the deputy secretary who appeared
6 before this committee, all of those individuals
7 should publicly explain in great detail for
8 families in this state what's going to happen on
9 March 3rd, because it's apparent there's a lot of
10 confusion, there are a lot of problems, there are
11 a lot of mistakes that have been made. And I
12 think they have the responsibility to explain to
13 the people of this state, and especially to the
14 families that going to be adversely impacted,
15 what's going to happen and what they're going to
16 do about it to soften the blow that will happen
17 for some families.

18 And they do that in a way that reaches
19 out to people. They' shouldn't do it in a way
20 which sends out a policy paper that gets mailed
21 around. They should do it in a dramatic way that
22 reaches the most people possible.

23 And when a governor in this state
24 focuses on an issue, he or she can bring
25 tremendous attention and tremendous energy and

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 resources to issues like that. And there's no
3 issue right now that requires more attention in
4 the next three months than the issue of welfare
5 reform. And I think that all of us have to focus
6 on that.

7 Let me just conclude with some
8 observations. You know, when you think about
9 welfare reform in this state or in any other
10 state, this is not an issue about number and
11 budgets and case loads; this is an issue about
12 people, real people trying to deal with real life.
13 It's about that single mother that I talked about
14 before who's trying to lift her family out of
15 dependency, who's trying to do the right things,
16 who's trying to provide child care, who's trying
17 to provide work so that her family can sustain
18 itself.

19 And that mother is in -- she can be in
20 Scranton or Aliquippa or Connellsville out in
21 western Pennsylvania, a small town, or here in
22 Philadelphia. And it's not limited to one area of
23 the state or one county or one city. State
24 government -- the crux of all of this, I think, is
25 that state government must demonstrate that it

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 cares about her, that it really cares about her,
3 and that it cares about her children and what's
4 going to happen to her children with these new
5 regulations and these new laws, that we really do
6 care about what happens to that family as they
7 walk down that difficult road to self-
8 sufficiency. And that's what this is all about.

9 And it's really about even more than
10 whether that woman is able to find a job or
11 whether she's able to provide child care for her
12 children. It's really about, I think, a lot more
13 than that.

14 I think we, as a state all of us, I
15 think, want to allow her and want to enact
16 policies which will give her peace of mind, the
17 peace of mind to know that this system is going to
18 support her and help her -- not to not to give her
19 a handout, but to help her and assist her in that
20 difficult process. And also that system is going
21 to support her to give her peace of mind not just
22 to live, but to dream, to dream about her
23 children's future in a very, very great state, to
24 give her the opportunity to dream about their
25 future. That's what this is about. It's about

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 more than all of the things that we talked about
3 today.

4 Every family, no matter how wealthy or
5 no matter how poor they are, ought to have the
6 opportunity to dream. That's what our whole
7 country is about, and I think that's what
8 Pennsylvania must be about. And that, that
9 promise, that is the promise of Pennsylvania, and
10 that's the promise that we must keep.

11 And I think, whether it's the
12 individuals in this room today or those who are in
13 the legislature or the governor or anyone else
14 who's involved in this issue, all of us, all of us
15 have an obligation to make Pennsylvania the best
16 that it can be, to make Pennsylvania the best
17 state possible.

18 We all have an obligation to make this
19 a commonwealth in life as well as in name, a place
20 where people can have opportunity and can dream
21 and strive and lift themselves out of dependence.
22 I think, at the bottom line, I think it has to be
23 a place where we truly are one family.

24 Thank you very much.

25 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Thank you very much,

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 General.

3 (Applause.)

4 COUNCILMAN COHEN: We think you've set
5 forth a program that's not only doable, but is an
6 absolute must program because I just can't
7 comprehend, as we approach the millennium a
8 government saying to the people, You have our
9 permission to starve, to live on the streets.
10 Government has the other responsibility, of
11 providing the opportunities that you talked about.

12 And the dreams, Mr. General, I must
13 say, can only come not when the stomach is empty
14 and there's no roof over the head, but it's got to
15 come by saying that every family is guaranteed,
16 under our form of government, an opportunity to
17 raise their family in a healthy environment. And
18 we thank you very much.

19 I'd like to ask Councilman Ortiz who I
20 know has a series of questions.

21 MR. CASEY: Thank you.

22 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Councilman Ortiz.

23 COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Thank you.

24 Auditor General, in terms of the
25 surplus that we have, and given the rationale of

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 the Ridge administration and the State legislature
3 that this is a "first work state," that you got to
4 go out -- not training, not aspect of looking at
5 how capable and what capacity you have to go out
6 and find work, but you just go out there and find
7 monies.

8 There is no planning that I see
9 anywhere of any jobs program coming forward to
10 supplement the TANF requirements. There's no jobs
11 programs that are going to take care of that great
12 majority of individuals that, on March the 3rd,
13 will be affected and impacted.

14 Did see any of that and do you have any
15 idea in which way this surplus that we have
16 currently in the state level can be used to put
17 forward a plan along those lines?

18 MR. CASEY: Well, I think that there
19 are ways that we could make some target
20 investments in programs that work. For example,
21 in our statement, we talk about just one small
22 example. The state of Maryland has a program
23 where they provide opportunity for -- because they
24 have a need for transportation and also a need for
25 jobs, they try to, in essence, marry the two,

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 where they help individuals to obtain jobs within
3 that industry -- in other words, to develop small
4 businesses that will transport people who need
5 that kind of transportation. So you're almost
6 dealing with two barriers at once. I think that
7 if this state focuses on this issue, I think
8 there's money to invest in it.

9 No one is saying that we've got to
10 spend all of our surplus; we need that for
11 economic downturns, and we can't spend all of the
12 surplus. But we can, I think, make target
13 investment in programs which will help people not
14 just find work, but will help people invest in
15 jobs that they can support their families on. And
16 I think that there are a lot of programs around
17 the country that other states are doing that we
18 should take a hard look at.

19 What I'm afraid has happened, frankly,
20 is that we have a good economy. That's point
21 number one. Point number two is that this has not
22 been a priority in Harrisburg, okay, not at all.
23 Point number three is that, you know, the law was
24 passed, the state law was passed in 1996, and I'm
25 afraid that there are some people in Harrisburg

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 that think that all you have to do is pass a law
3 that's called "reform," stamp the word "reform" on
4 it, and then the bureaucracy will be implemented,
5 don't worry about it.

6 And that's very dangerous. It stifles,
7 I think, creativity, it leads to a situation where
8 the train is going and there's no way to stop it,
9 and don't worry about it because we have a surplus
10 and everybody's happy, and the and unemployment
11 rate statewide is low.

12 COUNCILMAN COHEN: And we don't know
13 the direction of the train.

14 MR. CASEY: What's that?

15 COUNCILMAN COHEN: And we don't know
16 the direction of the train.

17 MR. CASEY: Exactly.

18 COUNCILMAN COHEN: It could be going
19 off a cliff.

20 MR. CASEY: So I mean a lot of the
21 creativity and energy and resources which we can
22 bring to this have not been examined or explored.
23 And, yet, we have this deadline facing us.

24 COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: We had quite an
25 extensive discussion, and former Councilman Ed

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 Schwartz challenged Deputy Secretary Heller in
3 terms of the very aspect that you were speaking
4 about, the expansion of the definition of work,
5 and she was accused of, in essence, trying to run
6 a game on people by not telling the truth as to
7 what all of these regulations meant and giving the
8 impression that if we do expand the definition,
9 that it would hurt us somehow in our ability to
10 satisfy federal requirements and so on down the
11 line.

12 Do you see this at all as a realistic
13 factor in our ability to expand the definition, or
14 is it just another rhetorical barrier that is
15 being put forward by the deputy secretary?

16 MR. CASEY: We think, and in our
17 written testimony, we expound on it more than I
18 can here, but we think that not only have we met
19 those bigger aggregate requirements, not only have
20 we met them but we've met them with a lot of
21 room. For example, I think in the first year, and
22 these are by DPW members, in the first year, the
23 percent number, and I won't get into all of the
24 calculations here because I -- it doesn't, um. . .

25 Here's basically what the calculations

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 are: In the first year, their rate that they had
3 to achieve was about 10 percent. What they
4 actually achieved was 23 percent, so they have a
5 lot of room there.

6 We think in fiscal year 1999, the
7 federal fiscal year, that what they need is only
8 about a 1 percent rate, because their rate has
9 come down because of the progress that's been made
10 since 1995 on people obtaining work. We think, by
11 our calculations, they only need 1 percent --
12 that's the number they have to reach, and we think
13 they're going to be able to do that.

14 So I don't think the argument that
15 expanding the definition of work adversely
16 impacting the state holds any water. We think
17 that they can do both, that they can meet those
18 aggregate requirements, and at the same time,
19 expand that definition of work.

20 See, this would be easier, I think, for
21 people to agree with, people like me, people like
22 both of you and others around the state. This
23 would be a lot of a lot easier to digest if we
24 knew that this system was working very well, that
25 the communication problem wasn't there, if we knew

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 that people were being trained, if we knew people
3 were on the road to self-sufficiency. If there
4 weren't any big problems with this, it would be a
5 different story, we'd have a harder argument to
6 make.

7 But you can't say, on the one hand,
8 that we can't expand the definition of work
9 because it will ruin our -- allegedly ruin our big
10 picture, which it won't; and at the same time,
11 acknowledge that there are problems with
12 communication, there's big problems with child
13 care, there's a lot of problems here.

14 So, I mean, I think any policy-maker --
15 a governor or a legislator -- must be open to the
16 idea to say, Okay, look, we thought it would work
17 out a little better; it's not working out as well.
18 We've got to make some changes. And no one in
19 politically or terms of reality -- this is going
20 to occur. Welfare reform's here to stay. There's
21 a consensus in Washington and I think there's a
22 consensus around the state.

23 And we've got to deal with it. I
24 didn't like it when it came, but I think office
25 have to deal with it. But I think that one thing

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 that --

3 COUNCILMAN COHEN: And you didn't like
4 it because I think you knew, as most of us,
5 everybody in this room knew, that it was born not
6 out of good intentions but out of evil intentions,
7 and that's the reason there are so many flaws in
8 the system. That's the reason -- there's
9 inattention to the real human problems that are
10 being caused. The drive was to get people off of
11 welfare without respect to the lack of jobs that
12 were available.

13 And I think that that is what we're
14 trying to do through these hearings and through
15 education, I think, is to take a thing conceived
16 in sin, as I see it, and make it something, you
17 know, that people can live with.

18 Everybody agrees it's much better for
19 individuals and families to be in a work situation
20 rather than in a welfare situation, but all of the
21 programs that you're suggesting should have been
22 in place at the same time that the legislation was
23 enacted instead of being in a situation where
24 people are confronted with homelessness, with no
25 means of supporting their families.

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 So I just don't begin -- assuming that
3 the governor of the state, because he's been a
4 strong advocate always of cut the relief rolls,
5 not worrying about what happens after you cut
6 them. And I think your efforts are moving in the
7 right direction, and I think an informed and
8 educated electorate will take the correct action
9 to see that government doesn't revert back to the
10 middle ages when people starved to death or froze
11 on the streets.

12 MR. CASEY: I think too often people in
13 Harrisburg are concerned with the scoreboard and
14 numbers crunching and, you know, whether the rolls
15 going down. And if they're going down, fine,
16 everything's okay.

17 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Yeah. That seems to
18 be the only score card they're interested in.

19 COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: I don't know where
20 those people are at. The one thing that bothers
21 me, and perhaps your office will be able to
22 determine for us, because we've asked the
23 question, how do you determine that those people
24 are actually employed, how do you determine that
25 they're actually keeping employment that they were

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 placed on when they went off the welfare rolls?

3 And they have no answers. They just
4 say that the welfare rolls are down but that they
5 don't know where the people have gone to. They
6 cannot identify where it is that they've been
7 placed. They cannot tell us that people that were
8 off the welfare rolls and whether they have come
9 back or not, whether they have entered into a
10 cycle of just going off, getting a job for four
11 months, five months, not holding it, going back on
12 the welfare rolls.

13 We don't know any of those things
14 because they're not -- either they're not equipped
15 to do it, they don't want to do it, they don't
16 want to find out, they don't want to tell us the
17 real truth about the numbers that are going off or
18 not.

19 And we need your office, in essence, to
20 be able to give us the reality of those
21 statistics. That when they say 14 percent, we can
22 identify where that 14 percent is at. When we can
23 identify what of that percentage has come back on
24 the roll and been placed by other individual so
25 that we begin to understand whether this law is

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 really having an effect, a positive effect in
3 actually finding work for people on welfare or
4 not.

5 Because right now, we've asked the
6 State, we've asked the City, and the City doesn't
7 know. And they've asked the State and the State
8 doesn't know. So we need to be able to determine
9 real, exact numbers. The reality of the
10 percentage going down, whether it is real or not,
11 whether it's fiction, is made up. Because
12 statistics lie, and we all know that.

13 COUNCILMAN COHEN: General, I want to
14 note the presence of Councilwoman Blackwell.

15 MR. CASEY: Councilwoman Blackwell, how
16 are you?

17 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Just fine.
18 Mr. Chairman is it all right if I --

19 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Yeah, go ahead.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Certainly, it
21 seems to me in our quest to try to deal with all
22 these welfare, all the -- the March 3rd deadline,
23 we've been really concerned because it seems to me
24 there has to be three issues that need to be dealt
25 with in order to make any sense of it.

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 One is, of course, transportation that
3 everybody knows is an issue. Two is day care,
4 which is the other issue. And the third is even
5 in job training.

6 And in our local program here to bring
7 Philadelphians to work, nobody -- there wasn't
8 seem to be a focus on how we're going to help
9 people who capital read at eighth-grade level or
10 above. Those who read at eighth-grade level or
11 below, I should say, are the ones for whom we
12 don't have a program. We've got to have a program
13 that will enable these people to get some kind of
14 meaningful job level training with jobs at that
15 end that can help our city so that they can be a
16 part of the workforce.

17 If we don't create those kinds of job
18 training opportunities because maybe these aren't
19 the people that we want to train for the other
20 jobs, for those, you know, maybe with the computer
21 repair. I'm involved in a school -- we've been
22 trying to do our part in welfare to work -- that
23 does nursing assistance, computer repair, and
24 several other areas. They do about five areas of
25 job training.

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 But for those who read at eighth-grade
3 level or below, we've got to find other jobs that
4 maybe people can learn by rote. People can be
5 very intelligent but not able to read.

6 MR. CASEY: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: And not be
8 able to pass certain kinds of tests, but they can
9 do a lot of jobs in our city to make it grow.
10 They can do a lot of jobs in all manner of city
11 services. And that, I think, is where we really
12 need a focus that will allow the city to do that.

13 So I wanted to know your opinion on
14 that and if you think at this point in this whole
15 welfare-to-work system that there's room for such
16 a proposal. I mean, folks can do all kinds of
17 work in our communities, from horticultural to
18 street-sweeping, go landscaping, and all other
19 kinds of work.

20 I mean, we all know somebody, if we're
21 old enough, we all have people in our families who
22 -- I can say I have a master's degree but I had a
23 father who couldn't go further than ninth grade
24 but who knew more than I did when he passed, even
25 with my degrees.

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 MR. CASEY: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: So I'm just
4 wondering if you think there's somewhere that we
5 can find a place in this whole welfare maze for
6 these individuals.

7 MR. CASEY: Well, I think there is, and
8 I think it goes without saying that there are a
9 lot of people right now working on this issue in
10 the trenches.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: That's right.

12 MR. CASEY: Three of them are before me
13 today -- the members of Council, the mayor, the
14 Private Industry Council. There's a lot of people
15 in cities like Philadelphia across the state who
16 are working on this every day and have provided
17 insights into this issue.

18 I think, however, the leadership on
19 this issue has to come really from a lot of
20 people, but primarily from one person: the
21 governor of the Commonwealth. This is a State
22 program which affects not just Philadelphia, it
23 affects the entire state.

24 That person, the governor of this
25 state, has to, in the next three months, provide

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 some leadership and commit the time and the energy
3 and the resources and the focus on this issue to
4 solve some of these problems that you pointed out,
5 especially in the area of job creation, job
6 training, child care, and transportation.

7 We cannot just have local communities
8 trying to hopefully patching together a solution.
9 This has to come from the people who said in 1996
10 that this would be a great system, that it would
11 work, it would help families. And they've got to
12 admit that there are problems with it and try to
13 fix them. And I think taxpayers expect that, I
14 think families who are going to be affected by this
15 expect that.

16 And that's where the leadership in the
17 long run has to come. No matter how well a
18 particular city or particular region deals with
19 it, it's got to come from top.

20 And I think, you know, when I read
21 after the election that the governor had a
22 priority list of four or five or six or seven
23 priorities for his second term, welfare reform and
24 making it work was not on there. I think he ought
25 to go back, take out his pencil, and add one more

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform
2 priority for his second term.

3 COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Actually, I think he
4 has to put it at the top of the list.

5 MR. CASEY: Exactly.

6 COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Because I think that
7 if there's any public policy issue that is going
8 to impact on this city in the next five years,
9 it's welfare and this aspect of the welfare
10 reform. And if the governor does not make that
11 the first priority in terms of education and
12 making this work, then this city and Pittsburgh
13 and the poor people across the state are in for a
14 very, very bumpy, bumpy ride.

15 MR. CASEY: And let me just point out
16 one example. I spent a lot of time in the last
17 year focussing on the whole issue of nursing
18 homes. And I've been saying for six months or
19 more that we should have a nursing home report
20 card, a very simple task for the governor and the
21 people in Harrisburg. It has taken about four or
22 five months of saying it that they're finally
23 responding to it. They're finally saying, Well,
24 we're studying it, we're looking at it. But took
25 them a while so.

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 So I think I can understand the
3 frustration that some people have that when
4 there's an important issue to focus on, you've got
5 to keep on them and pushing them in making sure
6 that the people who pay the freight in this state,
7 the taxpayers and the families affected by this,
8 want this done.

9 Everybody wants the system to be
10 better, but it's going to require some leadership
11 in Harrisburg.

12 COUNCILMAN COHEN: General, we're going
13 to be counting on you to lead the way, and we're
14 going to do everything we can do here. And we
15 deeply thank you for making the time available to
16 appear here today.

17 MR. CASEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

18 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Thank you very much.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you,
20 thank you very much.

21 MR. CASEY: Thank you, Councilwoman.

22 (Applause.)

23 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Marva West,
24 representative of District Council 668 of the
25 Pennsylvania Social Services Union.

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 (Ms. West comes forward.)

3 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Thank you and I
4 thank everybody for being patient this morning
5 with the schedule but we're going to stay in this
6 continued session until all witnesses are heard.

7 Miss West, please identify yourself for
8 the record and then proceed. You may introduce
9 the gentleman with you, and he may or may not
10 share, you know, the speaker's microphone,
11 depending on your issues. Go ahead, Miss West.

12 MS. WEST: First of all, I'd like to
13 say good morning.

14 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Good morning.

15 MS. WEST: And on behalf of the
16 Pennsylvania Social Services Union, we do thank
17 you for the opportunity to be able to come before
18 this committee to speak today.

19 For the record, my name is Marva West.
20 I am employed by the Pennsylvania Social Services
21 Union, and with me is my colleague Talmadge
22 Bellow. We are both busy agents for the
23 Pennsylvania Social Services Union.

24 And I must say, just to clear the
25 record and get this straight, that my colleague

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 and I are not income-maintenance caseworkers. We
3 were asked to come here today as representatives
4 of Local 668 to basically talk about the
5 perceptions of what's going on with the
6 caseworkers.

7 And there's been a lot in the media
8 about their inefficiency and those kinds of
9 things, and a lot of people seem tend to believe
10 that they're ineffective. We're here today
11 basically to try to give some clarifications and
12 to point out areas that the workers which we
13 represent are faced with.

14 So, while we're not business agents and
15 we're not caseworkers, so we don't have the
16 experience of a caseworker and, therefore, we
17 can't really answer kind of specific questions.

18 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Well, we know that
19 they all try to do a very good job. We're
20 concerned about whether being given the
21 information properly, whether they're being
22 overloaded with cases so that they don't have the
23 time available to make the explanations.

24 We have a lot of confidence in the
25 caseworkers, but they can only do what they're

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 being permitted to do. And those concerns that
3 have been expressed are not meant in any way to be
4 critical of the individual caseworkers but of the
5 system which seems to prevent them from doing what
6 know we know they would want to do, to do make
7 full information available to everyone.

8 MS. WEST: Well, we certainly
9 appreciate that, and that's really kind of what
10 we're here today to clarify.

11 First of all, let me, if I could give a
12 little history in the Social Services Union.

13 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Please do.

14 MS. WEST: We're a social and
15 rehabilitative union. Therefore, we represent
16 those individuals who work in social services or
17 rehabilitative services. We have a lot of drug
18 and alcohol counselors in addition to caseworkers.

19 We represent approximately about 15,000
20 members across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
21 And of that number, 9,000 are indeed employed by
22 the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. And in
23 Philadelphia, 1200 of those are income-maintenance
24 caseworkers.

25 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Let me interrupt you

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 for just a moment to announce that Councilwoman
3 Marian Tasco, who's Chair of the Health & Human
4 Services Committee and Co-chair of these hearings,
5 she's immediately to my left.

6 Thank you. This is Miss West
7 testifying.

8 Go ahead, please.

9 MS. WEST: The job basically of our
10 income-maintenance caseworkers is to provide
11 assistance and to determine eligibility for
12 recipients within DPW. That means they determine
13 whether or not they're eligible for cash, medical
14 assistance, or food stamp benefits.

15 Of late, however, the job of the
16 income-maintenance caseworker has been a daunting
17 task because, on a daily basis, they kind of are
18 receive constant changes to rules, regulations.
19 And, quite honestly, there are very few
20 clarifications on those issues.

21 We've heard, for instance, one of
22 problems that we've seen is that from the
23 beginning of the implementation process, our union
24 has been meeting with officials from DPW,
25 requesting, for one thing, a very simple thing, we

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 thought, was that there would be consistent
3 implementation of Act 35 throughout the State,
4 meaning that every office that was represented,
5 that was of DPW, they would all carry out the
6 policy in the same way.

7 What we actually got from Secretary
8 Heller was a response that basically said they did
9 not want to take away the flexibility from each of
10 the County Assistance Offices and, therefore, the
11 executive directors were left with the
12 responsibility to design basically their own plan
13 for implementation of welfare reform. And that
14 got worse because the executive directors decided
15 that they would advocate that responsibility to
16 each of the district offices.

17 And I think to speak to a lot of the
18 issue where people say that the caseworkers are
19 confused and misinterpret the rules, it really
20 speaks to this whole mishmash implementation of
21 welfare reform. We felt it should have been
22 consistent. We didn't get that. So that was kind
23 of the beginning of our problem.

24 Our workers are faced daily with,
25 again, as I said before, a lot of rule changes,

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 and they're expected to absorb and implement all
3 of those changes many times on very short notice.
4 And I must say, in defense of them, that they do
5 succeed in actually doing that, even if they don't
6 have the necessary tools and resources available
7 to them.

8 And, unfortunately, it does put them in
9 the position that it looks as if they're not
10 knowledgeable of their jobs. That couldn't be
11 further from the truth. Our worker do an
12 outstanding task of trying to deal with the
13 management that, you know, they work under.

14 Our workers right now, as a result of
15 welfare reform, are pressured daily and threatened
16 with discipline. We believe that there is a
17 complete lack of sensitivity on the part of the
18 Department of Welfare, and not our workers, in
19 terms of implementation of policies and procedures
20 as it relates to welfare reform.

21 So one of the things that I'd like to
22 say or share with people is, if you hear nothing
23 else today, that, you know, our feeling among the
24 workers is please don't kill the messenger. The
25 workers we represent within DPW are not

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 responsible for establishing policy, nor has our
3 input been accepted on a statewide or a local
4 level as it relates to even policy development.

5 So, therefore, they end up being the
6 ones who are responsible for implementing rule
7 changes and dealing with the constant rule
8 changes. But unfortunately, they just don't get
9 -- people are not seeing them in that particular
10 light. They seem them as the bearers of bad news
11 and inaccurate news. And, in fact, that's a
12 result of the management style that we're having
13 to work and live under.

14 I was also asked to speak on the issue
15 of whether or not our workers are being used as
16 scapegoats in this whole issue of welfare reform.
17 Without question, we believe that is true. And,
18 again, for that very first reason that I noted
19 about the implementation inconsistencies.

20 In the climate that we exist in today,
21 it's quite easy to blame the messenger. And in
22 fact, it's occurring daily. They've been accused
23 in the media of being insensitive and unresponsive
24 to client needs. We again believe that that is
25 completely inaccurate.

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 The job of the income-maintenance
3 worker, over the last, I would say, three decades
4 really, has really changed, and I think our
5 caseworkers started out in the '60s as being
6 workers who not only dealt with determining
7 eligibility for their clients, but they also were
8 responsible for dealing with the individual and
9 their family. Recognizing that there were some
10 social educational needs that people needed and
11 various other things, they even did home visits,
12 and they worked with clients in terms of getting
13 them into job-training programs and referrals for
14 child care and things of that nature.

15 Unfortunately, we estimate that
16 somewhere between the late '70s and early '80s
17 that that position of the Department began to
18 change. The home visits were abolished, and
19 people, as workers, were informed that their job
20 is to basically just determine eligibility, make
21 sure that the client has the paperwork that they
22 need that makes them eligible for the services
23 that they're looking for -- be it cash, food
24 stamps, or medical assistance -- and then to leave
25 that thrown.

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 That was, of course, a big transition
3 for our workers 'cause they had been used to
4 dealing with their clients. As a result, however,
5 of this whole focus on just determining
6 eligibility, the case loads did begin to expand.
7 I guess there was just a need to -- again because
8 there wasn't a lot of follow-through on other
9 programs in terms of moving people from welfare to
10 work, the case loads did grow. And as time
11 evolved and things changed, the climate for which
12 our workers existed under also changed.

13 So it become a factor for them, for the
14 employer, for the Department of Public Welfare
15 basically for our workers to deal with just
16 statistics, do the paperwork, provide the cash,
17 the food stamps, and don't worry about other
18 things. Well, certainly, we all know that that
19 changed as a result of the legislation that was
20 signed into law in August of '96, and then
21 business began to take a different tone, and the
22 Department of Public Welfare began to change as
23 well.

24 As a matter of fact, when Pennsylvania
25 began to really implement its welfare reform, they

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 did a poster which they sent to every district
3 office that said something like, "A Job, Any Job
4 Is The Goal." And our workers were insulted by
5 that; they felt that it was ridiculous to put any
6 such poster out saying that a job, any job is
7 important because it showed a lack on the part of
8 Department to really focus on the needs of
9 clients, not jut getting people into any kind of
10 job.

11 Because, as we're aware, any job is not
12 a job that moves people from welfare to
13 self-sufficiency. People need to be able to earn
14 jobs that provide them with a living wage. We
15 expressed these things over and over again to the
16 Department.

17 And, unfortunately, their responses
18 were very -- well, let's say their responses were
19 non-responses because they felt that, you know, in
20 some ways, that we were just kind of looking not
21 to deal with moving people off of welfare but
22 keeping them there, when, in actuality, our
23 workers knew that clients faced a lot of barriers.
24 There were people who needed educational training,
25 there were people who needed basic job training.

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 And there were also people who needed to
3 understand the ethics of work: going on a job on
4 a daily basis, how to dress, how to deal with
5 employers, and those kinds of things.

6 And we have a number of committees, and
7 we have a committee composed basically of
8 caseworkers who are dealing with the Commonwealth,
9 and we were raising these issues with them about
10 providing these resources and doing various
11 things. And, again, their response was not one of
12 being positive. They wanted us to just do the
13 things that the district offices were asking us to
14 do. Our workers were pushed into trainings that
15 were maybe for one day to deal with welfare
16 policy.

17 And, as you know, the policies are very
18 complicated. You know, they're very complex.

19 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Miss West, I would
20 like to say to you that I think you would perform
21 a great service and your union could if you kept
22 us informed of what it was of the demands being
23 made --

24 MS. WEST: Okay.

25 COUNCILMAN COHEN: -- on the workers

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 that were unreasonable. I don't think that the
3 discussion ought to be just between your union and
4 the governor's office, say, or the state
5 administration. Of course, that has to take
6 place, but we think that if we knew about it, we
7 could help all of you.

8 MS. WEST: Okay.

9 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Because you're the
10 folks that get the information, and if you provide
11 it to us -- because you are confirming all of our
12 worst fears as to what's happening, and most of us
13 expected that that was ongoing, and that's why I
14 said at the outset that we think the caseworkers
15 are trying to do a very good and honest job but
16 that it's being made impossible for them to do it
17 in many ways.

18 And we'd like to give you support, you
19 know, in the demands that you make of the, you
20 know, the heads of the department of the
21 governor's office to permit the caseworkers to do
22 the kind of jobs and consider the factors that
23 you've just mentioned.

24 Because I think we're all in agreement
25 that we're talking about meaningful jobs. We know

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 people need training, they've got to have
3 information, and training and education has to be
4 recognized as part of the work process. And that
5 should be considered work.

6 I thought the general who was here,
7 Auditor General Casey, made that point very well,
8 and we'd like to be very supportive.

9 MR. BELLOW: Yes. Councilman Cohen, I
10 would --

11 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Would you first
12 identify yourself for the record.

13 MR. BELLOW: Yes. I'm Talmadge
14 Bellow, the coworker of Marva West.

15 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Very good.

16 MR. BELLOW: I'm a business agent with
17 Local 668. I'm here today because mainly I've
18 been around for a while. I'm senior business
19 agent in the State of Pennsylvania so I've seen
20 some things. I wanted to sit by Marva's side
21 today to make sure that it was clear on where
22 Local 668 is coming from.

23 I want to add before I go further that
24 a business agent is not my only task. I live in
25 the community, I'm from North Philadelphia. I was

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 raised in the Raymond Rosen Project, I came out of
3 the Model Cities Program. I'm now a ward leader
4 in the 29th Ward, on the Republican side. So I am
5 involved deeply with regards to every aspect of
6 what's going on in the community.

7 One of the things that needs to be
8 reiterated here is that the activities of local
9 have been to do exactly what you suggested, and
10 that is to reach out. We have set up community
11 services committees within the local, in the
12 Philadelphia area to do just that. They have
13 caseworkers go out and actually touch base with
14 you guys, let you know what's going on from the
15 other side.

16 One of the things also, before I turn
17 it back over to Miss West, is that you need to
18 know that the reason the caseworkers are not here
19 today is because our caseworkers are afraid for
20 their jobs. If they came before you at City
21 Council or responded to the invite to go talk on
22 public television, they are fearful that they will
23 be disciplined or the subject of discipline.

24 So there is sort of a gag order with
25 regard to our case worker there, and that's the

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 reason why these business agents are here today,
3 to tell you what's going on.

4 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Well, we appreciate
5 that. And I might say, as a Republican, you're in
6 an especially good position to put pressure on the
7 governor and all of the others.

8 MR. BELLOW: Sure.

9 COUNCILMAN COHEN: So we appreciate
10 that, and we're very happy that you were here
11 today because it makes very clear that we thought
12 about the caseworkers was absolutely right. We
13 knew they're really trying to do everything they
14 can and that conditions are impossible for them,
15 'cause we get reports. Individually, our Council
16 phones often ring from caseworkers who are very
17 concerned that they're not being permitted to do
18 the kind of job they feel is needed.

19 MS. WEST: I'll just actually cut to
20 three points that we have --

21 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Yes, if you could
22 summarize, Miss West, at this point.

23 MS. WEST: All right. The additional
24 staff, we've requested additional staff because,
25 you know, again because of the requirements of

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 welfare reform, there's a greater need for people
3 to spend more time with their clients; and yet,
4 there's still ongoing case loads. So we need
5 additional staff to cover that.

6 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Right.

7 MS. WEST: We have not been able to get
8 that. The few people that they've been bringing
9 in, of course, it takes them at least a year
10 before they really can be of any service to the
11 workers who are currently there.

12 So in addition to that staffing
13 barrier, there's been a lot of discussion about
14 people not being able to reach our caseworkers.
15 And that's not completely inaccurate. We met with
16 the Department in an effort long before it began
17 to hit the media that people couldn't reach our
18 caseworkers, that we felt the need for voice mail
19 because, as a result of welfare reform, it
20 required that our caseworkers now sit down with
21 their clients and do what is call "interactive
22 interviewing."

23 By that process, the caseworker is to
24 develop, in conjunction with the client, an
25 agreement of mutual responsibility. That requires

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 a lot of time. It's sitting down and, first of
3 all determining, what kind of needs --

4 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Well, can you tell
5 us what was the response of the Administration was
6 to that request.

7 MS. WEST: We received no response for
8 many months. Finally, in September, we received
9 notice from the executive director here in
10 Philadelphia that, in fact, Deputy Secretary
11 Heller was agreeable, as a pilot, to allowing the
12 caseworker supervisors to have voice mail.

13 That has not become a reality yet, but
14 even with that, I think it falls short of what we
15 really need. What's really happening is when our
16 clients attempt to reach our caseworkers, no one's
17 answering the phone, and they immediately assume
18 people are not working but, you know, the voice
19 mail would certainly help to cut down on the
20 agitation and frustration of clients.

21 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Could I ask you a
22 question? How many cases are there per
23 caseworker?

24 MS. WEST: Well, our cases our measured
25 basically by a matrix, so it's really kind of --

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 in terms of cases, people are probably dealing, on
3 an average, with about maybe anywhere from 500 to
4 700 people on a case load. So that case loads --
5 and that includes not just the adults in that
6 household, but of course, the children and all of
7 the services that they need.

8 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: So then let's talk
9 about how many households, let's reduce it to
10 households because when a caseworker works with a
11 parent on working out her mutual responsibility
12 form, she's talking about the mother and all the
13 family members in that discussion. So for this
14 purpose, why don't we just then that number.

15 MS. WEST: Well, then that number would
16 still be inordinately high.

17 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Yeah, right. So
18 they're going from just dealing with the
19 individuals, the clients, in making sure that they
20 get food stamps, just sort of like a technical
21 service, to now really interacting with the client
22 to say, What can you do? How can we develop a
23 plan for you?

24 And so you're increasing the
25 responsibility, but you still have to deal with

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 this 500 number case load, so no wonder there's
3 the frustration. 'Cause even with voice mail,
4 you're still not going to be able to even get back
5 to those people. 'Cause they're going to leave a
6 message but at least they'll feel good that
7 somebody -- Well, I left a message, at least they
8 got my message.

9 MS. WEST: Right.

10 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: But in that
11 overall scheme of things, it's going to take time
12 to go back through the messages on the voice mail
13 to get to everybody.

14 MS. WEST: That's why additional
15 staffing is so important. But, again, we've not
16 been able to get that.

17 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: So then there is
18 the need because -- we do want this personal
19 one-on-one interaction because of all the things
20 that were told to us, the process that was going
21 to take place, that the client would get all of
22 this personal service, they would be able to work
23 with their caseworker on their mutual
24 responsibilities, then the person's supposed to be
25 knowledgeable enough to send them to Plan A or

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 Plan B or Plan C. And then you're saying, Well,
3 the caseworker may not know because they haven't
4 been given adequate training.

5 So what we got was a really global
6 perfect picture if it could work that way. But
7 it's not really working that way sums up what
8 you're saying.

9 MS. WEST: That is correct. It is not
10 happening that way at all. And, you know, as a
11 client, and I come in an office and I'm sitting
12 there and, of course, I'm going to get frustrated
13 if I'm waiting an hour or more to see my
14 caseworker because the management has required me
15 to schedule maybe 20 people in a day to deal with
16 this process.

17 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: And there are no
18 more home visits.

19 MS. WEST: No more home visits.

20 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Everybody has to
21 come to the office.

22 MS. WEST: Correct, everybody has to
23 come to the office unless they have, you know,
24 something that prevents them from coming in the
25 office -- they're disabled or something -- and

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 then they make arrangements for someone to go out
3 and deal with them. But those cases are very few
4 and far in between, but --

5 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: At the rate you're
6 going, at what point do you think the clients may
7 be reached? I mean, will everybody have had some
8 contact, their program work out?

9 MS. WEST: At this point, I think that
10 most of our clients have received some
11 correspondence, and many of them have already come
12 in for that first time.

13 What our bigger concern is right now is
14 that we were informed at our last statewide
15 meeting and discussion with the employer, which
16 was in October, that come March 3, 1999, no one
17 would be automatically cut off, all those clients
18 who are at the 24-month clock would continue to
19 receive assistance.

20 The problem is, they're going to now
21 all have to be reinterviewed, and the AMRs are
22 going to have to be redone, and then those clients
23 are going -- supposedly, the Department is going
24 to be providing a list of like all contractors
25 that these caseworkers will now have to send those

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 clients to those specific contractors and to those
3 specific job providers.

4 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Miss West, when we
5 recess today, and I don't know when it will be,
6 but we're going to be recessing until Tuesday,
7 February 2, at 11 a.m.

8 We would like you to be in touch with
9 our staff as to what the situation is and the
10 concerns that Councilwoman Tasco and you have
11 expressed, because we would like you back on that
12 day to report to us what has happened.

13 You are free to use in any way this
14 request on our part for you to report to us two
15 weeks prior to February 2nd what the situation is,
16 and you can tell whatever administrators that
17 you're being requested by the Council of the City
18 of Philadelphia to give full details in all of
19 these areas and that you're going to be making a
20 report to us at our hearing on February the 2nd.

21 MS. WEST: Okay.

22 COUNCILMAN COHEN: I think you may find
23 that that will be helpful to you when you tell
24 them that you've been requested by this committee
25 to come back on that date.

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 MS. WEST: I certainly will do that.

3 COUNCILMAN COHEN: If, in the meantime,
4 you can inform me, either Councilwoman Tasco or
5 me, of any particular problems, we will do our
6 best also to intervene in support of the kind of
7 things that you're talking about, that will enable
8 the people affected to get the services I believe,
9 and I think everybody in Council believes, they're
10 fully entitled to.

11 MS. WEST: Sure.

12 COUNCILMAN COHEN: We don't want to see
13 a single person taken off cash assistance if that
14 person has made an effort to get into a work
15 status. And we want the responsibility for the
16 failure of that person to be placed squarely where
17 I think that belongs, and that's on the State.

18 MS. WEST: Certainly. We certainly
19 agree with you on that.

20 And I would just like to leave one
21 other point. The barrier that we've come up
22 against is the whole issue of alternate work
23 schedules and why we think important. And why we
24 haven't gotten that is because now clients are
25 working, there are many who are in job activities,

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 but they're working core hours. They're either,
3 you know, between 8 and 5 p.m.

4 So it makes it impossible for them, if
5 they're scheduled for an appointment with their
6 caseworker and they just started a new job, for
7 them to come in to the office. And so we have
8 been asking and advocating for alternate work
9 schedules so that our caseworkers can --

10 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Can you tell us what
11 that means, "alternate work schedules."

12 MS. WEST: Alternate work schedules
13 mean that we people would be -- I guess some refer
14 to it as "flexible schedules," where some workers
15 come in at 7:30 and work until 3, or some would
16 come in at 10 and work until 6, or whatever the --

17 COUNCILMAN COHEN: So that the office
18 would be open during what hours?

19 MS. WEST: The office would be open
20 from anywhere from 7:30 to, I believe, 9 is what
21 we've asked for.

22 COUNCILMAN COHEN: If you would send us
23 a specific outline of that, I think Councilwoman
24 Tasco and I would be prepared to write, if you
25 tell us to whom.

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 MS. WEST: Okay.

3 COUNCILMAN COHEN: We would write
4 urging that they do that. We'd make that one very
5 specific demand 'cause that's important not only
6 for caseworkers but for their clients as well.

7 MS. WEST: Exactly. And so we will be
8 glad to follow up on that.

9 And I guess, really, quite honestly,
10 that concludes what I have to say but I would like
11 to close in saying that there's been this whole
12 being thing talked about of case loads
13 decreasing. And just so that you know, PSSU has
14 also been asking the Department to provide us with
15 stats on where these people are.

16 We know, our workers know for a fact
17 that they are getting into jobs and not staying
18 into those jobs very long. You know, like they
19 may go there for three or four weeks, and maybe
20 there's a child-care problem and people are coming
21 back through the system. But we haven't been able
22 to get real, hard stats on that.

23 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Could you send us
24 information on that.

25 MS. WEST: Sure.

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 COUNCILMAN COHEN: So that we can
3 direct a separate request. And tell us who the
4 appropriate person or officer might be that we
5 could direct it to.

6 MS. WEST: We certainly will do that.

7 COUNCILMAN COHEN: We would like to do
8 that 'cause you have that information, and we
9 don't have that.

10 MS. WEST: Sure.

11 COUNCILMAN COHEN: But it makes a whole
12 lot of sense.

13 MS. WEST: And the date that you want
14 us to return is February the 2nd?

15 COUNCILMAN COHEN: We're going to have
16 this hearing. We will be resuming when it
17 finishes sometime much later today, but it will be
18 resuming on Tuesday, February 2, 1999, at 11 a.m.

19 MS. WEST: Okay. And we will provide
20 you two weeks before then all the information you
21 requested, and we'll also make sure get
22 information about the alternate work schedules.

23 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Thank you very much.
24 And you may be in contact with the same staff
25 members that brought you here today.

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 MS. WEST: Okay, thank you very much.

3 COUNCILMAN COHEN: All right. Thank
4 you both very much for being here with us.

5 (Applause.)

6 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Joe Morelli, Vice
7 President for Institutional Advancement at Peirce
8 Junior College. And Helen Rosenfeld, the
9 Assistant Dean for Outreach.

10 (Peirce Junior College representatives
11 come forward.)

12 COUNCILMAN COHEN: We welcome you.
13 Proceed in whatever order you think is best for
14 you, and each speaker will identify himself or
15 herself for the record.

16 MR. MORELLI: Okay, thank you.

17 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Go ahead.

18 MR. MORELLI: Thank you. For the
19 record, I am Joe Morelli. I'm Vice President for
20 Institutional Advancement at Peirce College. And
21 my colleague is Helen Rosenfeld, also from Peirce
22 College. We thank you for the opportunity to
23 address this committee.

24 We are here this afternoon to provide
25 perhaps a solution to some of the problems that

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 this committee and the auditor general had
3 identified in terms of the welfare-to-work
4 legislation and reform.

5 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Good, Mr. Morelli.

6 Let me just intercept you for a moment to announce
7 that Councilman Richard Mariano has also joined us
8 this morning.

9 Go ahead, Mr. Morelli.

10 MR. MORELLI: Peirce College is
11 dedicated to --

12 COUNCILMAN COHEN: I just want to urge
13 you to be very brief. We don't need a history on
14 Peirce College. If you could deal directly with
15 whatever the issue is.

16 MR. MORELLI: Yes, I'm going to try to
17 outline that, yes. We want to outline what we
18 believe is a solution.

19 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Very good.

20 MR. MORELLI: Peirce College has been,
21 since 1865, providing, you know, workplace skills
22 and competencies, and we have been --

23 COUNCILMAN COHEN: We're all familiar
24 with the very fine reputation of Peirce College.

25 MR. MORELLI: Thank you. I just want

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 to say that we also have been working in the
3 welfare-to-work programs and providing programs
4 that will help people with job skills training.

5 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Very good.

6 MR. MORELLI: Our solution, however, is
7 to provide -- we have a different model that we'd
8 like to bring forth in terms of training and
9 education for welfare-to-work people.

10 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Have you submitted
11 that model to different government officials?

12 MR. MORELLI: Yes, we have.

13 COUNCILMAN COHEN: And if can you tell
14 us to whom, what their response has been, it would
15 be very helpful.

16 MR. MORELLI: I have used it in a prior
17 position in northeastern Pennsylvania in terms of
18 the Appalachian Regional Commission, where we did
19 a similar program.

20 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Do you have it in
21 writing? Is there anything in writing that you
22 could give to us in the committee?

23 MR. MORELLI: Yes. And I also have --
24 my written testimony has already been presented to
25 this committee several weeks ago when it convened

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform
2 the first time.

3 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Okay.

4 MR. MORELLI: Okay? However, the
5 essence of the model, of the program, basically is
6 to provide career counseling, to provide
7 assessment first. In other words, to identify
8 what a person's interest, abilities, and aptitudes
9 are, rather than say I have a job put, them into a
10 quick training program, and try to stuff them into
11 a job.

12 We first want to identify what that
13 individual can do in terms of -- and to identify
14 exactly where they are with the basic
15 communication skills, with basic job skills.
16 That's the essence. In other words, to try to
17 prepare them for a career rather than --

18 COUNCILMAN COHEN: We understand that.
19 Can you tell us what you've done about presenting
20 it and what your experience has been.

21 MR. MORELLI: Okay. We are doing it
22 right now. At Peirce, we're dealing with probably
23 over a thousand individuals a year that are coming
24 through this kind of program.

25 COUNCILMAN COHEN: And is there a

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 program that the State is funding that makes it
3 possible for them to become students at Peirce?

4 MR. MORELLI: Not at the moment, not at
5 the moment. We do have several -- we're
6 partnering with several agencies to provide some
7 of the, you know, PIC Council programs. We do
8 have some of those, and we can provide results of
9 those programs. We can provide, you know,
10 placement results.

11 COUNCILMAN COHEN: And what response do
12 you get from the State when you make these
13 proposals?

14 MR. MORELLI: Well, it varies.
15 Sometimes, you know, we've gotten some funding.
16 And other times, it's a -- it's just a no, and
17 there's no reason --

18 COUNCILMAN COHEN: So we're all
19 convinced that it's essential to have these kind
20 of programs so you don't have to convince us in
21 the committee of that.

22 MR. MORELLI: That's not what I'm
23 trying to do. I'm trying to point out that
24 there's a model that I believe works, that will
25 find solutions to the problems.

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 The key is -- I believe you have to
3 expand. As the auditor general said, you have to
4 expand the general definition of work to include
5 more training an education.

6 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Right, we agree with
7 that thought.

8 MR. MORELLI: That's the essence. So
9 that a person has time to search for a career and
10 is given the basic skills and competencies. There
11 are jobs out there. The problem is that they are
12 high-tech jobs and they need more training and
13 education.

14 And it takes time to do that. You
15 cannot make up for twelve years of educational
16 neglect in a six-to eight-week training program.

17 COUNCILMAN COHEN: What time would be
18 needed, on average?

19 MR. MORELLI: Well, depends on what
20 career you're preparing for. In other words, most
21 people --

22 COUNCILMAN COHEN: What would be your
23 proposal that you would present to the State?

24 COUNCILMAN COHEN: My proposal would
25 be, roughly, at least a minimum of six months, and

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 it could take up to two years, depending on, you
3 know, the skill and competency that's needed for
4 that particular job.

5 COUNCILMAN COHEN: And your proposal
6 would be that that training and educational period
7 should be considered as part of the work.

8 MR. MORELLI: That's exactly right.
9 However, as part of the training program, there
10 should be on-the-job training. In other words,
11 another key component is to place people in a job
12 as early as possible as long as they have the
13 basic skills.

14 COUNCILMAN COHEN: How would you do
15 that?

16 MR. MORELLI: An entry-level job is
17 just that; it's entry level, it's a way to gain
18 experience so that they can move on, into a
19 career, and eventually end up with a job that will
20 provide self-sufficiency, that will provide a
21 liveable wage. And that's another key ingredient
22 of our model.

23 COUNCILMAN COHEN: And how would that
24 fit into your model? What would you be
25 proposing?

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 MR. MORELLI: What I'm proposing is
3 that as part of the overall training program, as
4 part of that six months to a year, you provide
5 what amounts to, in educational jargon, as a
6 "co-op." Okay, in other words, you are giving
7 them the basic skills, you're giving them the
8 education, but then you place them in a job so
9 that --

10 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Now, would Peirce
11 College be doing that, or would you be asking the
12 state to do that?

13 MR. MORELLI: Pardon?

14 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Would or Peirce
15 College do the placing, like Drexel University
16 does?

17 MR. MORELLI: Exactly. We would search
18 for the jobs, and we have been. In other words,
19 we partner with business and industry.

20 To give you an example, we have a
21 pharmacy tech program. We are partnering with CVS
22 and Rite Aid. They come to us, and they'll take
23 every one of our --

24 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Now, what has
25 happened when presented this proposal to the

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 State?

3 MR. MORELLI: I have not presented
4 formally to the State.

5 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Well, it sounds like
6 a very fine program.

7 MR. MORELLI: Yes.

8 COUNCILMAN COHEN: And we think you
9 ought to be -- and we would be supportive of
10 that. We'd be supportive of any efforts in this
11 direction to expand the definition work, to be a
12 realistic definition, which would mean preparing
13 to be able to enter the workforce.

14 MR. MORELLI: That's true.

15 COUNCILMAN COHEN: And a combination of
16 training and sort of on-the-job training seems to
17 me to be a very useful approach.

18 Councilman Ortiz?

19 COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Yes.

20 COUNCILMAN COHEN: You don't have to
21 sell us on it.

22 MR. MORELLI: No, I'm not selling; I'm
23 just --

24 COUNCILMAN COHEN: 'Cause we think it's
25 great.

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 MR. MORELLI: I'm just describing --

3 COUNCILMAN COHEN: And that's all I'm
4 trying to do, is to tell you that you don't have
5 to convince us of -- MR. MORELLI; I'm not
6 selling. What I was doing was describing a model
7 that I believe -- that I know works. And we're
8 willing to work with any City, State or federal
9 agency that would want to incorporate this type of
10 model into the welfare-to-work programs.

11 COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: The purpose of these
12 hearing are exactly that, Mr. Morelli. The
13 purpose of these hearings is to build up the
14 pressure, the consciousness that -- because no one
15 really out there is talking about this except the
16 thousands of welfare recipients that going to be
17 affected that they're worried that they're going
18 to be hurt. And they're the only ones really that
19 seem to be concerned because newspapers are not
20 putting it out except for a few stories here and
21 there.

22 So what we're trying to do at these
23 hearings is to begin putting out the force, the
24 education so that people become concerned. I like
25 that Peirce and Drexel are here because we need

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 those institutions to join in the effort. We've
3 got to force them to change the definition of
4 work. They're not going to do it willingly.

5 We have to get masses of people
6 involved that -- because March 3rd is not just
7 going to affect just welfare recipients. March
8 3rd is going to affect this Penn's Landing, it's
9 going to affect the Convention Center, it's going
10 to affect the Marriott Hotel, it's going to affect
11 everything that we've been trying to do in this
12 city.

13 And if we don't make the changes that
14 are necessary to make, then you can count on
15 DisneyQuest, Mickey Mouse, and Goofy to just keep
16 walking down the highway, you know?

17 (Applause.)

18 COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: But the thing is
19 that we need Drexel, we need Peirce, we need you
20 folks to begin joining us in this effort that
21 we're trying to put forward. It is -- it's taking
22 us -- it will take us even more.

23 We're hopefully -- we're in a an
24 election period that hopefully this issue will
25 become a priority of the mayoral candidates. I

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 hope that they begin to understand that the wage
3 tax reduction and this other aspect will mean very
4 little if we have 75,000 people out on the
5 streets. So that it's something that we're trying
6 to get across to people, that they have to begin
7 talking about-- and not only talking about but
8 forcing the state legislature to begin making the
9 changes that are necessary.

10 At one point, we may need you and other
11 people join us going to Harrisburg and do the
12 things that we need to do.

13 COUNCILMAN COHEN: And we also want to
14 make sure that you're in touch with Mayor Deputy
15 Donna Cooper, who is heading up the Philadelphia
16 program for the mayor. We want them to know what
17 your model program is so that they can take
18 advantage of it.

19 Because what we're talking in terms of
20 putting pressure on the state legislature, there's
21 much to be done right here in Philadelphia.

22 MR. MORELLI: That's right.

23 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Because we can't
24 afford to just wait for the State to act. We've
25 got to be ready to act if the State begins taking

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform
2 people off of cash assistance.

3 So I just like to urge you -- have you
4 had contact with Miss Cooper?

5 MR. MORELLI: Not yet, no.

6 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Well, we urge you to
7 move in that direction, and you can use our name.
8 Since I'm the one that's here, say that it's at
9 the request and suggestion of Councilman David
10 Cohen that you are in contact with them and you
11 want the City to know fully about your program so
12 that it can be ready for operation, moving in the
13 right direction.

14 MR. MORELLI: Okay, thank you.

15 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Well, look, we thank
16 you both very much for being here and we're very
17 delighted to see as venerable an institution as
18 Peirce dealing with this problem.

19 MR. MORELLI: We thank you also.

20 COUNCILMAN COHEN: And we wish you very
21 well in your program. And if you get an
22 unfavorable response or it looks to you like
23 people are stalling, let us know. We'll help open
24 the doors.

25 MR. MORELLI: Thank you. We'll

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 certainly let you know.

3 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Thank you very much.

4 Arun Prab -- you have to forgive me.

5 Prabhakaran?

6 Okay, when you identify yourself, sir,
7 would you begin by spelling your last name so that
8 the court reporter get your name down very
9 accurately.

10 MR. PRABHAKARAN: My name is Arun,
11 A-R-U-N. And the last name is spelled
12 P-R-A-B-H-A-K-A-R-A-N.

13 COUNCILMAN COHEN: That's the spelling
14 I have, too.

15 MR. PRABHAKARAN: Okay. And I'm --

16 COUNCILMAN COHEN: And you are the
17 convener of the Forum Committee for the Black
18 Radical Congress.

19 MR. PRABHAKARAN: Right, local
20 organizing committee of the Black Radical
21 Congress.

22 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Okay, sir.

23 MR. PRABHAKARAN: I just have a written
24 statement; that's what we're going to be
25 presenting today.

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 COUNCILMAN COHEN: All right. You're
3 going to present the written testimony; you're not
4 going to testify.

5 MR. PRABHAKARAN: No because we assumed
6 that people like the auditor and all of those
7 folks have all the statistics. We just want to
8 present our vantage point in terms of how we
9 represent the people of Philadelphia in terms of
10 the black radical populace here.

11 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Okay.

12 MR. PRABHAKARAN: Let me move up to the
13 microphone.

14 We live in the most affluent country in
15 the world, which has used its economic policies to
16 work way into the economies of nearly every
17 nation. While American corporations reap the
18 wealth of the globe by using low-paid labor --
19 low-paid, exploited labor and using heavy-handed
20 tactics to bully other countries into supporting
21 our consumer-crazed market and industry --

22 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Can you speak
23 directly into the microphone.

24 MR. PRABHAKARAN: Yes, okay. Our
25 nation's people are losing jobs every day and

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 getting poorer and more indebted to a system of
3 economics that, since its inception, has only
4 worked for the rich. People in this country
5 struggle to survive without adequate health care,
6 schooling, shelter, food, and without access to
7 many of the absolute needs of life.

8 The welfare reform legislation is the
9 fruits of what saw brought by most of our elected
10 leaders about three years ago in a flurry of
11 racist rhetoric about the welfare queen. This
12 propaganda was meant to insult black women and
13 have us believe that the fight against the
14 legislation would only affect black people.
15 Unfortunately, many Americans were duped by their
16 racism and today we have poor people of all colors
17 still facing a death sentence.

18 In the end, all this rhetoric just
19 serves to distract us from the biggest government-
20 supported welfare recipients -- American
21 corporations. They love welfare reform so that
22 they can downsize the working class and use the
23 slave labor of former welfare recipients from the
24 welfare-to-work legislation that's recently been
25 passed. Okay, this is the beginning of a new

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 American slavery.

3 The people who are the most important
4 are not being invested in. While the City
5 beautifies Schuylkill banks, builds up the Avenue
6 of the Arts and scrubs clean the city of poor and
7 homeless with things like the sidewalk bill,
8 making it a safe haven for corporate investment
9 like Disney, who's coming right now, so there
10 aren't any other real, you know, members sitting
11 here, you know.

12 I mean, we have thousands of abandoned
13 houses standing empty and communities undeveloped
14 and unsafe. The actions that are government is
15 taking against the millions of poor around the
16 country and the thousands in this city are
17 inhumane, cruel, and violate their human rights.
18 It's criminal and represents a signed death
19 warrant for many. The public officials who stands
20 by and do nothing have will blood on their hands.
21 The media who censors any information or news
22 created by poor people must also be held
23 accountable.

24 The Black Radical Congress bears
25 witness to these actions and stands in strong

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform
2 opposition to the removal of Philadelphians from
3 public assistance, and we believe that welfare is
4 a right.

5 And that's our statement.

6 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Thank you very much.

7 MR. PRABHAKARAN: Thank you.

8 (Applause.)

9 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Rochelle Phillips,
10 Social Supports Coordinator, Friends Neighborhoods
11 Guild.

12 (Rochelle Phillips comes forward.)

13 (Applause.)

14 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Miss Phillips,
15 please identify yourself for the record and
16 proceed with your testimony.

17 MS. PHILLIPS: Good afternoon.

18 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Good afternoon.

19 MS. PHILLIPS: I'm Rochelle Phillips,
20 Social Supports Coordinator for the Friends
21 Neighborhood Guild. Was that sufficient?

22 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Yes.

23 MS. PHILLIPS: I work for the Friends
24 Neighborhood Guild, which is a settlement house.
25 In my job as social supports coordinator, one of

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 my main responsibilities is the leadership
3 development and training program. That
4 responsibility includes -- I do such things as
5 individual counseling, social supports. I teach
6 life skills advocacy and job readiness.

7 This program has worked with our
8 neighbors in north central Philadelphia to help
9 them find their voices, their hidden potential,
10 and to encourage self-sufficiency.

11 Since the inception of this program,
12 the mission has always addressed the needs of
13 welfare recipients. We do that in a whole
14 package, which includes -- we have adult basic
15 education, GED preparation, English as a second
16 language, job readiness, life skills, community
17 advocacy, and --

18 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Excuse me. I would
19 like to ask my colleagues, I don't want to be
20 discourteous, but if you could either join me at
21 the table or take your conversation out of this
22 room, because it's very difficult to hear, and we
23 know it's important business that you're
24 discussing but we would prefer if all of you could
25 join us, because I think the testimony is very

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform
2 important.

3 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you.

4 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Go ahead, Miss
5 Phillips.

6 MS. PHILLIPS: What I was trying to
7 describe, I was trying to show you the components
8 of the program which are adult basic education,
9 GED preparation, English as a second language,
10 job-readiness, life skills, community advocacy,
11 and basic computer training. Those are all the
12 components that we have in our leadership
13 development program.

14 This is complemented by the social
15 services support through the numerous programs
16 that are managed at the Guild. For example, we
17 have neighborhood energy center, emergency food
18 cover, after-school program, and a teenage youth
19 empowerment program. All of these services would
20 also be available to anyone who participates in
21 our leadership program. And we found that to be
22 very important. People need to know that they're
23 not just coming to us for one thing; that they're
24 going to be involved in a program that also
25 touches four or five other special programs.

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 We challenge our students in the
3 program, but we recognize the need for individual
4 counseling. We do this by assisting persons with
5 their problem-solving and helping them build on
6 their strengths while enhancing their academic and
7 vocational skills, which we know will help them
8 overcome obstacles. The whole person is
9 acknowledged in our program. That is really how
10 we define success.

11 I personally -- what I do is, I teach
12 all the traditional components: how to do a
13 resume, how to interview, what employers expect on
14 the job. But I wanted to really stress that these
15 are done in an environment where I look at each
16 individual for their success and their level of
17 success because each student that comes to us,
18 some of them -- they all learn and we're
19 learning-centered on them and what their needs
20 are.

21 Individuals coming to our program, they
22 know that that clock is ticking, and beginning
23 now, we're starting to feel like a boot camp at
24 the Guild. We work hard to train people so that
25 they can survive and interview.

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 These days, most of our students are
3 not dreaming about planning a career. They're
4 rushing just to get 20 hours a week, accepting any
5 job that will hire them. I'm very concerned about
6 them taking a job before they're prepared. Just
7 as all of us prepared ourselves for a career, our
8 students need that same time. I see that a lot of
9 them are landing dead-end jobs, and some of them
10 being exploited at job sites.

11 The Guild also -- we're a work site for
12 welfare recipients that are in transition. This
13 has been an excellent opportunity to see how this
14 partnership can work. Right now, we have women
15 that have come to the Guild, and all in all, the
16 women are getting exposure for doing community
17 service.

18 This is the first time in their lives
19 that they're getting this kind of exposure. I see
20 where they just need just so much. They're not
21 adults who had summer jobs as youth, they've not
22 even worked menial jobs as adults. These women
23 have never worked. And due to the requirements of
24 the State being a work first state, the program
25 designed does not allow them to participate in our

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform
2 leadership development program.

3 And as I stated earlier, the program's
4 pretty comprehensive. It runs five days a week
5 about 25 hours a week. And I know that these
6 particular women in the transition could benefit
7 from our program. Our partnership we haven't been
8 able to give the women the wholistic approach we
9 know that they need.

10 Another concern is the Office of the
11 Department of Public Welfare. The workers really
12 seem to be struggling with the new changes. But
13 all they really talk about to our clients is
14 sanctions. They know how to sanction someone.

15 I have encouraged our leadership
16 students to ask for the special allowances that
17 are now in the law. The caseworkers get very
18 angry, they tell them no. And as my students push
19 on and ask, they threaten to sanction them.

20 If people are expected to work, they
21 need the special allowances. Some of things that
22 are included in the special allowances are
23 clothing and transportation, for example. And
24 some of the students are really kind of ashamed to
25 even ask for these allowances. And that's as to

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 me, I'm concerned about.

3 People need to have all of that support
4 they can get to work. Work can be a positive,
5 self-improving experience, and we know that taking
6 on a job is very difficult.

7 At the Guild, we're advocating for
8 people to improve their literacy through our adult
9 basic education, our GED. We're having the social
10 supports through the direct services and the life
11 skill classes, and we're really teaching community
12 advocacy. We want people to have a role in
13 improving their lives, especially in the
14 neighborhoods.

15 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Miss Phillips, I
16 think everybody knows the wonderful work of the
17 Guild over many, many years.

18 May I ask -- you list all kinds of
19 problems that most of us are concerned about. Can
20 you tell me, what does the Guild do -- or what is
21 the Guild doing to try to bring about good answers
22 to the problems that you're talking about?

23 MS. PHILLIPS: Well, what I want to
24 stress and what I talked about in the beginning, I
25 want to stress that through the many components of

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 our program, we're trying to work with the whole
3 person. And that's what we see as one of the
4 solutions.

5 COUNCILMAN COHEN: But I mean, are you
6 working with other organizations? Because
7 nothing's going to happen about any of the
8 problems you're raising unless there is an
9 organized base of citizens demanding that their
10 state legislature and their governor and their
11 mayor and the City Councilmembers do something.

12 Now, my question is aimed at what are
13 you doing to help bring about that kind of
14 support?

15 MS. PHILLIPS: Okay, I'm sorry.

16 COUNCILMAN COHEN: We know you're very
17 well-intentioned and that you have a wonderful
18 program for the people, but we've got to make it
19 possible for the people to partake of your
20 program.

21 MS. PHILLIPS: I misunderstood your
22 question. I can address that now that I understand
23 it.

24 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Okay.

25 MS. PHILLIPS: One of the things we do

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 with our advocacy is, we are part of a North
3 Philadelphia collaborative. A lot of social
4 service agencies, we've been talking about the
5 changes and trying to figure out how best, for
6 example, with the community service, that the
7 welfare recipients are being asked to do, how
8 could we best put ourselves in a position to groom
9 them and to make that into a fruitful experience.

10 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Are you in agreement
11 with the general discussion that took place
12 earlier today that the kind of work your agency
13 does should be considered as part of the
14 training?

15 MS. PHILLIPS: Yes, yes I am.

16 COUNCILMAN COHEN: So that the people
17 can remain on cash assistance while they're going
18 through this?

19 MS. PHILLIPS: Yes, I do.

20 COUNCILMAN COHEN: And you're helping
21 to prepare them for work --

22 MS. PHILLIPS: Yes.

23 COUNCILMAN COHEN: -- if work is
24 available.

25 MS. PHILLIPS: Yes, I do support that

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform
2 position.

3 Also, we're working right now -- we're
4 going to come up with what we're call "a
5 monitoring project." One of the concerns is, as
6 we talk amongst social service agencies, the
7 numbers being dropped from the rolls are being
8 shown as a victory. We're putting together a
9 survey to interview people to see how their
10 quality of life is changing for them because we
11 want that information to be publicized also. So
12 that's another project that we're focussing a lot
13 of energy on.

14 COUNCILMAN COHEN: All right. Well,
15 we'd like to encourage you and all similar kinds
16 of groups throughout the city is to heed what
17 Councilman Ortiz said before, that the calendar is
18 moving, and there are tremendous gaps in the
19 program.

20 Nothing has been given us by way of
21 assurance to remove our concern that as of March
22 3rd, there may be as many as 75,000 people in
23 Philadelphia from some 26,000 families that will
24 be entitled to no support whatever by the
25 government; with the government telling them, eat

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 garbage if you have to, Eat nothing if you have
3 to, eat nothing if you have to.

4 MS. PHILLIPS: Exactly.

5 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Because you're not
6 guaranteed any roof above your heads no matter how
7 hard you have tried to enter the workforce 'cause
8 there are just no jobs available.

9 MS. PHILLIPS: Yes.

10 COUNCILMAN COHEN: And we're not going
11 to permit you to train for jobs; we're going to
12 treat you like animals and just say that you're
13 going to be starving and you're going to be
14 freezing. That's the reality of what we face
15 unless people are educated.

16 So we'd like to urge that your group,
17 together with other groups, go out into the
18 neighborhoods and explain to everybody that this
19 is what we're facing beginning early in March, and
20 that it doesn't have to be that way if people
21 understand that they have rights under our
22 government.

23 MS. PHILLIPS: Exactly.

24 COUNCILMAN COHEN: You have the right
25 to petition all of the people you help elect, and

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 you have the right to empower yourself to be in a
3 position and have major impact by making sure that
4 everybody in the inner cities is registered to
5 vote and make it clear that they're going to hold
6 all of their public officials accountable in the
7 next election, which will be in May.

8 MS. PHILLIPS: Right.

9 COUNCILMAN COHEN: If do you that, you
10 will begin to have the possibility of stopping
11 these terrible things from happening.

12 MS. PHILLIPS: Yes.

13 COUNCILMAN COHEN: And we know you're
14 ready to do your share. We've heard from other
15 organizations. Some, we may be concerned, are
16 only interested in the profit. We know the
17 Friends Neighborhood Guild has not been
18 interested; you've always been nonprofit.

19 MS. PHILLIPS: We go in --

20 (Unintelligible; parties talking over
21 each other.)

22 COUNCILMAN COHEN: -- only concern has
23 been uplifting everyone.

24 MS. PHILLIPS: Yes.

25 COUNCILMAN COHEN: But we're in a

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 desperate position, and we need people to

3 understand how serious this situation is.

4 MS. PHILLIPS: Yes.

5 COUNCILMAN COHEN: 'Cause we know there

6 are many thousands of people in Philadelphia who

7 are threatened with what you call the "sanctions,"

8 with what, apparently, the Welfare Department

9 called "sanctions."

10 MS. PHILLIPS: Yes.

11 COUNCILMAN COHEN: But so many people

12 don't know that they're being threatened with

13 that.

14 MS. PHILLIPS: Exactly.

15 COUNCILMAN COHEN: So they've got to be

16 educated to take the steps necessary.

17 MS. PHILLIPS: Yeah, you stole end of

18 my speech.

19 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Okay, okay.

20 (Laughter.)

21 MS. PHILLIPS: That was basically what

22 I was --

23 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Well, I'm getting a

24 little impatient because we know the terrible

25 problems, we know the great work that's being done

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 to deal with the problems.

3 But the one thing that's missing is the
4 political power to make the changes in the law so
5 that people are not going to be faced with
6 starvation and freezing, you know, and so that the
7 little children don't get hurt because a mother
8 doesn't understand when she reads a letter because
9 it's written in such a way that she doesn't even
10 know what it says.

11 MS. PHILLIPS: Yes.

12 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Because that's
13 frequently the case, too.

14 MS. PHILLIPS: Yes. One of the things
15 that I would also like to let you know that we've
16 been doing a lot of is training people on exactly
17 what these changes mean.

18 COUNCILMAN COHEN: That's very
19 important work.

20 MS. PHILLIPS: How you do an appeal,
21 how many days do you have to act after you've been
22 sanctioned, what to do when your caseworker
23 doesn't call you back. I mean, we have been
24 working with our staff especially on what I would
25 call the very basics 101 of this welfare cut.

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: And register them to
3 vote at the same time.

4 MS. PHILLIPS: Yes. At every parent
5 meeting, we have voter-registration forms there.

6 COUNCILMAN COHEN: The quickest way to
7 empowerment is when an individual says, "I'm a
8 human being, I demand to be treated as a human
9 being, and I'm going to exercise my rights as a
10 human being." And in a democratic country, that
11 means don't count yourself out; Council President
12 yourself in by registering and voting.

13 MS. PHILLIPS: Yeah.

14 COUNCILMAN COHEN: And when you do
15 that, then the community has power. If you don't
16 do that, politicians -- all politicians tend to
17 pay attention only to people that have the power
18 to vote on whether they remain in office or
19 whether they're going to go out of office.

20 So that's the reason we're holding
21 these hearings, to try to alert everybody of the
22 importance of being a full citizen.

23 MS. PHILLIPS: Yes.

24 COUNCILMAN COHEN: And we thank you
25 very much and urge the Neighborhood Guild, and we

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 know you'll do it whether we urge you or not, to
3 do a great job because you've been doing it for so
4 many years.

5 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you very much for
6 inviting me.

7 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Thank you.

8 (Applause.)

9 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Now, the final panel
10 for today is going to be Leona Smith, the
11 Executive Director of the Union of the Homeless;
12 John Austin, Chairman of the Right People
13 Campaign; together with Lawrence Roy K-A-L --
14 excuse me if I don't get the pronunciation right;
15 Al Shagor (ph); and Barbara King.

16 And if all of you will come and sit
17 around the table. And, Miss Smith, may I ask you
18 to assume the responsibility for determining in
19 what order everyone ought to speak.

20 Before you begin, identify yourself,
21 your name. And if it's a name that may be
22 misspelled, I urge you to spell your name so we
23 can get it accurately in the record. 'Cause we're
24 very anxious to hear your testimony.

25 MS. SMITH: Thank you. First of all, I

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 would just like to thank Council and
3 Councilmembers for allowing to us participate in
4 the third hearing around the whole issue of
5 welfare reform.

6 I'd again like to basically -- well,
7 again, my name is Leona Smith, L-E-O-N-A. Last
8 name S-M-I-T-H. I'm President of the National
9 Union of the Homeless and Executive Director of
10 the Employment Project here in Philadelphia.

11 I would like to just basically take the
12 opportunity to inform Council what we have been
13 doing thus far. Also a member of the Right
14 People's campaign, which my colleagues and peers
15 can explain politically exactly what that means.
16 And also to bring update as we see around the
17 whole issue of welfare reform.

18 I think truly Mr. Casey could not have
19 seen it any better than what he said today because
20 a lot of the issues that I was going to raise, as
21 my sister said, he stole a lot of things that I
22 was planning to address. And I'm glad to be here
23 because we have agreed outside the corridor to
24 work together where we can come together, and we
25 be able to have an input on some of the solutions

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform
2 as we see it.

3 Currently, what the Employment Project
4 has done thus far, and the same opportunity,
5 Councilman Cohen, that you offered to the Peirce
6 College, is the same opportunity that I would like
7 for you to take the same position of our
8 organization who is 12 years old and who are
9 currently out of funding. We will absorb our last
10 paycheck this Friday. I have three staff that --
11 a staff of five, three have been laid off based on
12 not having enough resources.

13 I have raised this issue and met with
14 Miss Cooper last week and also the Private
15 Industry Council, and I am just here to say that I
16 did not get a wonderful response as I wanted to
17 from Miss Cooper, who indicated that there is no
18 training dollars and there's no money left.
19 However, I did get a wonderful response from the
20 Private Industry Council.

21 So, hopefully, we will be able to work
22 out these issues with our support because our
23 program is very --

24 COUNCILMAN COHEN: You will have the
25 full support of these committees.

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 MS. SMITH: In order to be able keep
3 our doors open.

4 What we've currently done in order to
5 make a difference, we've been blessed to receive a
6 small grant from the State based on our concept of
7 computers, so we intend to open up a computer -- a
8 computer repair program as well because if you're
9 living in the shelters, you don't have access or
10 the opportunities to have usage of computers.

11 So with the small grant from the State,
12 we do intend to open up a computer lab. We have
13 expert volunteers that have agreed to come on
14 board as well to begin to teach our people
15 computer repair. And we see that as a marketable
16 skill, whereas a person -- and not a minimum wage
17 job -- whereas a person then, what we call will be
18 able to bring themselves up by the bootstraps
19 towards self-sufficiency.

20 We also -- O have a written letter in
21 my possession from labor, whereas Local 332 has
22 agreed to work with our organization and to employ
23 some homeless adults with union wages. The
24 problem that we're faced with -- and I'm sure
25 you've heard this before -- as minority

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 contractors that has agreed to work with our
3 organization is not getting their fair share of
4 the work that comes into the City of Philadelphia.
5 And I mean, we know very clearly that so far as
6 the hiring of minority women to work down at the
7 naval base, when we know that a lot of the jobs
8 that will be coming down there don't look like me.
9 The people that work those jobs don't look like
10 me, we're real clear about.

11 But what we're saying is that there's
12 enough work that's coming in with Disney and all
13 of the new hotels that's being built in the City
14 of Philadelphia, hire, you know, some of the
15 minority contractors who have agreed in return to
16 hire some of the welfare recipients, and then that
17 way, we'll be able to employ quite a bit of our
18 people.

19 And, lastly, before, you know, we turn
20 it over to our peers, we're saying that we want
21 our fair share, just like everybody else. We
22 deserve it, we fought for it, we've made a
23 difference in it; and yet, we're the least to
24 receive anything in the City of Philadelphia. And
25 we're saying it's time for the racism and the

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 discrimination to stop on our people, particularly
3 those of us who have worked and served our
4 community for a long, long time.

5 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Have you met with
6 Mr. Roundtree who's in charge of the City's
7 program to see to it that minority contractors get
8 a fair share of the City's jobs?

9 MS. SMITH: No, sir. The person that I
10 have been in contact with has been Mr. Tony Louis,
11 from the Housing Delaware Valley Association, who
12 has offered to enter a partnership with our
13 program, if we're still in existence, 'cause we
14 have no money.

15 We also have heard from Mr. Jerry
16 Mondesire from the NAACP, who also gets jobs in
17 all the time, who wishes to also enter into a
18 partnership so that, collectively, we'll be able
19 to make a difference to serve our community and
20 the people that's a part of TANF and they're
21 unemployed.

22 But I have not -- this is my first time
23 hearing the name of person that you just
24 mentioned. I don't know the gentleman at all.

25 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Well, he is the

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 City's -- when I say "the City," I mean we're
3 talking about the mayor and the people that the
4 mayor appoints, separate from the City Council,
5 which is a legislative body.

6 MS. SMITH: Yes.

7 COUNCILMAN COHEN: But Mr. Roundtree's
8 job is to see to it in the city that minority
9 contractors get fair their share. And because
10 they haven't done it, we've even begun to hold
11 hearings on the matter that even where minority
12 subcontractors, say, have worked for a general
13 contractor, they're often not treated fairly,
14 we're going deeply into that.

15 So the subject you're raising is very
16 important and very close to the heart of a clear
17 and overwhelming majority in City Council, so
18 we're interested, but you got to take the first
19 steps.

20 MS. SMITH: Yes.

21 COUNCILMAN COHEN: And Tony Louis would
22 know about that and I'm sure Jerry Mondesire would
23 know about that, and we're prepared to work with
24 you in every way to try to secure the fair share
25 that you're speaking about.

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 MS. SMITH: And lastly, for our
3 organization, Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell, we
4 respect you to the highest and to the utmost. You
5 have been down to the Employment Project, you have
6 seen the success from our students, giving the
7 fact of what our program has meant to them, and
8 our students speak for themselves because that's
9 part of their empowerment.

10 Councilman David Cohen, unfortunately,
11 you have not been to any of our graduation
12 ceremonies, to my knowledge, and hopefully, you
13 can attend the next one.

14 COUNCILMAN COHEN: I hope to.

15 MS. SMITH: And to Councilman Angel
16 Ortiz, you have been there, you have seen our
17 students and, therefore, I feel that it is -- and
18 these are some of our students, we have a class
19 now of 32 students that's currently enrolled in
20 our last cycle. Many of them are on -- today are
21 on job interviews from an employer that has called
22 us.

23 So we are making a difference, and I
24 ask you if you could please assist us, through the
25 mayor and Miss Donna Cooper, that this is a

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 valuable organization that needs to continue in
3 operation, and we're trying to do this as
4 diplomatically as we possibly can. So we ask for
5 your support in perhaps contacting the mayor -- I
6 was at his office yesterday -- and making sure
7 that we get adequate resources that we need in
8 order to keep our doors open.

9 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Have you been in
10 touch with the Council President, Council
11 President Street?

12 MS. SMITH: Yes, I have, around the
13 whole program -- and issue around the quality of
14 life. What we have been able to do thus far, we
15 identified, as was requested by Councilman Street,
16 to identify a building that we will be able to
17 assist the homeless downtown in Center City, and
18 we did that.

19 Not only have we identified a building,
20 but we've also identified a house whereas we would
21 be able to bring our people in for residential
22 living, as opposed to shelter. We've identified a
23 property that will be able to hold 17 already
24 zoned individuals coming in from Center City.

25 However, when I raised that as an issue

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 of where the funding is for this particular
3 project, I was informed that it has to be approved
4 by the mayor. And that's where we're at in
5 reference to this whole piece of the
6 quality-of-life bill. We've done everything that
7 we've been required to do: we've identified the
8 building, we've identified the residential house
9 where our people could be able to stay.

10 What we're lacking is the dollars and
11 the cents to get the program off the ground. I've
12 submitted the proposal, that's done. I also did
13 the budget, that's done. We're just now waiting
14 for a final response to say that we can be up and
15 running.

16 COUNCILMAN COHEN: All right, very
17 good. And President Street indicated his support
18 for your proposal?

19 MS. SMITH: That is correct, as early
20 as receiving the phone call yesterday from one of
21 his administrators.

22 COUNCILMAN COHEN: All right, very
23 good.

24 MS. SMITH: Thank you.

25 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Councilwoman

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 Blackwell?

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you, Mr.
4 Chairman.

5 You know, my understanding from him is
6 that he wanted to work with you. We don't know
7 what's going to happen after the 17th, so I
8 suggest you follow up with him maybe on Friday or
9 after.

10 We've been -- we have some legislation
11 that we're all working on and we're going to be in
12 hearings this afternoon and tomorrow, but maybe on
13 Friday, but pretty quickly, before the 17th, when
14 we go in recess.

15 MS. SMITH: Councilwoman Jannie
16 Blackwell, I think that's all well and good and
17 fine, but we're ready, but when we asked about
18 where's the resources in order to start up the
19 program is when we were told from Councilman
20 Street's office that it's the mayor's decision.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I see.

22 MS. SMITH: And that's basically where
23 we're at with this project. And we do want to
24 work, all of us, and that's why all of us has done
25 a lot of groundwork of identifying -- we did the

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 budget, we did, you know, a whole lot of work on
3 this particular project.

4 But, again, until they give us the
5 money to start up and if it's the mayor who's in
6 charge of this particular project, and I know CBH
7 Commissioner Estelle Richman, we've been work with
8 her as well, but we were told that the money is
9 not there and that the money has to be approved by
10 the State.

11 That was the last information that I
12 received as early as yesterday for this particular
13 project, that the money has to be approved by the
14 State in order to utilize these resources in that
15 particular direction. And that's the information
16 that I was given.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I'll tell you
18 what. Unfortunately, I don't know because I've
19 been on the other side of the administration and
20 the president in that issue. They kind of -- they
21 kind of give me a blackout where I'm concerned.
22 They tell me nothing. Everything I find out, I
23 find out from people on the street and people like
24 yourself who are out there and because I'm
25 involved in the issue.

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 So, unfortunately, I can't give you any
3 advice on when they're talking about money, 'cause
4 we also, with regard to that quality-of-life bill,
5 we put in a transfer amendment for 25 million but,
6 of course, we never got a public hearing. So, you
7 know, that's one of the most detrimental bills
8 I've ever seen but, you know, because of my strong
9 stance, I absolutely don't get any information.

10 But certainly we're committed to you
11 and to all that you do. We know what you do. In
12 fact, we enjoy your graduations, the marching, and
13 all that they are, and we applaud your efforts in
14 trying to help people at the bottom rung of the
15 ladder who just need a hand up -- and not a
16 handout, but a hand up to get on their feet.

17 So we will continue to support you.
18 And certainly, Councilman Cohen, I'm sure I can
19 speak for him as well as myself, and we're always
20 available to you because we appreciate what you're
21 doing in the community.

22 MS. SMITH: Thank you. So if we could
23 get the support to contact 'cause March 3rd is
24 going to be worse, we can get them and see where
25 we're at with Commissioner Estelle Richman.

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 Because they right now can fund the program, and
3 perhaps if we can now -- just as long as the house
4 gets up and running, we'd be able to go to --
5 that's how we see it, Mr. Mike Nardone, where he
6 could fund the shelter bid, maybe then we could at
7 least get a part of the program up and running.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Well, Mr.
9 Nardone has sent notices -- or his office has sent
10 notices to everybody dealing with shelters because
11 of this crunch so I'm surprised that you can't get
12 any information when they're mailing them out
13 everywhere. They're in desperate need of shelter
14 beds, in spite of all their budget crunches and
15 all of that, you know, where you hear two opposing
16 points of view, but they've done a serious mailing
17 to people to try to get shelter beds, so I don't
18 understand why you haven't gotten any feedback,
19 period.

20 MS. SMITH: Well, I did meet with Mr.
21 Mike Nardone at another meeting, and I raised the
22 issue to him that we had this particular house,
23 and how the concept could actually work. The
24 house that we identified had three L&I violations,
25 but we visited the house, the whole group of us

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 went up there, and we just really strongly feel it
3 takes minimal in order to comply with the L&I
4 violations, which is the tub, a stove and, you
5 know, really just minor things that this property
6 could actually be used. There's not a lot of
7 money.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Well, my
9 understanding on all the shelter stuff is that
10 they are not, after the deliverance debacle, they
11 have not agreed in my -- I don't believe they've
12 agreed to do any kind of rehab. They want to rent
13 somebody's place, but they don't want to put any
14 money in for rehab dollars because there's been so
15 much pressure on them to help bring the shelters
16 they own and those they contract with to help
17 bring them up to minimum code standards and above,
18 to make them nicer places.

19 So I believe that that's part of the
20 reason why they have not expressed -- maybe out of
21 this program, the CBH dollars, this whole issue
22 has created a whole 'nother set of rules. But
23 under the old rules, they haven't been interested
24 in doing any rehab work, only to rent your place
25 as it is.

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 So maybe you're caught between two sets
3 of rules, too; one dealing with the
4 quality-of-life bill, and then the old rules that
5 were generally in effect for about the last couple
6 years.

7 MS. SMITH: Thank you very much, and
8 you're absolutely correct.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you,
10 thank you all.

11 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Thank you.

12 Incidentally, would Mr. Smith join the
13 panel, Paul Smith.

14 MR. SMITH: I'm not part of that group.

15 COUNCILMAN COHEN: You're not a part of
16 that group, okay.

17 MR. AUSTIN: Good afternoon. I would
18 like to first say that --

19 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Are you going to
20 identify yourself for the record.

21 MR. AUSTIN: Yes. For the record, my
22 name is John Austin. I am the Chairman of the
23 Right People Campaign, as well as Austin
24 Associates. We are entertainments consultants
25 based here in Philadelphia.

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 Over the past several months, upon
3 getting involved with Miss Smith in her effort
4 here in Philadelphia with the homeless, I really
5 kind of take the issue very, very serious, being
6 that I realize that funds are going to be cut on
7 March the 3rd.

8 I do agree with the statements
9 mentioned earlier today here in this chamber of
10 our auditor Casey, and I do share his platform.

11 I would like to first thank
12 Councilwoman Blackwell for her support in this
13 area, as well as you, Councilman Cohen. I happen
14 to be a voting member of your district in West Oak
15 Lane and Block Captain President of the 1800 block
16 of Roselyn Street, so I have a lot of respect for
17 you, and I'm very hopeful that these hearings
18 today will not fall on deaf ears as you all go
19 before other various deliberations that you all,
20 I'm sure, have.

21 I would like to just let you know that
22 the Right People Campaign, aside from working on
23 behalf of homeless people for some time here in
24 metropolitan Philadelphia, we find ourselves on
25 the verge of a serious catastrophe with regard to

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 the issue of welfare reform. As we heard today
3 from other speakers that have sat before you,
4 there are not only legal issues or loopholes, I
5 guess as Councilwoman Blackwell has so noted, but
6 there are just perception versus reality.

7 And the perception of the situation is
8 that March the 3rd is going to show up, we know
9 the numbers of 25,000 -- and that is just adults,
10 not counting children that will be displaced and
11 will become less fortunate because of this
12 situation.

13 We stand here today, me and my
14 colleagues, united in the cause of making sure
15 that the jobs will be available for people,
16 whether or not they have an education or not,
17 because it is our strong belief that, again, as
18 Counsel Councilwoman Blackwell noted earlier,
19 there are some jobs that can be taught to someone,
20 regardless of their equivalency level, whether it
21 be sixth grade, eighth grade, twelfth grade, and
22 so on.

23 And we want to make sure that the jobs
24 are at least being created, because we feel that
25 without the jobs being created, we open up a

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 Pandora's box for a lot of violent actions, some
3 of which are already starting to be felt -- some
4 of that because of the time of year that it is,
5 but some of it out of sheer desperation of these
6 people feeling that their world, as they know it,
7 is going to be coming to an end on March the 3rd
8 for those people are the mostly affected by that.

9 We feel that we need real issues; and
10 more so than issues, we need action. We are
11 appealing to you all because we don't know
12 anywhere else that we can appeal to. As
13 Mrs. Smith has noted, we have had meetings with
14 the mayor's office, we have talked with the
15 mayor's president and Mr. Street.

16 And at this time, we strongly urge this
17 body to do something now. We cannot afford to
18 wait until 1999 shows up and on March or February
19 the 28th, there's going to be some miraculous
20 overnight decision that will be signed and put in
21 effect that will be able to affect the citizens
22 who will most need the attention on March the 3rd
23 of 1999.

24 This issue paramount to the citizens of
25 Philadelphia. Resources are needed now for this

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 effort. No person should be denied work under
3 federal law. If a solution is not found now, we
4 will have real problems concerning the TANF
5 recipients.

6 This issue is the most important issue
7 before this chamber and this body. It is a human
8 issue, and if we cannot take care of our less
9 fortunate here in the Commonwealth, then it really
10 reflects upon what we are doing to move forward.
11 Councilman Cohen, as you stated earlier, it is
12 very, very important for us to be able to give
13 everyone a fair opportunity to work.

14 So, in conclusion, I would like to say
15 that we can meet and have meetings. I understand
16 you have another scheduled round of meetings after
17 the 1st of the year. But if we cannot get an
18 action plan to resolve this issue, I strongly feel
19 that we are headed into a very bad state of
20 affairs.

21 And I would like at this time to
22 recognize my other colleagues on the panel here
23 with me. Thank you.

24 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Thank you. Please
25 go ahead, sir.

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 MR. ROY: Good morning. My name is
3 Lawrence W. Roy. I am a homeless person. I live
4 in the (unintelligible) house, and I am also on
5 welfare. I am also a single father. My son is in
6 Slayton Farm, and I haven't seen him for a couple
7 of months.

8 But I'm afraid. I'm afraid that we may
9 be doing too little too late because I've gone out
10 for jobs, and a lot of places are going to say I
11 need an associate's degree. I don't have one.
12 But these same places are funded from welfare
13 money, and I don't understand that. Why are they
14 going to fund places with welfare money where I
15 can't even get a job.

16 I wake up in the morning, and sometimes
17 I walk from 69th and Woodland to downtown
18 Philadelphia, to 401 North Broad and other places,
19 seeking employment, seeking help. I don't like
20 living there, I don't want to live there. I've
21 worked for years. I used to drive a truck, but
22 the courts said to me, You can't drive a truck and
23 raise a kid. How you going to work over the road
24 and raise a kid? So I had to leave my job to try
25 to raise my kid and find that I've been unable to

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 find employment that I can support myself with.

3 And by not finding employment, I had to

4 go back to my mom, and she had to help me. And

5 now, even with all her help, I'm still homeless.

6 I've tried everything they try. And people told

7 me, Hey, you can't work here, you don't have an

8 associate's degree, although you have experience.

9 Or, you getting up there in age, we can't keep

10 you. I've heard every excuse in the book.

11 It's not that I'm lazy. It's that --

12 I've looked for jobs, where are the jobs? All

13 these jobs they're talking about, where are they?

14 I'm upset because I've gone out to look, and for

15 the jobs I qualify for, I don't have a degree.

16 And for the jobs I can work, they say I'm

17 overqualified, you can't work here.

18 What's wrong with me? Why am I at a

19 shelter? And I look around, and where the white

20 people at? I don't see 'em. What are they doing,

21 are they working? I don't know, I'm confused

22 about these issues.

23 But they say there's money there.

24 Where is the money? I understand industries are

25 getting a lot of money, I understand there's a lot

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 of money being shipped down the shipyard but why
3 can't I be helped?

4 I went to a school called "Fame," and
5 it's run very tight. When I became homeless, they
6 said I had to drop out for a little while and
7 said, Go ahead, we'll accept you back. But now
8 that I'm in a homeless shelter and I go back, they
9 say, We don't have a slot for you anymore. Why
10 not? I had a 93 average. What's the problem? I
11 don't know.

12 I'm being helped very well by Miss
13 Leona Smith to get a job, and the job that I was
14 first left to go to was out in Franklin Mills
15 Mall. It takes me two hours and fifteen minutes
16 to see get there, two hours and fifteen minutes to
17 get back, and then I'm going to be working for
18 twelve hours only to go back to the shelter.

19 I don't understand. Are we just going
20 to stand here and let you guys chop us off, no
21 food, toss us into the garbage cans and stuff?
22 You know, I'm not going back to that. I don't
23 want it, I don't need it, and I'm not the only one
24 that is saying I'm not going to stand for it, I'm
25 really not.

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 And you can tell Walt Disney and all
3 his clowns the same thing. I'm not standing for
4 it, I'm not going to be in a city where somebody
5 says, "You can't eat, you can't do anything." I
6 can't support my son and now I find out that if I
7 don't see him another seven months, even if I do,
8 I don't have a house, the house isn't properly
9 inspected, my son's going up for adoption.
10 They'll take him right on away from me.

11 What kind of place is this? This is
12 America? Think about what's going on here.

13 I have all of these papers here, what I
14 have to do to try to get back on welfare. See,
15 when they take your son, you automatically get cut
16 off so you don't have any money. You can't
17 support yourself. How can you sustain yourself?
18 And you can't run out and get a job because the
19 first two weeks there, you got to be inside and
20 find out how you got there. I know how I got
21 there when I started.

22 So what am I supposed to do? I mean,
23 they're trying, and all of this sounds good but it
24 sounds to me like the rich are getting richer and
25 the poor are getting poorer, and the people that

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 are getting poorer are just getting stepped on
3 again. And I've been stepped on too many times
4 I'm sick and tired of being stepped on.

5 Thank you.

6 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Thank you Mr. Roy.
7 You've outlined pretty well the problems that
8 we're dealing with today.

9 The last speaker we haven't heard from
10 is --

11 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: May I say
12 something?

13 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Yes.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: The one issue
15 that I meant to mention that you touched on when
16 Auditor General Casey was here was the whole issue
17 of our children, because we only get 12 months.

18 And not only that, at prior hearings
19 that Councilman Cohen called, the Department of
20 Human Services, the Department of Health came
21 here, and the Department of Human Services came
22 and they said they don't have the capacity to take
23 the kids, which means they don't want 'em, they
24 don't have the money. We don't to give 'em up.

25 And like you so perfectly said, we're

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 in a squeeze here, you're in a squeeze. They make
3 it impossible, and it's just wrong. You know, I
4 totally agree with you that this is America and
5 that we have a right to expect more. That's
6 what's supposed to make America different.

7 And that's what I resent most about
8 bills like, that quality-of-life bill and I will
9 always fight bills like that because they take
10 away rights that they don't have a right to do
11 because people sit there and can academically or
12 legislatively say, Well, let me look on this piece
13 of paper, and they can put a line through
14 something that can affect thousands and thousands
15 of people. It's just not right.

16 But certainly, we're committed to do
17 all that we can to be of assistance. Thank you.
18 Your testimony was excellent.

19 MR. ROY: Thanks.

20 MS. KING: Good afternoon, Council.
21 I'm here on behalf of the children of
22 Philadelphia.

23 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Identify your name.

24 MS. KING: My name is Barbara King.

25 I was a teacher in the public school

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 system for 28 years. I was born into a home where
3 my grandmother was left, because my grandfather
4 died, with 13 children, and my mother brought me
5 into that home. I watched my grandmother go every
6 day to do day's work, and we couldn't eat until
7 she came home.

8 My mother married and moved out, and my
9 sister and I slept in a crib till I was in the
10 third grade. So I know what it is to be poor.

11 I was educated at St. Malachy's and
12 John W. Hallahan Catholic Girls High School. I
13 went on to Temple, Cheyney Wilkesboro. That was
14 my way out of poverty.

15 I worry about the children that are in
16 the school district today, who are being
17 miseducated on purpose. These are some of the
18 children whose parents were miseducated and are
19 now on the welfare rolls of today.

20 It frightens me to know that these
21 children, even with going to school every day,
22 that they do not stand the chance with the way
23 they're being miseducated to get a job later on in
24 life. This seems to be a vicious cycle.

25 I taught GED math through Temple

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 University to the homeless and the National Guard.

3 I've seen people who really wanted to learn and to
4 better their life, but because of their
5 circumstances, that they could not do any better.

6 I have a question about the taxes that
7 we pay because I was told that we pay taxes to
8 take care of people that are on welfare. Will we
9 get extra money in our checks now? What will
10 happen to that money that we put into the welfare
11 fund to take care of the people who don't have the
12 same opportunities that they should have?

13 I met up with Miss Leona Smith and this
14 group, and I know that it is important for every
15 person here -- and I can't understand why there's
16 only two Councilmembers here when there's a home
17 room full of desks. Somebody has to care. People
18 don't seem to understand that what affects one
19 affects all. When these -- when the people come
20 off of welfare, it's going to have an impact on
21 all of us.

22 I'm not going to see you with a piece
23 of bread and I go hungry, whether you live in my
24 community or you just come to my community to
25 work. I'm going to eat. We have to be very

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 conscious. There are people that have a lot of
3 pride, people who are honest, people who want to
4 do a good day's work. But when they get desperate
5 and they have to worry about their babies, they do
6 desperate things.

7 It's sad to know that they have built
8 26 prisons. Why are they sitting there empty?
9 What is the master plan for them?

10 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Thank you, Miss
11 King.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Yes, thank
13 you.

14 (Applause.)

15 (Khalefat El comes forward.)

16 MR. EL: Good afternoon to you,
17 Councilman Cohen, to you, Councilwoman Jannie
18 Blackwell, and good afternoon to the Council
19 staff.

20 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Please give your
21 name, sir.

22 MR. EL: I am Khalefat El. I am the
23 sergeant-at-arms in the parliamentary for the
24 Right People's Campaign for Human Rights. I'm
25 also the Executive Director of the Independent

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 National Council Empowerment Forum for

3 African-American Fathers and sons united. And I'm

4 a consultant to several organizations in and

5 around this city and the east coast.

6 I would much rather be sitting here

7 today and talking about where we are going to do

8 some things tomorrow that we can see ourselves

9 doing in the pursuit of life, liberty, and that

10 happiness. But the unfortunate thing of the true

11 and profound reality in which we have been brought

12 and joined here today, as has been oratorally and

13 very clearly expressed by every person that has

14 come upon this table, we have a definitive

15 situation impending of a magnitude, a level of

16 diversity and multitudinistic (sic.) complexities

17 of which we know not the true impact.

18 Yet we still, we have as was said

19 before me by Sister King, we have only one

20 African-American elected official sitting in this

21 chamber.

22 I'd like to share something with you,

23 an excerpt of a letter that's in route as we speak

24 to Vice President Gore. I'm just going to use a

25 couple excerpts from it.

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 In the opening: We open this letter,
3 sir, with the word spiritual, inner self, and
4 mind, aspiration of humane peace. And unto you
5 and yours, we pray and hope the university divine
6 provides the same in the coming new year, period.

7 Especially in and under the current
8 national and global state a preponderant crisis
9 also growing multiple hardships, scenarios now
10 affecting the poor and working class people across
11 the board. Well, these are truly troubled times
12 we are all now existing in today's world.

13 Sir, it is now more than ever to those
14 whom still embody the true and just spirit of love
15 unto his or her fellow human brethren, especially
16 fathers and sons and young adults alike that it's
17 time and to the indigenous masses' families, the
18 poor working and unemployed of this nation that,
19 yes, it's too painfully, profoundly clear, and I
20 quote, the mass suffering of the dark-hued peoples
21 etc., must cease to exist now.

22 And without any further ado, a mere
23 moment more of hesitation, the mindful creation of
24 this nation must indelibly, unequivocally, and
25 expeditiously without any fail, 'cause you don't

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 need a Ph.D. and a rocket science degree to look
3 out and see what's forthcoming, stand and
4 spiritually, more especially mentally work for a
5 fair and equally humane and equitable state of
6 true, also expeditious resolve of this
7 overwhelming plight that now faces all the poor
8 here in America. Or, sir, Mr. Vice President, we
9 all shall be brought low for the failure to
10 address these pressing issues of the day.

11 I'm not going to go as I thought to do
12 into the rest of the (unintelligible0, but that
13 was the opening. You can just phantom (sic.) how
14 Leona and I closed it.

15 I say unequivocally I applaud you, and
16 I earnestly beseech you that if we, the
17 representations of the highest creation, if you
18 are truly the representation of man exalted in the
19 frame work of statehood, if we are truly an
20 exaltment (sic.) of that, the form that is
21 responsible and truly his brother's keeper, we
22 need to dispense with the rhetoric because there's
23 a big dark cloud up in the sky.

24 And as the attorney general himself sat
25 right here and said -- the auditor general, I

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 correct myself. The auditor general said himself,
3 there has not been the true wherewithal
4 professional indulgence in the assessment,
5 evaluation, strategizing and planning of the
6 technical impacts of long-term and short-term
7 design of what this was forthcoming. It was
8 hastily done. It is self-evident all of the
9 aforementioned.

10 But what I'm going to be the forewarner
11 of, as that father said, as that mother said, and
12 I am both a father and a grandfather, not having
13 all the wherewithal and privileges of many men
14 that have gone before me and walk amongst me, but
15 I stand erect, upright, and challenge and ready to
16 meet the challenge under any circumstances,
17 whether it is designed to be peace or to do accord
18 of that which is necessary as the last and final
19 resort.

20 We must find a human accord of which we
21 come together in a coalition of final resolve.
22 We've failed to. We have placed the children's
23 future at risk. We have placed in total
24 conscious, willful and with visual foresight, not
25 blindness, the entire social populace of this

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 nation in a state of which you don't have to use
3 the word "national security." You will have
4 manifest and fostered your own.

5 The appeal is genuine, it is truly from
6 the heart.

7 I have seven children, and the number
8 seven is very significant to me as a
9 (unintelligible) and a man. If we but love the
10 god, regardless of the name you call him in, we've
11 got to reach out and not set somebody by
12 conversation. We got to now let our faith be our
13 words, not our conversation.

14 And with that, as I opened, I close. I
15 bid you peace and thank you for your time.

16 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Thank you very much.
17 (Applause.)

18 COUNCILMAN COHEN: We appreciate all of
19 your testimony. And the final speaker is going to
20 be Paul Smith. And then after that -- he's the
21 final speaker -- if anyone else in the audience
22 wants to speak, they may approach the Chair after
23 Mr. Smith talks, and we will hear that person.

24 MS. SMITH: Thank you. And lastly,
25 Councilman Cohen, we are well organized around the

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform
2 voting issue. We have committees throughout the
3 entire City of Philadelphia and, I wanted to let
4 you know that.

5 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Very good very.
6 We're very by that.

7 MR. EL: Thank you again.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Let me note
9 that Joyce Taylor's in the room. I wanted to say
10 greetings.

11 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Thank you.

12 (Paul Smith comes forward.)

13 MR. SMITH: Good afternoon.

14 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Good afternoon.

15 Identify yourself for the record Mr. Smith.

16 MR. SMITH: My name is Paul Smith. I'm
17 currently a citizen of Philadelphia. I am the
18 former Executive Director of Service Employees in
19 the International Union local 99, in Los Angeles.
20 I have recently relocated back to Philadelphia.

21 Before I left for California, I was in
22 income-maintenance worker at both Ridge District
23 in North Philadelphia and the Snyder District in
24 South Philadelphia for 16 years. I'm a retired
25 state worker.

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 My first suggestion to this committee
3 was that they bring in either the business reps
4 from PSSU or an iron worker to give testimony
5 about what was going on in the welfare offices so
6 I don't have to go to that point since you've
7 already done that with Marva West and Tom Bellow.

8 I would like to say, though, that both
9 of them were absolutely correct in terms of what
10 goes on in the County Assistance Office in terms
11 of the way rules are handed down and the iron
12 workers are supposed to implement them. So,
13 basically, what they told you was correct.

14 I want to get off of that point and
15 move to two groups that I haven't heard discussed
16 at these hearings. I've been to the three so far,
17 this is my third one. The first one are
18 recipients with substance-abuse problems. Being a
19 former iron worker, I know that many of our
20 recipients had substance-abuse problems.

21 If you're going to move these folks
22 from welfare to work, the employers are going to
23 require some type of drug testing or screening.
24 The question I have is: Is the employer going to
25 pay for that, is the recipient going to pay for

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 that, or are the nonprofits who placed 'em going
3 to pay for that? Or is the City going to pay for
4 that?

5 So, if not, these people are going to
6 be left out of the loop. They're going to be
7 still out there with nothing, no welfare, no jobs,
8 no prospects of a job. A lot of these people will
9 have to be cleaned up before they can even go to
10 training into a job. Who's going to pay for that.

11 A second subgroup that we haven't
12 discussed are convicted felons. Many people on
13 assistance have done jail time, have served their
14 time, and cannot get a job because they have a
15 felony conviction, so the only alternative was
16 welfare. What are we going to do with them?
17 Because they're also going to be left out of the
18 loop.

19 Many employers in this city won't hire
20 if you even have a misdemeanor. In fact, I was
21 told that if you put "misdemeanor" on your job
22 application, it's tossed in the trash can, we're
23 not going to hire that person.

24 So we have to look at what can the City
25 come up with to handle these two particular

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 subgroups that are going to be extremely
3 problematic for welfare reform. They are not the
4 women with children who obviously, as slim as the
5 shot is, they at least have a shot of getting
6 something. These two subgroups will not have a
7 shot at anything.

8 These folks will do what they have to
9 do to survive. Does that mean that the City's
10 going to hire additional police or that the
11 citizens are going to continue to arm themselves
12 at a record clip in this city to protect
13 themselves against folks who can't get any help,
14 who the system doesn't want anymore?

15 Much has been said about jobs not being
16 in the city, that they're in the suburbs, and the
17 City's losing 1200 jobs a month. I don't want see
18 a perceived situation -- and by "perceived
19 situation," I mean, you have a less affluent
20 person living in a less affluent community riding
21 a bus or any kind of public transportation for two
22 hours to go and work in a more affluent community
23 where they can't live in, only work in, and then
24 ride back.

25 When I discussed that scenario with my

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 wife, she said "apartheid." And my wife is not a
3 flaming radical. She said it looks like that is a
4 form of apartheid, where you have people from the
5 inner city going out to the more affluent they
6 that can't live in and then coming back; they're
7 only out there to work.

8 So I'm not saying that that's going to
9 be the scenario, but that's the perception, and
10 it's a very real perception.

11 So I would ask that we've got to
12 transpass to become a pass book for these folks,
13 that we get together and figure out a way to get
14 jobs back into the City or create jobs in the
15 City. We have some brilliant minds in this city.
16 I think that we underutilize them, that we should
17 be able to come up with something.

18 Because Governor Ridge has political
19 ambitions. Harrisburg is not going to help us.
20 We can make calls, we can send letters, we can do
21 whatever we want, his mind is somewhere else.
22 We're on our own in this. And us and all the
23 groups that have been talking here for the past
24 three sessions that I've been at -- you, the
25 mayor, everybody, it's us, me, it's all of us in

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 the city, this is our problem that's been dumped
3 on us by Harrisburg. We're going to have to solve
4 it 'cause they're not going to solve it for us.

5 The media has done an awful lot to
6 demonize welfare recipients. The late Daily News
7 columnist Larry Fields regularly in his column
8 called welfare recipients "the welfare mob." The
9 face of welfare has been projected as being black
10 or Hispanic; or Hispanic and black. And you have
11 a lot of people out there whose hearts are hard
12 because that's the way they perceive welfare to
13 be. It's a minority problem, it doesn't concern
14 us.

15 I would suggest that we start showing
16 some faces of some Caucasians, okay, who are on
17 assistance, who have the same issues and the same
18 problems that black people and Hispanic people
19 have, in order to show that this is a universal
20 thing, that everybody's involved in this welfare
21 thing and not just certain minority groups.

22 It may help us in softening the
23 regulations the way we want to soften them, which
24 is -- basically what we want is an extension on
25 this thing and have training count as work. I

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 would suspect that if we saw some Caucasians, if
3 Governor Ridge saw some Caucasian faces saying,
4 "This is unfair," we may get a reaction. But as
5 long as it is perceived that it's only a black or
6 Hispanic issue, we're not going to get any
7 results.

8 I would also suggest a focus group
9 between the press and welfare recipients so that
10 the press sees that these folks are human beings.
11 I think the press has no concept of who these
12 folks are. They just write and they demonize
13 them. And that's part of the problem we have now,
14 why people's hearts are so hardened against these
15 folks.

16 The last thing I want to say is that
17 the Republican National Committee is going to be
18 here soon. The spotlight, the national spotlight
19 is going to be on this city. And I'm so tired of
20 looking at the television and the national
21 spotlight is on Philadelphia and they talk about
22 clocks breaking down at a stadium, they talk about
23 railings breaking down at a stadium.

24 Folks on welfare perceive that the
25 Republican party has dropped this nightmare on

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 them. This convention thing could get very ugly
3 in terms of demonstrations and so on. We need to
4 get this thing straightened out because, again, I
5 would not like to see this city embarrassed again
6 nationally.

7 I do not blame the City. This is not
8 your fault. Don't think I'm coming at you. I
9 understand that this was dropped on you as much as
10 it was dropped on everybody else. But we've got
11 to figure out a way to pull this thing together,
12 to tap the energies and the brain power that we
13 have in this city because I know that we can beat
14 this thing, regardless of what Ridge does, we can
15 beat this. But we've got a very short window
16 period, a little less than four months.

17 I was thinking of maybe a task force
18 but it takes too long to put that together, too
19 long to have the meetings, but we need to come to
20 some kind of consensus of what we're going to do
21 and how we're going to handle it.

22 We can go back and forth to Harrisburg
23 all we want. They're going to drag it out until
24 February the 28th. You know, we can go back and
25 forth, we can bust -- you know, Councilman Cohen,

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 you know what they're going to do.

3 Ridge needs this to look good for the
4 convention. This has become political. If this
5 convention was in Indianapolis, it probably
6 wouldn't matter. But since it's in his state and
7 he has political ambitions, he is going to say,
8 "We did welfare reform. And it works in
9 Pennsylvania."

10 We need to get something together to
11 put some pressure on this man prior to March 3rd
12 and stop dealing with, Well, let's call him,
13 'cause, you know, you don't get any information
14 when you call. The statistics are screwed. The
15 only truthful person that you had coming here in
16 the three hearings that I've dealt with from the
17 Commonwealth was Mr. Casey.

18 COUNCILMAN COHEN: I thank you, Mr.
19 Smith.

20 Is there anybody else who wishes to be
21 heard? Will all those who wish to be heard just
22 come to the table.

23 (Timothy Heyward comes forward.)

24 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Identify yourself
25 and proceed with your statement.

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 MR. HEYWARD: My name is Timothy

3 Heyward, okay? Timothy Heyward, H-E-Y-W-A-R-D.

4 I find it very disrespectful that when
5 we are in a session and we have people running to
6 the table to speak to you. I know that you guys
7 have, you know, you have your work cut out and
8 there are things that you need to talk about but
9 this is, like we said, not only is this an
10 important issue but all issues that you do in your
11 work every day is important.

12 And it's like that, when I came up,
13 when grown people were talking, you know, we
14 children, we did not come in the room or disrupt
15 or, you know, stop and do something. So I would
16 just like to say like in the future, not only just
17 this session, but all sessions, that you tell your
18 aides to limit their conversations if they have to
19 come in, because all issues are important, and we
20 need everybody -- especially we need you on this
21 issue to have your undivided attention.

22 That's all I have to say.

23 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Thank you very much,
24 sir.

25 (Joyce Taylor comes forward.)

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Would you proceed
3 with your statement and identify yourself for the
4 record, then go ahead.

5 MS. TAYLOR: Councilman Cohen, Joyce
6 Taylor. Councilwoman Blackwell, one of my most
7 popular two Councilpeople, including Councilman
8 Ortiz. I'm here to represent J.T. Save the
9 Children Association, which I am the founder of.
10 Councilman Cohen and yourself, Councilman
11 Blackwell, you've been to my home, you see what I
12 have to work with, all right?

13 I've been fortunate that I am not
14 homeless although I have worked with Leona Smith
15 many years ago in her shelter. As a matter of
16 fact, I spent more time in there and only went
17 home maybe once a month than I did in my home,
18 working with her, so I understand it.

19 I am here to say, first of all, our
20 young people are going to be more than affected by
21 this. My organization tries to teach them and
22 have started this past summer teaching crafts,
23 cooking, different things, sewing, just so they
24 could become young entrepreneurs. If they could
25 not get a job for many reasons that many people

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 have sat around here and stated -- you may have a
3 degree or you may not be eligible for this job or
4 that one. I'm trying to show them that at least
5 we're dealing with survival right now.

6 This is what I think the homeless
7 people and everyone else is trying to say. No one
8 is saying that we want to be top-notch. Everybody
9 can't be the mayor, everybody can't be the
10 government, but everybody wants to survive, all
11 right?

12 And I think people being labeled as
13 "homeless," I think that's a very cruel labeling
14 for people. When they have enough vacant
15 buildings, they have enough homes that they throw
16 people out of, they let enough of these
17 Stop-and-Go stores come over here, Koreans from
18 wherever else and bring their businesses here,
19 they have all these vacant buildings, and the
20 City's doing nothing with it, but yet, they will
21 tell you that in order to open a shelter, you have
22 to have this done and that done. And you can call
23 L&I, and L&I takes years to get to you. We don't
24 have that type of time.

25 There's going to be a problem, and the

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 problem's not affecting only those who are on the
3 streets or those without homes. The problem is
4 going to affect us all -- those in office, our
5 politicians. First of all, we vote you in.
6 Everyone's for you when they need your votes.

7 I must say this here, I'm a very blunt
8 person. Councilman Cohen, Councilwoman Blackwell,
9 I don't think Councilman Ortiz is here, out of the
10 City Council, each -- none of you are my
11 Councilpersons direct, but I must say all of the
12 representatives that I have in the area that I
13 live, I have to go elsewhere to ask for the
14 services that we need.

15 Why is that? Why do I have to go to
16 the northeast to ask, Could I get a turkey from
17 Pathmark to help feed 150 to 200 people? Why do I
18 have to go to Councilwoman Blackwell in West
19 Philadelphia, as I've done for many, many years,
20 even before was she was Councilwoman and I was
21 going to Councilman Blackwell? Or why do I have
22 to call your wife and ask her, Can we get any kind
23 of help?

24 When we don't do one jurisdiction we
25 don't do one area because I don't accept many of

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 these grants because I know put a leash around
3 your neck and walk you like a dog. I refuse to
4 have that done.

5 (Applause.)

6 MS. TAYLOR: I refuse to be dictated to
7 after 23 years, telling me who I can service and
8 who I cannot. Wherever there is a need, I don't
9 care if over the ridge or across the bridge, I'm
10 going to give it up.

11 We teach our kids to be able to give
12 something back. I do not walk out with an
13 envelope and ask for a donation. Our people that
14 donate to us are people that are concerned and
15 know what we do. But these large organizations
16 can get the mayor out, and we can't get him for a
17 unity dinner. All right? We're giving this away,
18 but we cannot get the services from something that
19 we're giving, but you can service those that are
20 selling.

21 What's the deal? Is it to keep the
22 small man down and let the big get bigger? The
23 effects is going to hurt us all.

24 I personally do not consider this a
25 black or white issue or a black or a white

1 12/09/98 - LAW & GOV'T, HEALTH & HUM. SVCS. - Welfare Reform

2 problem; I consider this a people problem. You
3 are here maybe you should go back and wake up the
4 rest of your workers.

5 Thank you.

6 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Thank you very much.

7 (Applause.)

8 COUNCILMAN COHEN: The joint committees
9 of Law & Government and Health & Human Services
10 will recess until Thursday, February 2nd, at 11
11 a.m., in the Council chambers.

12 I thank everyone for their patience. I
13 think it's been a very good and productive
14 session. Thank you.

15 (Applause.)

16 (Adjourned at 3:40 p.m.)

17 - - -

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

1

2

C E R T I F I C A T E

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

RE: JOINT COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON
LAW & GOVERNMENT, HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
WELFARE REFORM

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

JOSEPHINE CARDILLO,

Registered Professional Reporter