

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

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Friday, May 12, 2017
1:20 p.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILMAN DAVID OH, CHAIR
COUNCILMAN DEREK S. GREEN
COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA
COUNCILMAN AL TAUBENBERGER

RESOLUTION 170258 - Resolution authorizing
Council's Committee on Global Opportunities
and the Creative/Innovative Economy to hold
public hearings on the state of the
Philadelphia Film Industry.

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COUNCILMAN OH: Good afternoon.
My name is David Oh and I'm Chairman of
City Council's Committee on Global
Opportunities and the Creative/Innovative
Economy. Today we are holding public
hearings on the state of filmmaking in
the City of Philadelphia.

Clerk, would you please read
the title of the resolution.

THE CLERK: Resolution No.
170258, a resolution authorizing
Council's Committee on Global
Opportunities and the Creative/Innovative
Economy to hold public hearings on the
state of the Philadelphia Film Industry.

COUNCILMAN OH: At this time,
let me state for the record that
Councilman Al Taubenberger is present,
and let me ask the Councilman if you have
any opening statements.

COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Just
very briefly, Mr. Chairman. Thank you
very much for your leadership on the
resolution and the issue, and also I'm

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2 very honored to co-sponsor this with you.

3 I think it's an important topic,
4 something that really relates to the City
5 in many ways as far as advertising,
6 obviously storytelling, and the history
7 of the City is all wrapped up in the film
8 industry. I look forward to hearing the
9 expert witnesses.

10 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

11 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
12 much, Councilman.

13 Let me state that it is
14 critical for the citizens of Philadelphia
15 to support the film industry and
16 filmmaking. It is critical for City
17 government to understand that not only
18 does this have to do with art and
19 creativity, it has to do with jobs and
20 the robust competitiveness of our city.

21 Filmmaking also offers so many
22 jobs and opportunities that citizens
23 don't think of, from those folks who
24 drive the film trucks, making up to
25 150,000 a year, all the support, the

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2 folks who are involved in making those
3 sets, the great wages they have and how
4 it highlights our city, our region, our
5 state. And for government, it's
6 important that we show through the
7 actions that we take and how we support
8 the industry that we get it, that we
9 understand.

10 Well, I mean, so much of this
11 is actually handled by the state, not by
12 the City, but we have to know what we can
13 do, and so we're very fortunate to have
14 some experts from the state and who deal
15 with the state tax credit, among other
16 things.

17 And so with that, I'll ask the
18 Clerk to call the first panel. Thank
19 you.

20 THE CLERK: State
21 Representative Paul Costa and Michael
22 McCann.

23 (Witnesses approached witness
24 table.)

25 COUNCILMAN OH: Let me note for

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2 the record that State Representative
3 Costa represents, I believe, a district
4 out and around Pittsburgh.

5 REPRESENTATIVE COSTA: Yes,
6 sir.

7 COUNCILMAN OH: So it's a huge
8 thank you for being here to testify here
9 in Philadelphia, and we understand that
10 as soon you can, you need to leave and go
11 back to Pittsburgh. So thank you very
12 much for being here.

13 And with that, would you please
14 state your name for the record and then
15 provide us with your testimony.

16 REPRESENTATIVE COSTA: Yes,
17 sir. Thank you. I'm State
18 Representative Paul Costa. I represent
19 the 34th Legislative District, which is
20 parts of the City of Pittsburgh and its
21 eastern suburbs.

22 Before I begin, I want to thank
23 you, Chairman Oh, very much for inviting
24 me to talk about the Film Tax Credit.
25 It's something that I've been an advocate

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2 for forever, as long as I've been in the
3 Legislature, because I've seen the direct
4 impact that it's had not only in my
5 district but throughout the state in
6 creating jobs.

7 Just a little bit of background
8 on how the Film Tax Credit works is, if a
9 movie industry wants to come -- well,
10 I'll use Pittsburgh as an example --
11 wants to come to Pittsburgh and makes a
12 movie, they put in a request. If 60
13 percent of the work is going to be done
14 in Pennsylvania by 60 percent of the
15 employees who are from Pennsylvania, if
16 that's the case, then they apply for
17 these tax credits.

18 So they go along and they make
19 the movie, and at the end of the movie
20 and after everything is done, there's an
21 audit that is done to make sure that the
22 production did exactly what they said
23 they were going to do, a minimum of 60
24 percent of work in Pennsylvania by
25 Pennsylvanians. If that's the case, then

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2 the tax credits are released.

3 So that's basically how it
4 works. But what my bill does is, it
5 uncaps that credit amount. Today I
6 believe our tax credit is at \$60 million.
7 We are turning away lots of business, at
8 least I know in Southwestern Pennsylvania
9 and I'm sure here in the Philadelphia
10 region. We are turning away projects
11 because we don't have enough tax credits.
12 And, as you said, it's very competitive
13 out there. There's all the other states
14 that offer these tax credits, and you may
15 ask why. And you kind of hit on it early
16 when you talked about the impact that
17 these movies have. I mean, everybody
18 thinks of the actors and the producers
19 and people like that, but as you stated,
20 there's electricians, there's carpenters,
21 there's painters, there's hairdressers,
22 there's makeup, there's caterers, there's
23 hotels, there's rent-a-cars. There's
24 several opportunities that are associated
25 with the Film Office. And I always tell

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2 people, I have a friend who is a dog
3 walker, and one of her clients are people
4 that are makeup artists in the Pittsburgh
5 region for film. When the makeup artists
6 are working, the dog walker is working.
7 So the ripple goes all the way down to
8 someone who walks a dog. And, again, you
9 don't realize the positive impacts it
10 has.

11 My district that I represent,
12 some areas are pretty distressed, and
13 we've been fortunate that we've had a
14 couple movies that have been made in our
15 district. And the nice thing about this
16 that people don't realize is that a lot
17 of times they go through clothes or
18 furniture or things like that. We're
19 fortunate in our area, we have a place
20 that's called the Free Store, and any
21 time that the movies in our region make
22 movies and when they're done, they donate
23 the clothes and the furniture and
24 anything else that they have to the Free
25 Store so that the people in the community

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2 could come and reap the benefit of that.

3 In addition to that, there was
4 a movie that was made in one of our local
5 police stations. As a thank-you, they
6 bought the police station a brand new
7 radio system, which is not very cheap and
8 that they really need it.

9 So there's a lot of other
10 things that the film industry does that
11 people don't see, the donations that they
12 make to our communities.

13 This story goes back a long
14 time ago, and we try to tell the impact
15 it has in other members' districts and
16 the region, the impact. There was a
17 movie that was made in Pittsburgh with
18 Russell Crowe, The Next Three Days. So
19 Russell Crowe had three private parties
20 at a restaurant. The owner of the
21 restaurant told us that he made more
22 money in those three nights than he makes
23 in six months. So that's the revenue
24 that is coming in. And, as I said, the
25 hotel room, the rent-a-cars.

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2 I used the example in our
3 region when the movie was being made,
4 they had our station at our Fire
5 Department's hall, rec hall. So they
6 rented our Fire Department's rec hall for
7 a couple months, which was good money to
8 them. They rented the police officers,
9 again, which was good money to them.
10 Whenever they need something, they don't
11 think about best, cheapest place. They
12 go to the closest place they can get
13 something. So they're always staying
14 close to the region.

15 So those are one of the many
16 reasons why I've introduced this
17 legislation. If we are to uncap it --
18 uncap really means about \$150 million,
19 because once you get to that point,
20 there's only so many jobs that can be run
21 and done at a time. So if we raise it up
22 to \$150 million, we wouldn't be turning
23 away anybody, and we would constantly
24 have employment for not only our crafts
25 but everyone else, again, all the way

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2 down to the dog walkers.

3 So I would be more than happy
4 to address any questions.

5 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
6 much.

7 At this time, let me recognize
8 that we have been joined by Councilman
9 Derek Green and Councilman Mark Squilla.

10 Because you are the drafter of
11 this legislation, what I'm going to do
12 is, we're going to direct anyone who has
13 questions to you at this time and then
14 we'll continue with our second panelist,
15 who I understand is quite knowledgeable
16 of the technical aspects of the tax
17 credit.

18 So let me just start with a few
19 questions of my own.

20 Your bill increases the
21 available tax credit in Pennsylvania from
22 about \$60 million to 115 or 150?

23 REPRESENTATIVE COSTA: 150.

24 COUNCILMAN OH: 150.

25 REPRESENTATIVE COSTA: It says

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2 uncapped, but in reality it's 150.

3 COUNCILMAN OH: Pretty
4 significant.

5 REPRESENTATIVE COSTA: Once you
6 get to that point, there's not much more
7 work that can be done.

8 COUNCILMAN OH: So \$150
9 million. Does it look like it has some
10 pretty good support?

11 REPRESENTATIVE COSTA: It's
12 difficult. We've had an uphill battle
13 explaining to people how the tax credit
14 works. They think that the money is
15 going to the producers or the movie stars
16 and whatnot, and several times I've had
17 to explain to my colleagues that that
18 movie -- it doesn't matter where the
19 movie is being made. The producers and
20 the stars are getting paid. It's when
21 it's made in our region that our
22 carpenters, our electrician, our
23 painters, again, our dog walkers, all of
24 them included, they all get paid too.

25 So it's hard to explain that to

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2 some of our members. But the good side
3 of it is, we do have people that are in
4 the industry that have been e-mailing. I
5 know they e-mail me. I assume they're
6 e-mailing their other representatives
7 explaining the beneficial impact of the
8 tax credit. But it's an uphill battle.

9 As you know, our state is
10 roughly in a \$2 billion structural
11 deficit, and when we try to tell people
12 that we're increasing a tax credit, they
13 get squirmish, but my argument is these
14 film industries have to make an
15 investment in the community before they
16 can draw down on that tax credit. So if
17 they're not working, we're not giving out
18 the credit.

19 COUNCILMAN OH: They got to pay
20 first --

21 REPRESENTATIVE COSTA: Exactly.

22 COUNCILMAN OH: -- before they
23 get a tax credit opportunity.

24 REPRESENTATIVE COSTA: Yes,
25 sir.

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2 COUNCILMAN OH: In terms of
3 some of the things in the bill, and I
4 know there's an expert sitting right next
5 to you, but just as a legislator, an
6 originator of what the bill covers, does
7 it cover -- and maybe if it doesn't,
8 could it cover -- some additional things
9 that I just wonder about, because --
10 well, first let me say that I do
11 understand that Pittsburgh has got a
12 really good situation right now with what
13 they're filming. I think there's a
14 Netflix series going on in Pittsburgh.

15 REPRESENTATIVE COSTA: And
16 fortunately they're in my district.

17 COUNCILMAN OH: Oh, in your
18 district. Okay. Wonderful.

19 So I hear from industry folks
20 that a television series or series are
21 wonderful because people keep working,
22 they keep working. And then folks in
23 Philadelphia also wonder about is there
24 anything for independent filmmakers. I
25 generally believe that if we don't have

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2 major motion pictures going on here,
3 there just isn't a lot of excitement and
4 opportunities for Philadelphia, but we
5 really want to look at independent
6 filmmakers. I know there have been tax
7 credits or incentives for on-the-job
8 training or training folks. Somebody has
9 raised issues about diversity tax
10 credits, if you hire a diverse production
11 crew behind the scenes, all those type of
12 things. I don't know, is that too taxing
13 in the film industry, but what are your
14 thoughts on that right now?

15 REPRESENTATIVE COSTA: Well,
16 going as far as the independents, because
17 the tax credit are only at 60 million, it
18 gets eaten up pretty fast and usually by
19 the big movie productions because they're
20 planning so far out that they're able to
21 do this. Unfortunately, if an
22 independent, by the time they want to get
23 into the mix, the tax credits could be
24 gone. So, again, if we increase it, then
25 it would create more opportunities for

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2 the independents and for the other
3 programs that you're talking about.

4 COUNCILMAN OH: All right.

5 Thank you very much.

6 At this time, I see that
7 Councilman Green has a question.

8 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
9 Mr. Chair.

10 Thank you for your work on this
11 issue. I know some years ago when I
12 worked for Councilwoman Tasco, we looked
13 and explored and actually had hearings on
14 the concept of a local tax credit, but in
15 talking with the Administration at that
16 time, the finances of doing that was
17 challenging, probably very similar to
18 what you're having at the state level
19 where I know from my observation over the
20 years, even going back to the Rendell
21 Administration as Governor, there's been
22 a movement by some to reduce the tax
23 credit, where other states and other
24 jurisdictions have been growing their tax
25 credits and you're seeing the benefit

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2 that it has to the industry.

3 What steps can we as a city
4 which has benefited from growing the film
5 industry help to promote the tax credit
6 even though it's something at the state
7 level? Is there an opportunity where the
8 City can partner with the state to better
9 promote the industry, especially from a
10 tax credit perspective?

11 And I'm curious of what's
12 happened in other jurisdictions. I know
13 Georgia has a very booming film tax
14 credit. I see the "made in Georgia" all
15 the time for a lot of different
16 productions. What can we on the local
17 level do to support efforts to at least
18 maintain, if not enhance, tax credits at
19 the state level?

20 REPRESENTATIVE COSTA: I would
21 suggest not only talking to your
22 legislators but your Senators and the
23 Governor's staff and explain to them the
24 impact it has had on your area. As I was
25 explaining earlier, I know the direct

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2 impact it has in my district. And the
3 more and more we can get that information
4 out there to other members and to the
5 Governor's staff to show that this is
6 actually an investment that is made in
7 our communities and then they will get a
8 tax credit at the end. Again, they can
9 only get the credit if they do the work.
10 If they're not working, there's nothing
11 to give them a credit for.

12 So to stress that the ripple
13 effect that it has, not only, as I said
14 earlier, for the crafts, but all the way
15 down to the dog walker, that the people
16 are employed, and when those people are
17 employed, they're contributing to our
18 economy, and just keep stressing the
19 importance of that.

20 COUNCILMAN GREEN: And how does
21 the Pennsylvania Film Tax Credit compare
22 to other states? Because I'm trying to
23 remember from the research we did some
24 years ago in reference to other states
25 like New York and Massachusetts and

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2 Georgia, but how does it compare to other
3 comparable cities on the East Coast?

4 REPRESENTATIVE COSTA: Well,
5 the one thing that I know that our state
6 is a model of is the fact that we do an
7 audit after the production is done. A
8 lot of states give them the credit up
9 front. We don't do that. Again, you do
10 the work that you said you're going to
11 do, and then, and only then, do we give
12 you the tax credit. That's one of the
13 major differences that we do in
14 Pennsylvania.

15 And I will tell you this: I
16 know when other states that have
17 cancelled their tax credits; for
18 instance, several years ago, North
19 Carolina had a tax credit. They withdrew
20 it, and my district benefited because the
21 TV shows that they were doing in North
22 Carolina packed up and came to
23 Pittsburgh.

24 COUNCILMAN GREEN: And I guess,
25 finally, how do we as a state and also as

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2 a country compete with other productions?

3 I know there's a lot of productions done

4 in Toronto and other North America

5 jurisdictions. How do we compete in

6 reference to trying to bring those jobs?

7 REPRESENTATIVE COSTA: Well, I

8 think we're actually doing a good job

9 because we're turning away -- at least I

10 know in Southwestern Pennsylvania, we're

11 turning away projects because we don't

12 have enough credits. Again, my solution

13 is -- I hope I'm right -- we increase the

14 amount of credits, we increase the amount

15 of jobs that keep coming into our region

16 and hopefully we don't have to turn away

17 jobs.

18 COUNCILMAN GREEN: And then,

19 finally, because there's been a move in

20 film and movie and television where

21 there's much more content through

22 different type of providers like a

23 Netflix and others. Is there a strategic

24 advantage of focusing more on television

25 as opposed to just film because of some

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2 of the changes that are happening in the
3 industry with some of the content
4 providers looking for more original
5 content? There seems to be a diversity
6 of opportunities with some of the newer
7 providers and newer mechanisms of getting
8 content out to people.

9 REPRESENTATIVE COSTA: Right.

10 With these TV shows or the Netflix or
11 whatever, the nice thing about it, if you
12 catch on to a good one, then it's
13 continuous and you're working year round.

14 Movies sometimes last a year,
15 year and a half, sometimes six months,
16 and hopefully you're available for the
17 next one that comes along. But the TV
18 productions, as long as they're
19 committed, there's a little more, how do
20 you want to say, predictability of how
21 you're going to be working.

22 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
23 Mr. Chair.

24 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you,
25 Councilman.

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2 And just to note that we do
3 have an expert on tax credits who has yet
4 to testify, but I wanted to give my
5 colleagues the opportunity to talk to a
6 fellow legislator before he has to leave.
7 He has very graciously come in, and he's
8 got to return home to Pittsburgh, so I
9 want to certainly let our legislators
10 speak to Representative Costa.

11 Councilman Squilla.

12 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you,
13 Mr. Chair.

14 And thank you for coming. We
15 appreciate it. I agree with you
16 wholeheartedly on the increase of the tax
17 credits. The one concern that I heard,
18 though, is, is it that the tax credits
19 have to be renewed each year, so
20 sometimes that may be a thought process
21 and when somebody is deciding whether to
22 come here, they don't know if it's going
23 to get passed the following year? So is
24 there something in this bill that would
25 take that away or not?

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2 REPRESENTATIVE COSTA: That's a
3 very good point. Right now we're at \$60
4 million, and that's this fiscal year.
5 We're hoping and assuming that it's going
6 to be in the next fiscal year, but we
7 don't know that yet. We won't know that
8 until the budget passes.

9 By having a bill that says that
10 it's uncapped -- in reality, as I said
11 earlier, it's \$150 million. If it's
12 uncapped, it's more of a predictability,
13 where movies can do long-range planning
14 and they can come next year or the year
15 after and they're prepared when they line
16 up their slots.

17 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Because I
18 think especially if you're doing
19 long-term Netflix shows and not a movie
20 where you're going to be from year to
21 year and you might think, well, if we
22 don't get it the following year and we're
23 stuck here doing it, then it won't be
24 beneficial.

25 REPRESENTATIVE COSTA: A lot of

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2 the times with the \$60 million, before
3 you get to the end of the year, it's
4 gone.

5 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Right. So
6 I agree. I thank you for introducing
7 this, and hopefully maybe we could help
8 with some of our --

9 REPRESENTATIVE COSTA: There's
10 one more thing I wanted to touch on about
11 that. So if a movie comes in and says
12 they're going to do X and after they do
13 the audit and they didn't do X and they
14 don't get the money, so unfortunately
15 that money was tied up. We're over \$25
16 million of credits that were promised out
17 that were never received.

18 We've also been trying the last
19 several sessions to throw that money back
20 into the pot, even if it's only just a
21 one-time. So let's say that next year
22 instead of it being 60, it could be 85
23 million. Unfortunately, we haven't been
24 successful doing that either, but we are
25 trying to come up with different ways of

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2 raising that number to create more jobs.

3 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: And we
4 understand how tough it is in Harrisburg
5 now with the deficit and then budget that
6 goes on and you guys have your hands
7 full, but we appreciate you at least
8 leading the charge on this effort,
9 because we do believe -- and it's great
10 that Pittsburgh is getting a lot of the
11 benefits of it, but I think if it's wide
12 enough, all the areas in the Commonwealth
13 could benefit from this and generate
14 income for the Commonwealth.

15 REPRESENTATIVE COSTA: You're
16 right, Pittsburgh is doing well in this.
17 We have a Southwest Regional Film Office,
18 but it's not just Pittsburgh. It's all
19 the Southwestern PA.

20 A few years back there was a
21 movie with Denzel Washington in a runaway
22 train. I forget the name of it. But
23 anyway, a lot of it was made up in
24 Punxsutawney area, and the person who
25 owns the hotel had told a meeting of

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2 people that he wanted to make sure that
3 the tax credit was -- because he had over
4 a million dollars influx in his hotel
5 because of one movie that was made
6 technically in Pittsburgh, but they used
7 all of Southwestern Pennsylvania.

8 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Right.

9 And I think we can also look how we could
10 coordinate maybe some type of
11 Philadelphia tax as a super bonus, if
12 possible. Whatever we could do to
13 support your venture here, I think you
14 would have some support from a lot of
15 members of Council.

16 REPRESENTATIVE COSTA: I

17 appreciate that. Thank you.

18 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you,

19 Councilman Squilla.

20 Let me just state we have a
21 bipartisan group at this table of
22 democrats and republicans. So whatever
23 we can do to help, we certainly want to
24 do that.

25 I mistakenly overlooked the

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2 Vice Chairman. Councilman Al

3 Taubenberger has questions for you.

4 Thank you.

5 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER:

6 Mr. Chairman, thank you. No apology
7 necessary.

8 I just want to get this right.

9 I thought, Representative, you had said
10 that you in your district lost the
11 opportunity to have some movies made
12 because you were over the tax credit?

13 REPRESENTATIVE COSTA: All the
14 tax credits -- so right now the tax
15 credits amount is \$60 million. Once
16 those 60 million are gone --

17 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Is
18 that for the whole state?

19 REPRESENTATIVE COSTA: That's
20 for the whole state.

21 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Oh,
22 that's for the whole state. So they
23 couldn't even have come here?

24 REPRESENTATIVE COSTA: Correct.

25 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: This

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2 was not going to work in Pennsylvania?

3 REPRESENTATIVE COSTA: Right.

4 This was across statewide that we had to
5 turn away people.

6 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: And
7 your legislation increases that amount?

8 REPRESENTATIVE COSTA: Correct.

9 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: And
10 how long will those tax credits last,
11 meaning will the next year we have the
12 same amount?

13 REPRESENTATIVE COSTA: Well, if
14 it's uncapped -- again, when I say
15 "uncapped," we're really talking about
16 \$150 million, but I'm hoping if I keep
17 saying uncapped, we'll get the 150. So
18 you're almost doubling -- or more than
19 doubling the amount of tax credits that
20 you have today.

21 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: In
22 doing your homework for this bill -- and,
23 once again, thank you for your leadership
24 on that as well. I think it's very, very
25 important.

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2 Was this modeled after another
3 state is doing something?

4 REPRESENTATIVE COSTA: No. It
5 was just let's just -- what can we do to
6 make this right.

7 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Is
8 there a particular state that you believe
9 is doing it really, really well?

10 REPRESENTATIVE COSTA: Well, I
11 would say Louisiana, because they're
12 pulling a lot of work. It used to be
13 Arizona -- or I'm sorry. New Mexico.
14 You've heard Toronto. There's other
15 areas that are doing it well. Again,
16 once we have the ability to increase it,
17 we can create more jobs.

18 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER:
19 That's a Louisiana state --

20 REPRESENTATIVE COSTA: Yes.

21 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: --
22 law with these tax credits?

23 And you believe they're doing
24 that. Do you know what's really
25 interesting? Someone actually just told

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2 me something similar, that in New Orleans
3 right now -- in fact, there's two young
4 folks from Philadelphia working down
5 there, and they're doing quite well, and
6 New Orleans seems to be the hub now of
7 growing these. And do you have a sense
8 of how big their tax credit is?

9 REPRESENTATIVE COSTA: I do
10 not, but I will tell you this, if you
11 talk to the producers or any of the
12 people in the movie industry, when you
13 ask them -- I always say, Why do you pick
14 Pittsburgh? And the first thing they say
15 is the tax credit. If you don't have a
16 tax credit, you're eliminated and then
17 you go to the next --

18 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: So it
19 doesn't really matter what the aesthetics
20 of the city is or --

21 REPRESENTATIVE COSTA: Well,
22 that's the other side of it. If you get
23 the tax credits, you're looking at your
24 region because, again, looking at
25 Pittsburgh, you can be New York, you

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2 could be Philly, you could be Chicago or
3 you can be Iowa within a half an hour.
4 So the Pittsburgh region. Plus we have a
5 pretty good workforce that we've
6 developed over the years. Some of -- our
7 community college is in Point Park
8 University. Both have programs to work
9 with production assistants and movies and
10 educating these children on how to get
11 into this industry.

12 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER:

13 Representative Costa, thank you very
14 much.

15 REPRESENTATIVE COSTA: Thank

16 you very much.

17 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER:

18 Mr. Chairman, thank you.

19 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very

20 much.

21 Thank you for making it all the
22 way down here.

23 REPRESENTATIVE COSTA: My

24 pleasure.

25 COUNCILMAN OH: We very much

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2 appreciate your work.

3 REPRESENTATIVE COSTA: And if
4 there's anything I can do to help you
5 guys on your end, please don't hesitate
6 to reach out to me. I know I've worked
7 with -- some of your colleagues used to
8 be some of my colleagues.

9 COUNCILMAN OH: Yes. All
10 right. Thank you.

11 REPRESENTATIVE COSTA: Thank
12 you very much.

13 COUNCILMAN OH: Mr. McCann,
14 would you state your name for the record
15 and in this case give us your title and
16 then please provide us with your
17 testimony.

18 MR. McCANN: Yes. My name is
19 Mike McCann. I am not Mike McCann, the
20 real estate, for those of you -- in fact,
21 a long time ago PIDC -- because I'll tell
22 you in a minute, we do a lot of tax
23 credits here in the City with your
24 technology companies.

25 Someone at PIDC said, Look, I

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2 told everybody this is Mike McCann, the
3 tax credit man, not the Mike McCann, the
4 real estate man. So there you go.

5 But my name is Mike McCann. I
6 own a couple companies, MVM Associates
7 and Film Incentives Group. We're based
8 out of Fort Washington, Pennsylvania, so
9 we're local. We have been involved --
10 it's our 20th year in business, and we've
11 been involved with these type of
12 transferable tax credits since 2003 when
13 we first started trading or helping sell
14 Pennsylvania's research and development
15 tax credits, which at that time Governor
16 Rendell had started that program to allow
17 technology companies to sell tax credits
18 that they couldn't utilize on their own
19 to companies that could use them so they
20 could generate revenue and the company
21 who would buy it would buy it for a
22 little bit of a discount.

23 They added the film tax credits
24 and some others in 2007, and I started
25 Film Incentives Group, a second company,

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2 to sell these tax credits across the
3 country. So we sell or have sold tax
4 credits in Pennsylvania, in Louisiana, in
5 Georgia, in Massachusetts, in Florida, in
6 Alaska. So if you can sell them in the
7 film business, we do that.

8 So we are very active in
9 Pennsylvania obviously because we're
10 here. To give some idea, I've written in
11 my testimony, I looked at the last annual
12 report, which was for Fiscal Year
13 '14-'15, I think, and there was \$88
14 million that were transferred, I think
15 60-some-odd transfers. We did 40 percent
16 of those. And probably on a year-to-year
17 basis, we might do half of them, you
18 know, or more. So I won't go into all
19 the details. We worked for Disney, we
20 worked for Paramount, worked for Sony,
21 worked for Lionsgate, you know, local
22 things here. So we know a lot about
23 these tax credits because it's what we
24 do.

25 So what I had looked at was in

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2 looking at your resolution and kind of
3 tailored what I was going to say to how
4 you could draw more large film
5 productions and large TV series here to
6 Philadelphia versus other states and
7 perhaps either other sides of the state.
8 Representative Costa kind of hit it right
9 on the head. The amount of tax credits
10 that are available each year is simply
11 not enough. I mean, in addition to the
12 fact that the budget each year is \$60
13 million, the legislation also allows the
14 state to dip into future years. So this
15 particular year I believe there's only
16 about \$40 million that was available to
17 start with, and given the legislation, it
18 could be as low as 20-some million. So
19 there is unquestionably a need to
20 increase that cap. I had recommended in
21 my written testimony to a minimum of \$100
22 million. I believe that would at least
23 allow another two to four large projects
24 to come to Philadelphia versus things
25 that might go to Pittsburgh. And

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2 uncapping it, as Representative Costa
3 said, is really what's really needed.

4 I think the fear when you hear
5 uncapped, as you would with anything, is,
6 okay, are we going to have a runaway --
7 like are we going to have a trillion
8 dollars of these and is it going to
9 bankrupt the state. And in reality when
10 you look at what has happened in some of
11 the other states that do have uncapped
12 credits, that is not what has happened,
13 which is where Representative Costa gets
14 his \$150 million.

15 If you look at -- Massachusetts
16 is a very similar -- it's a northeastern
17 location. It's unlimited. It's a 25
18 percent credit. We're at 25 percent.
19 Theirs is a little bit different, but you
20 can kind of look at them as apples to
21 apples. And based on their reports over
22 about a ten-year period, the average
23 amount of credits that was utilized in
24 that state was \$60 to \$70 million. So
25 having an uncapped credit in and of

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2 itself does not mean you're going to end
3 up with a billion dollars worth of tax
4 credits.

5 Some of the states don't
6 produce as much information as perhaps
7 you'd like to see. But Georgia and
8 Louisiana, which are the largest --
9 Georgia certainly now; Louisiana they've
10 changed their film tax credit. Again,
11 you're talking about a couple hundred
12 million dollars worth of credits in any
13 one given year.

14 So the first recommendation
15 would be obviously to increase the credit
16 whatever you could, and uncapping it is
17 really what is needed.

18 Let me backtrack for a second.
19 I want to tell you very quickly how the
20 credit works. Sometimes there's a
21 misunderstanding of exactly how these
22 credits work.

23 So as Representative Costa
24 said, in order for companies to get the
25 credits, there's minimum criteria they

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2 have to meet. They have to shoot at
3 least 60 percent of their full budget
4 here in Pennsylvania, and then if it's
5 approved and they do their audit, they
6 get a tax credit equal to 25 percent of
7 their eligible production spending. But
8 that tax credit doesn't mean much to a
9 lot of the companies that shoot here
10 because, again, they don't pay
11 Pennsylvania taxes. You have a lot of
12 big companies or small companies or
13 mediums are coming in, creating a movie,
14 investing here. They don't have profits
15 and, thus, they don't have state taxes to
16 use the credit against. So, therefore,
17 they are allowed to sell the tax credit,
18 which is essentially what we do, and
19 companies who buy these -- and it's all
20 public information, but Apple Computer
21 buys a lot of them, Selective Insurance
22 buys a lot of them, Walmart buys a lot of
23 them. So big companies with big tax
24 bills purchase these credits.

25 The real great thing about this

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2 program is, they have to invest -- not
3 only do they have to invest that money
4 first, but by the time they do the film,
5 go through the process, do the audit,
6 file their tax returns, sell the credits,
7 it could be two, two and a half years.
8 You're getting people to spend 40
9 million. They're not even getting the
10 \$10 million benefit for two and a half
11 years. There couldn't be a better
12 economic development program than getting
13 people with the money up front.

14 Now, the one thing I thought on
15 a local level that you could do -- I took
16 a look at your PIDC Bridge Loan that you
17 have for PIDC. So if you're not familiar
18 with that, PIDC offers companies that are
19 filming -- that have a tax credit awarded
20 and are filming in Philadelphia to loan
21 them the money on that tax credit.
22 Certain stipulations, but at very fair
23 rates versus the things you'd have to get
24 out on the street, which are very high
25 rates for -- they're mostly for

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2 independents that utilize it. So that
3 program is actually very unique. There
4 are very few municipalities and no states
5 who offer financing with their tax
6 credit. New Mexico used to do it. They
7 don't do it anymore.

8 So as I stated before, if you
9 know it's going to take you a year and a
10 half, two years, two and a half years to
11 actually get to the money that is the end
12 result of your tax credit, you'd like to
13 get that money a heck of a lot sooner.
14 The big budget productions, your studios,
15 they have access to -- a lot of access to
16 low cost of capital. So they may not
17 have interest in financing the project up
18 front. That may not make the difference
19 between, let's say, them coming to
20 Philadelphia versus them going to
21 Pittsburgh or to Georgia, but I will tell
22 you many times over that what's happened
23 is as the time goes along and some of
24 these CFOs that these big studios have
25 reported these numbers into a quarterly

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2 number they're supposed to meet or an
3 annual fiscal year that they're supposed
4 to have it in and they're not quite sure
5 when that money is going to come, I think
6 it would be very valuable for the City
7 and PIDC to be talking to them to say,
8 Hey, we would help you with that. We
9 would finance this tax credit through our
10 program.

11 So, lastly, I'll just leave you
12 with, the program's cap is \$4.5 million.
13 That's not enough in the case of some of
14 these tax credits that are 8, 10, 12, 15
15 million dollars with these big-budget
16 pictures and television series. I mean,
17 the Netflix credit is, I think, \$23
18 million over a couple years. So, again,
19 it might be something where the
20 Philadelphia Film Office and the City and
21 PIDC talk to the studios and say, Hey,
22 how could we better craft this program
23 that it would be really important to you
24 guys and work for you that it would be
25 the difference between filming elsewhere

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2 and coming here because the other cities
3 don't have this finance program.

4 So that's kind of what -- I
5 have long testimony written. I won't
6 read it, but that's kind of what I wanted
7 to come here to talk about today.

8 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
9 much. And just for clarity's sake, what
10 you've said is that the tax credit in
11 Pennsylvania is \$60 million, but they can
12 kind of borrow from future tax credits,
13 so we may have a lot less available. And
14 then I understand what you said is that
15 the per-project cap, there is a
16 per-project cap and it's 4.5 million. So
17 if there is --

18 MR. McCANN: That's from the
19 PIDC program, not the state program.

20 COUNCILMAN OH: PIDC program.

21 MR. McCANN: The funding cap is
22 \$4.5 million.

23 COUNCILMAN OH: For the loan
24 against --

25 MR. McCANN: Correct.

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2 COUNCILMAN OH: Okay. So on
3 our part, we could elevate that or remove
4 that cap and then the bill that
5 Representative Costa has presented would
6 be to increase the tax credit from 60
7 million to 150 million.

8 MR. McCANN: Yeah. So the
9 state -- again, the state tax credit is
10 the lure to get the productions to film
11 here. So Representative Costa's bill,
12 which would uncap it, is unquestionably
13 the answer really to everything. If it
14 was uncapped, you would have all the work
15 you could handle and more. So that's the
16 first part of it.

17 And the second thing is the
18 City's program, which is the loan to
19 companies who get those tax credits to
20 allow them to get access to their capital
21 sooner, I think again is a great tool if
22 perhaps that cap is raised and you tinker
23 with it to see how it would be more
24 beneficial to these studios that are
25 shooting these big-budget pictures and TV

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2 shows.

3 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you.

4 Councilman Squilla.

5 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you.

6 Thank you for your testimony.

7 Do you see when we need to do this to
8 save Rep Costa's bill to pass that the
9 study for an economic impact of what
10 these performances or movies or shows
11 bring to the City as far as the return?
12 Do we have that?

13 MR. McCANN: There's several
14 studies that have been done. The most
15 recent one that I think that would be
16 applicable, the Pittsburgh Film Office
17 did a study that gave the numbers in
18 about 2009, 2010. The state Legislative
19 and Budget Committee did a study on the
20 program, and all of them showed the
21 benefits of the program with the
22 different multipliers for every dollar
23 invested, X plus comes back.

24 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: So it is
25 beneficial even to the state. Because, I

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2 mean, you always hear when people have
3 opposition to something is that we can't
4 afford it, but maybe it is that we can't
5 afford not to do it, because if it's
6 bringing a dollar plus back for every
7 dollar spent, it's a net profit to the
8 state.

9 MR. McCANN: Correct.

10 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: So we
11 would just need to make sure we have that
12 information to be able to push through.
13 And even if we as a city looked at
14 implementing some type of tax credits
15 maybe as an above bonus, we would want to
16 show that for every dollar that we
17 believe we return, that we actually would
18 make a profit on that.

19 MR. McCANN: Right. Let me
20 speak to that, because I didn't talk
21 about a city credit, but at the end of
22 the day, look, it comes down to what's
23 the return to the production companies at
24 these big levels. So here in
25 Pennsylvania, you have 25 percent.

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2 Massachusetts has 25 percent. Georgia
3 has 30 percent. And those are kind of
4 the highs. There's not much more than 30
5 percent. I think there might be one or
6 two others. So, I mean, if you have a 25
7 percent credit and then the City puts
8 something in that raised that bump-up
9 more towards 30 or a little bit more, you
10 know, net, then of course it's going to
11 make a big difference. So if there's
12 something the City could put in that
13 would be a state tax credit, plus a city
14 tax credit that would add up to a certain
15 amount, again, that would drive business
16 here. There's no question about it.

17 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you
18 very much.

19 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you,
20 Councilman.

21 Councilman Taubenberger.

22 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Thank
23 you, Mr. Chairman.

24 Mr. McCann, the Bridge Loan,
25 does that exist now?

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2 MR. McCANN: Yes, it does.

3 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Oh,
4 it does? Okay. And you feel we should
5 raise that cap --

6 MR. McCANN: Well, let's -- at
7 the very least, so you have the major
8 cities --

9 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: So I
10 have it right in my head, it's 4.5?

11 MR. McCANN: \$4.5 million.

12 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Per
13 project?

14 MR. McCANN: Yeah. The current
15 PIDC sheet that's on their site right
16 now, so it says it's \$4.5 million is the
17 maximum loan amount. Now, that's
18 actually not bad for a lot of smaller to
19 medium-sized independents. That's fine.
20 I believe that it has been used, and it
21 should be marketed more if it's not being
22 marketed enough. But a big budget --
23 when you look at what the size of even,
24 I'll call it, the medium budget big films
25 that come here, they're getting credits

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2 for 7 million, 8 million, 9 million. And
3 those are perhaps, say, like Lionsgate,
4 what I'll call a mini major, right?

5 They're not Sony. They're not Paramount.

6 So they're not getting the 23 million

7 that Netflix is doing, but they have a

8 smaller picture. Those pictures are

9 great. They're large pictures. So at

10 the very least, it would be perhaps a

11 good idea to look at increasing this to

12 try to lure more of those. But then once

13 you get to the big guys, loaning them the

14 money is probably not as important

15 because they have access to low cost cap,

16 plenty of it, but as I said, what I have

17 found is of interest to them is when

18 later on they need that money because

19 there's a certain quarter they were

20 supposed to have it by and maybe the

21 production overran or maybe the audit is

22 not done or maybe the state is taking a

23 while to transfer that credit, I would

24 think it would be very -- they would be

25 very interested in, hey, you know what, I

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2 have this in my back pocket.

3 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Got
4 it.

5 Well, a question. The actual
6 tax credit in the end is based on an
7 audit that you are within the parameters,
8 and that is done, I would assume, post
9 production?

10 MR. McCANN: Yes. Correct.

11 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: What
12 happens we loan them the money and then
13 all the sudden we find out they didn't
14 hire 60 percent from Philadelphia or
15 wherever they're supposed to do this?

16 MR. McCANN: Sure.

17 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: And
18 they did not qualify for the tax credit.
19 What happens?

20 MR. McCANN: Well, with the
21 program in and of itself, they're secured
22 with the first position against the tax
23 credit. They perhaps don't loan 100
24 percent of the tax credit amount. So if
25 it comes under and there's a lessening of

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2 the credit, they could still recover
3 that. And I'm sure they have other
4 collateral requirements. And, again,
5 with the big studios, again, you're going
6 to have them ensure this or guarantee the
7 payment on that.

8 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: The
9 requirements as you see it from your
10 perspectives in this law that the studios
11 must do, do you think that is fettering
12 their success in a sense that maybe
13 hiring 60 percent of Philadelphians is
14 too much for them?

15 MR. McCANN: I'll be honest
16 with you, that's not really my area of
17 expertise. I would ask some of the other
18 folks who are going to testify. They do
19 look at that. Are they going to be able
20 to meet that hurdle? Has it -- it has
21 been an issue. I believe that issue has
22 been addressed in that the state is
23 allowed to provide some waivers if they
24 see that the economic impact that's
25 projected from the project kind of

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2 offsets some of that. So, yes.

3 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Thank
4 you, Mr. McCann.

5 And, Mr. Chairman, thank you.

6 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
7 much.

8 Could we call the next panel.

9 Thank you very much.

10 MR. McCANN: Thank you very
11 much.

12 THE CLERK: Jeffrey Rotwitt,
13 Steve Leshinski, Neil Samuels, Jim
14 Whalen, and Jozef Jozefowski.

15 (Witnesses approached witness
16 table.)

17 COUNCILMAN OH: Well, there's a
18 lot of names for that little table. So
19 let me do this. Why don't we start with
20 the first three, Jeffrey Rotwitt, Steve
21 Leshinski, and Neil Samuels, and then
22 we'll do the next two.

23 All right. Thank you very
24 much. And so let me ask Jeffrey Rotwitt
25 to begin. Please state your name and

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2 identify yourself and provide us with
3 your testimony. Thank you very much.

4 MR. ROTWITT: Great. My name
5 is Jeffrey Rotwitt. I built a
6 full-service movie studio in Delaware
7 County called Sun Center Studios. We've
8 been operational since actually the
9 fourth quarter of 2011 and we've hosted
10 probably six or seven major films there,
11 film stars.

12 You have my notes I've given
13 you, so I come really more as a resource
14 for you to ask questions, but to the
15 extent that you would want my two cents
16 on how to improve the area, I would look
17 at less provincially than the boundary
18 line that where Philadelphia begins and
19 ends. I was born in Philadelphia, went
20 to Philadelphia public schools, went to
21 Penn, and located in Delaware County.

22 I think to the extent that the
23 state tax credit program is perceived in
24 the other 65 counties is benefiting only
25 Allegheny County and Philadelphia County,

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2 it makes it for a tougher sell.

3 I think that the film tax
4 credit has been proven to be very
5 effective and very effective in
6 comparison to other film tax credit
7 programs, other tax programs if you use
8 the same set of metrics.

9 I think for the most part,
10 there are those who are advocates for the
11 program and there are those who are
12 against it to the extent that you are
13 more of a laissez-faire approach that
14 government should pick winners or losers
15 in the private sector.

16 But if you have a 25 percent
17 credit at 60 million, you know there's
18 \$240 million of local spend. And even
19 those who are against film tax credits
20 acknowledge the velocity of money, the
21 multiplier, is at least two to one. So
22 you're talking about nearly a half a
23 billion dollars worth of spending in
24 Pennsylvania for \$60 million of credit.
25 And I can't imagine any other industry,

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2 from hula hoops to high tech, that can
3 produce that kind of result.

4 Where do we stack up in the
5 competition for films? Well, I think as
6 Representative Costa indicated and Mike
7 McCann is as good as the comments with
8 regard to the tax credits, tax credits
9 are the mother's milk of filming. Right
10 now it's worse than the opioid crisis for
11 Hollywood. They will not come if they
12 don't exist.

13 Originally going back, as you
14 may know, Philadelphia was the Hollywood
15 in this country until the middle teens,
16 the Lubin Studios. And when it migrated
17 out after Teddy Roosevelt trust
18 specialists broke up what was sort of
19 oligarchy with Lubin and Edison, who had
20 all the patents for photography and movie
21 images, it migrated to Hollywood.

22 Thirty years ago Canada began
23 to offer credits, and they used to call
24 them runaway productions because they
25 left LA to go to Canada. None of the

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2 producers really wanted to go there, but
3 it was money they couldn't ignore,
4 because it's very difficult to raise
5 money for films.

6 States began to decide, well,
7 if Canada can do it, we can do it. And
8 sort of like a mini "buy American," buy
9 Louisiana act. And right now the
10 principal states are Louisiana, Georgia,
11 and Massachusetts besides Pennsylvania.

12 Our problem is that our 60
13 million is woefully inadequate, and as I
14 think some of your very good questions
15 you've asked go to, it goes to both the
16 absolute amount, it goes to the duration
17 of it. It's only for one year, and that
18 causes a lot of problems.

19 A few years ago there was an
20 amendment that created the ability to tap
21 into it, to have 30 percent of it or 18
22 million to be available out of the second
23 subsequent year and then 20 percent the
24 following year. So you could go three
25 years ahead. And that was viewed as

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2 being very helpful on TV shows in theory.

3 What the practical effect was is that

4 once you govern away 30 percent of next

5 year's budget, when next year's budget

6 comes in at 60, you really have 42

7 million left to give away, not 60, and

8 it's just simply inadequate.

9 We have when we opened up with
10 Sony and Will Smith a \$120 million movie,
11 and as they were concluding, we had
12 Marvel and Disney fly in, and they wanted
13 to do Captain America 2, which was an
14 even bigger movie. They applied for the
15 state for film tax credits. I think I'm
16 right, but if I'm off, it's not by much,
17 but on August 5th of 2012, the fifth week
18 into that fiscal year and there weren't
19 enough film tax credits and we lost them
20 to -- actually to several states. It was
21 all around.

22 So we have a great opportunity,
23 Philadelphia does, as a world-class city.
24 I say it not just because I grew up in
25 Olney. It's the only world heritage

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2 city. It's a vibrant city. It's rich in
3 culture, sports, and other amenities
4 that, quite frankly, these visiting
5 impression companies very much enjoy
6 rather than being in a small town in
7 North Carolina or a small town elsewhere.
8 We won't pick on anybody. So it has a
9 rich array of things.

10 Captain America, for example,
11 would have shot 81 of their 86 principal
12 days of photography -- and that's a lot
13 for a movie -- in Pennsylvania, and our
14 sound stages are on location here,
15 because Philadelphia can double as
16 Washington and New York.

17 So, again, as I said, try not
18 to draw a bounty line so much and see
19 this is as a resource that's regional.
20 We've generated probably over our movies
21 over 250 million of spend here, 35,000
22 room nights, hotel room nights, the
23 majority of which have been in
24 Philadelphia even though they were
25 located out in Delaware County.

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2 Philadelphia, generally speaking, is
3 going to be the major draw for food,
4 entertainment, and hotels.

5 COUNCILMAN OH: Well, thank you
6 very much.

7 What I'm going to do is, I'm
8 just going to go through the panel
9 straight through, that there are five
10 witnesses, but just physically we have
11 three people at the table. I'm going to
12 do the three and then I'll have the two,
13 and then you'll have to share microphones
14 for the questions. I apologize about
15 that.

16 So the next witness, please
17 identify yourself and state your
18 testimony.

19 MR. SAMUELS: Neil Samuels.
20 I'm a Board member of SAG-AFTRA. Beside
21 me is Steve Leshinski, who is our
22 Executive Director, but I'll be
23 delivering the testimony. So that will
24 move things faster for you.

25 There's a PowerPoint over here.

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2 I believe you have a handout as well.

3 I'm going to just go through it quickly.

4 On behalf of SAG-AFTRA's 3,000
5 actors, television, and radio
6 broadcasters, your neighbors and friends
7 who perform in front of the camera and
8 behind the microphone and who are active
9 members of the Philadelphia local, please
10 accept our sincere thanks for the
11 opportunity to address this hearing
12 today.

13 The resolution authorizing
14 today's hearing contains two prominent
15 statements that we enthusiastically
16 endorse. "Attracting film production to
17 Philadelphia and encouraging independent
18 filmmaking directly benefits the City"
19 and "film production is important to
20 Philadelphia's national reputation and
21 the local economy." We could not agree
22 more wholeheartedly with the resolution's
23 conclusion that the more movies and
24 television shows choose to shoot in
25 Philadelphia, the more of a hub of the

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2 creative economy the City becomes.

3 The question is, how do we
4 collectively help make that happen. In
5 exploring this issue for the past year,
6 SAG-AFTRA Philadelphia performed a SWOT
7 analysis to identify our internal and
8 external strengths and opportunities as
9 well as the internal and external threats
10 and weaknesses that surround this
11 challenge.

12 First we need to understand
13 some of the forces at work that are
14 larger than our local community.

15 It's critical to recognize that
16 film production is an industry that is
17 impacted like any other by the actions of
18 many forces, including the support from
19 government at all levels through its
20 ability to legislate.

21 We live in a highly competitive
22 landscape when it comes to feature films
23 and television production in particular,
24 and legislators, including right here in
25 our Commonwealth, can affect the

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2 production landscape dramatically through
3 the creation of film tax credit programs,
4 among other incentives or disincentives.

5 California and our neighbor New
6 York are particularly aggressive in the
7 current environment in terms of
8 attracting and retaining production. Not
9 only are jurisdictions committing
10 financial resources to the effort of
11 attracting production just as they would
12 any other industry viewed as desirable,
13 but they are hiring experts to lead the
14 effort and marketing to producers to let
15 them know they are open for business.

16 It happens at the state level,
17 at the regional level, at the county
18 level, and at the city level. And it's
19 not just in California, but as the map
20 shown earlier attests, in the majority of
21 our nation's states.

22 And then we also have to learn
23 how to compete successfully against
24 foreign locations. These are all ads
25 that appear in The Hollywood Reporter,

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2 and they represent a fraction of the
3 marketing materials I've collected.

4 Even Fiji gets it, 47 percent.

5 We and others try to attract
6 production because the industry compares
7 favorably to other sectors in terms of
8 generating jobs as well as associated
9 ancillary economic activity.

10 Within the film industry
11 itself, we have data showing the
12 significant losses California experienced
13 as other states made a concerted effort
14 to attract business.

15 Within our region, we have
16 significant data from years of
17 productions coming here and filing
18 required reports detailing their
19 expenditures in our local economy.

20 The recent production of
21 Creed -- where is that studio? Well, it
22 was there a lot of it. Thank you for
23 that. It couldn't have been possible
24 without that studio.

25 That production of Creed

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2 included thousands of local hires,
3 immediately injected millions of dollars
4 into the local economy. It is just one
5 example of the power of all our assets
6 working together to make another
7 important chapter in the Rocky franchise
8 welcome in our hometown.

9 Within Pennsylvania, we have an
10 excellent reference resource for
11 understanding our sister city and
12 sometime rival Pittsburgh and their
13 efforts to attract and retain this kind
14 of industry.

15 The Milkin Institute report
16 commissioned for Pittsburgh presents a
17 compelling case for the long-term
18 economic value of the creative economy in
19 an urban setting. It is a superb
20 blueprint for supporting film and
21 television production as part of a
22 creative economy with detailed
23 recommendations that are not dissimilar
24 to what we might consider doing.

25 I have a copy here and,

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2 Councilman Squilla, I know you were
3 asking for that earlier. I'll be happy
4 to lend it to you.

5 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you.

6 MR. SAMUELS: We also have
7 standard measurements for objective --
8 from objective economists comparing our
9 industry and its impact to other
10 industries, and we can use those tools to
11 compare different initiatives that
12 legislators implement to spur the private
13 sector to benefit our communities.

14 We also have a history that
15 tells us we have a great story to tell
16 and city to sell. Hollywood loves
17 Philly. Look at just some of the
18 masterpieces made in our town. This is a
19 list to be proud of and to be built on.
20 And we have substantial assets in place
21 to help do just that. Film and
22 television production requires
23 infrastructure and human capital and
24 optimally commingling and leveraging
25 assets, bringing universities and their

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2 students into the industry, retaining our
3 local graduates, clustering support
4 services, and blending media with
5 technology campuses to build flourishing
6 communities rather than isolated
7 corporate islands.

8 Something else happens when we
9 make movies that doesn't happen with very
10 many industries. We transcend the medium
11 and create culture and commerce. It
12 would be easy here to show you Rocky
13 Balboa on the steps of the Art Museum,
14 but I'd rather that we talk about this:
15 Every airport in America sells baseball
16 and football jerseys for the local team,
17 and we do too, but every time I fly in
18 and out of Philadelphia, I see this, for
19 years. All those green eye-shade, bean
20 counters at the U.S. Department of
21 Commerce would have their work cut out
22 for them if they could ever come close to
23 calculating the value of the Rocky
24 franchise to Philadelphia. This
25 dedicated shelf space at our airport is

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2 just the tip of the iceberg in
3 understanding the incalculable value of
4 something as powerful as the idea of a
5 fighter who gets back up, has the heart
6 of a lion and the integrity of a dream
7 that will not be denied.

8 Stories can define a time and
9 they can define a place. The choices we
10 make to help attract movies like Silver
11 Linings Playbook or Creed or Trading
12 Places or Philadelphia say a lot about us
13 as a city and become part of our story
14 too for everyone who sees them around the
15 world.

16 I spent 20 years in marketing,
17 and I promise you Philadelphia cannot
18 afford the advertising budget those
19 billions of impressions would have cost
20 us. And here again, our airport proudly
21 displays the posters from iconic films
22 set in Philadelphia, greeting travelers
23 as they arrive like old familiar friends.

24 So how can we collectively
25 cultivate culture and industry? By each

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2 doing our part in partnership. You might
3 start by creating a task force to
4 determine and recommend the most
5 cost-effective methods of attracting and
6 retaining film, television, and
7 production to Philadelphia. Here are
8 some of the things a task force might
9 consider:

10 Lobbying in support of
11 uncapping the state Film Tax Credit. I
12 guess we're a broken record today; a
13 cost-free resolution in support of the
14 Commonwealth's Film Tax Credit program;
15 local grants; additional permit easing;
16 shortening the stay requirement for hotel
17 tax forgiveness in the City; additional
18 local bumps and incentives for approved
19 state projects that locate in
20 Philadelphia, like San Francisco's vendor
21 discount program; incentivize specific
22 interest groups, African American film,
23 women's film, LGBT film. QFest is
24 already here. Let's expand our support
25 efforts. Build a reputation as an

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2 hospitable place for filmmakers to work,
3 starting with active outreach; host a
4 Film in Philly event for producers; dust
5 off the doormat, let the industry know
6 they are valued by us; market to the
7 industry directly and consistently; build
8 a brand and sell it.

9 We have the track record and
10 the assets and the flexibility to
11 effectively attract the kind of business
12 we want as long as we're focused and
13 attentive and work our part of the
14 equation. Will decisions go against us
15 some of the time? Of course. And
16 sometimes because of elements beyond our
17 control, like the value of the Canadian
18 dollar versus the U.S. dollar, but we
19 cannot win if we do not make our best
20 effort.

21 And you might ask what the
22 SAG-AFTRA's best effort looked like.
23 What are we doing to help attract
24 business here?

25 We are reworking our national

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2 contracts to meet local economic
3 realities. We've already done it with
4 our commercial and industrial contracts.
5 And we're demonstrating flexibility in
6 our contracts when we negotiate with
7 interested producers who express a desire
8 to bring productions to our city.

9 We host open houses for
10 independent filmmakers. We created
11 simplified student and new media
12 contracts to encourage the next
13 generation of filmmakers and hold open
14 houses for them as well. We engage in
15 outreach and presentations to film
16 students at the university level. We
17 created deferred salary structures for
18 student films. We financially support
19 festivals locally through the SAG
20 Foundation. And, finally, we support
21 educational efforts like the Women in
22 Broadcasting Symposium recently at Temple
23 University, encouraging understanding of
24 our industry so that we can retain
25 qualified individuals to build our local

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2 creative community.

3 SAG-AFTRA Philadelphia is just
4 getting started, and we are delighted to
5 work by your side as you continue your
6 efforts to build the creative community
7 you envision for Philadelphia.

8 Thank you.

9 COUNCILMAN OH: All right.

10 Thank you very much. Would you please
11 pass the microphone, and I wonder have we
12 worked out the problem with one of these
13 microphones yet? They're working? Okay.
14 Then we don't have to pass the
15 microphone, I suppose.

16 It doesn't sound like it's
17 working, does it?

18 All right. Please state your
19 name and your title.

20 MR. WHALEN: My name is Jim
21 Whalen. I am currently the Trustee and
22 Business Agent of Teamsters Local 817 out
23 of New York. Our union represents the
24 drivers and loaders in the Philadelphia
25 area for feature film, TV film, TV

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2 series, commercials for the entertainment
3 industry. We have had the jurisdiction
4 in Philadelphia since 2010 and have
5 always had a great relationship with our
6 brother Teamster Local 107 that had prior
7 jurisdiction.

8 I have worked in the
9 Philadelphia area as a transportation
10 coordinator/captain dating back since
11 1991. I worked on movies such as
12 Philadelphia, 12 Monkeys. I worked on
13 Annapolis. I worked on Creed, and I just
14 finished in April the movie Untouchable.

15 Understanding that work has
16 declined, I must say in 2012 was one of
17 the busiest years this city has had with
18 TV series. I feel the jobs done here
19 have positive feedback, and it is
20 important that I give you my input on
21 some of the issues that are positive and
22 negative.

23 From a transportation
24 perspective, there are competent,
25 qualified professional drivers. My

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2 observation on other crews are the same.

3 Office staff and location departments are
4 excellent. Stage space, city support are
5 also excellent.

6 In my opinion, the main
7 feedback of Philadelphia is the state
8 incentive is too limited, restrictions,
9 uncertainty. There are difficulties and
10 deadlines to be met, the fund running
11 out, eligibility requirements. These
12 difficulties differ from other state
13 incentives.

14 Also, in my opinion, the
15 proximity to New York and the process for
16 the tax money hurts the Philadelphia
17 area. Philadelphia, in my opinion, lacks
18 infrastructure. There are plenty of crew
19 people, but as far as equipment, there's
20 not enough equipment that is readily
21 available, and most of the equipment has
22 to be shipped in or brought in, which
23 causes an expense.

24 I also noticed that there is a
25 difference between New York-based

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2 production companies that come down here
3 and see Philadelphia as New York on
4 location and do not utilize the local
5 resources and support that's available
6 here. They go back to New York where
7 it's the path of least resistance.

8 The other thing is that when
9 you bring equipment in to the City, you
10 got -- there's all like little loopholes.
11 People form what's called passthrough
12 companies, which gets sloppy in
13 accounting and it also, in a crazy way,
14 opens the door to corruption, in my
15 opinion. Just my opinion.

16 I also noticed that
17 California-based companies are more --
18 are based -- are more conditioned to
19 effectively use the local area first and
20 then expand outward.

21 I would also say that the
22 proximity to New York is a big benefit
23 for Philly also, especially for talent
24 and above-the-line crews, because people
25 that live there, it's an easy commute to

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2 come and work in Philadelphia.

3 And I've also, being around the
4 Philadelphia film community for so many
5 years, I've also been privy to the
6 interstate battle of Pittsburgh versus
7 Philadelphia. And I'm not talking about
8 the hockey, the Penguins versus the
9 Flyers. We're talking about business.
10 There is a difference in the two cities.
11 They're about seven hours away.

12 Pittsburgh, in my opinion, is organized.
13 They have industry infrastructure. Their
14 work styles and rates are different.
15 They're not in sync as what goes on here.
16 And the union-based crews have different
17 rates. They're very organized, and they
18 have equipment available local.

19 The conclusion I have is that
20 Hollywood follows the money. I feel if
21 you restructure the tax incentive,
22 production will come back to this great
23 city. In my opinion, if you added -- in
24 New York there is -- there's a 30 percent
25 tax incentive, but basically the

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2 complaint in New York, it seems very
3 similar, is that everybody wants to shoot
4 in New York City. So what the Governor,
5 Governor Cuomo did, was he added an
6 additional 10 percent, which brings it up
7 to 40 percent, if you film outside the
8 commuting cities.

9 In my opinion, if
10 Philadelphia -- if the City of
11 Philadelphia could give a 5 percent
12 increase, as simple as 5 percent, you
13 will level the playing field with
14 competing with New York City's 30 percent
15 and also you'll offset the cost of -- the
16 cheaper cost of doing business in the
17 western part of the state. So it would
18 actually kind of be an incentive to come
19 here. And of course, as everybody said,
20 uncap the cap. You know what I mean?
21 It's just crazy.

22 The other thing is we -- I have
23 to mention that my boss, Tom O'Donnell,
24 is the Director of the Motion Picture and
25 TV Trade Division for the International

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2 Brother of Teamsters, and he initiated a
3 program that basically has area
4 standards, so Teamster locals throughout
5 the country can't undercut each other.
6 There's a bare minimum. So that does
7 help.

8 We've also -- he's also for
9 independent films, he's done great
10 things. You just come, and he will work
11 with any budget to make it work. And a
12 lot of times we give smaller budgets the
13 blessing to grow, but don't forget about
14 us when you get bigger. We are here to
15 help.

16 In New York City, which we
17 would probably be interested in doing
18 here, is we have -- the city sponsors
19 people. They'll send us candidates to
20 the Teamsters, and usually it's inner
21 city. We send them to driving school.
22 They get their license, and we send them
23 out to work. So we're more than willing
24 to help out and grow, because let's face
25 it, tax incentive, tax programs are based

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2 on taxpayers that should benefit the tax
3 people. As a taxpayer myself, there's
4 nothing worse than seeing a construction
5 program or site being built and all's you
6 see are Tennessee license plates. How is
7 that helping my local community?

8 And thank you for the
9 invitation, and I'd be happy to answer
10 any questions.

11 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you.

12 Thank you for coming down from New York.

13 MR. WHALEN: You're welcome.

14 COUNCILMAN OH: Would you
15 please identify yourself and state your
16 title and provide us with your testimony.

17 MR. JOZEFOWSKI: My name is
18 Jozef Jozefowski.

19 Good afternoon, everyone. I am
20 a grip. A grip is a crew member who
21 deals with the non-electrical
22 manipulation of light. So an electrician
23 will set a light up and we will shape it
24 and form it to make it look better.
25 Grips are just one of the many positions

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2 involved in getting to lights, camera,
3 action.

4 I'm here today because I was
5 asked to present the collective voices of
6 over 40 technicians who want to increase
7 opportunities for those in the film
8 industry in the Greater Philadelphia
9 area.

10 In this brief presentation, I
11 hope to bring to some understanding
12 regarding four main points. One, the
13 goals of Philadelphia film workers; two,
14 the realities of our industry; three,
15 some qualitative and quantitative data;
16 and, four, our hope for the future of the
17 film industry in Philadelphia.

18 After many conversations, there
19 seems to be a consensus of what we want
20 for Philly film. We want to increase
21 work opportunities for those in the film
22 industry, to help the City evolve into an
23 attractive location for film production,
24 to support a sustainable lifestyle for
25 film workers, to ensure equitable and

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2 safe working environments, and to be well
3 represented.

4 By achieving these goals, not
5 only the individual film workers but the
6 economy can thrive.

7 The current climate of today's
8 film industry has its positives and
9 negatives. On the positive side, you
10 know what they say, location, location,
11 location, and everyone said prior we can
12 double as New York, Washington. Heck, we
13 can even double as Pittsburgh if we'd
14 like.

15 Philly can be cost effective.
16 There is a wide range of places to film
17 and, as I said, we can double as New
18 York. I have that written down.

19 We have many skilled crew
20 workers who have proven their resilience,
21 determination, and ingenuity over time.
22 We also have many feeder schools for
23 film, including Temple University and
24 Drexel University and the university of
25 the Arts.

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2 So why isn't the film industry
3 booming here? At this time, the
4 Philadelphia film industry does not have
5 a good reputation. For some, the
6 industry appears to be disjointed, out of
7 touch, and notorious for poor
8 collaboration; therefore, driving
9 productions away.

10 The workers I represent have
11 identified certain obstacles. We believe
12 these problems can be tied to poor
13 representation, lack of advocacy,
14 ineffective union and non-union
15 leadership, and a lack of accountability.
16 Additionally, the City needs access to
17 better tax incentives, as everyone has
18 already stated over and over again.
19 Overall, the sad reality is that a
20 general lack of work is causing skilled
21 film workers to leave our great city.

22 In an effort to better
23 understand this sentiment, a survey of 40
24 film workers offered some further
25 insight.

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2 It appeared most people worked
3 and become skilled in Philadelphia for
4 five to seven years, then move on to
5 other places such as New York, Atlanta,
6 LA, even Pittsburgh. Eighty percent of
7 those surveyed said they had considered
8 leaving Philadelphia, and 95 percent are
9 not content with the current quality and
10 quantity of work opportunities in the
11 area.

12 One survey respondent noted
13 there has been a rise of horrendous
14 working conditions on low budget,
15 unregulated productions, which is thought
16 to be producers taking advantage of
17 young, passionate craftsmen. I
18 personally know six friends who have left
19 in recent years, probably the past two
20 years, and in fact, I just learned that
21 last week another one left for New York
22 because they couldn't make ends meet here
23 in Philadelphia.

24 Given this information, we have
25 to find a solution to this problem. And

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2 while searching for such a solution, I've
3 come to learn more about quality and
4 process improvement systems. I believe
5 that the time has come for the City of
6 Philadelphia to invest its resources to
7 improve the film industry. If we wait
8 much longer, there may be an ongoing
9 vicious cycle of poor reputation, fewer
10 film opportunities, more skilled workers
11 leaving, a smaller crew base, fewer jobs
12 and so on.

13 After many conversations with
14 my colleagues, we realize that no matter
15 how much we want our industry to change,
16 thrive, and improve, from our
17 perspective, there is only so much we can
18 do. We must depend on our city and
19 industry leaders to act, bringing
20 accountability, opportunity, and change.
21 I appreciate this hearing today, and I
22 see it as a start of the process to
23 define problems and assess stakeholders
24 such as myself. I recognize this to be
25 the first step of which I hope will be

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2 subsequent phases of measure and analyze,
3 which will ultimately improve our
4 industry for the future.

5 In closing, I hope that through
6 this presentation, you've acquired a
7 better insight regarding the goals of
8 Philadelphia film workers, the somewhat
9 harsh realities that we face, as well as
10 qualitative and quantitative data that
11 support our assertion for quality and
12 process improvement for the film
13 industry.

14 Philly is getting such a
15 positive reputation for its conventions
16 and events such as the DNC and NFL Draft
17 that we should encourage this growth to
18 influence our film industry and see how
19 our future Philly film fortunes can
20 flourish.

21 Try saying that three times
22 fast.

23 Anyway, that's it.

24 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
25 much.

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2 Before we open for questions,
3 let me just state that I did receive
4 written testimony from John Ford,
5 President of Local 52, Motion Picture
6 Studio Mechanics, International Alliance
7 of Theatrical Stage Employees, AFL-CIO,
8 and I'd just like to read his testimony
9 for the record.

10 Dear committee members, my name
11 is John Ford. I have been a member of
12 Local 52 for 39 years. From 1978 to
13 1998, I worked in the Property
14 Department. I've been an officer of the
15 union since 1999. I've been asked to
16 provide testimony as to what might be
17 done to increase theatrical feature and
18 television production in Philadelphia.

19 I was fortunate enough to work
20 on the production of a movie in
21 Philadelphia and have -- I'm sorry.
22 Strike that.

23 I was fortunate enough to work
24 on the production of the movie
25 Philadelphia and have visited many times

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2 since then in my capacity as President of
3 Local 52. It is a fantastic city.

4 Prior to the implementation of
5 the New York state tax credits in 2004,
6 we were in the same boat as Philadelphia.
7 We lost many productions to Louisiana and
8 Canada. We still lose them to Georgia,
9 Canada, and now Hollywood due to their
10 recently enacted tax credit program.
11 Louisiana recently cut their credit, so
12 they have lost a lot of work to Georgia
13 as well.

14 Accordingly, we put together a
15 coalition of unions, facility owners, and
16 production companies to lobby for a
17 credit of our own. Over the years it was
18 made clear to us by the studios that in
19 order for a show to be considered for a
20 given location, the credit must be good
21 for at least five years into the future.
22 Fortunately for us, we have a Governor
23 and a Legislature that recognizes the
24 value of the industry to the state
25 economy. We just had our credit, which

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2 is \$420 million a year, extended out to
3 2022, continuing the five-year guarantee
4 that studios require.

5 Much has been mentioned in your
6 local press about Pittsburgh winning out
7 over Philadelphia due to cost differences
8 in the union contracts. Those cost
9 differentials are minimal given the
10 multi-million dollar budget of a typical
11 show. If that were indeed the case, I
12 would point out that the cost of doing
13 business in New York far exceed those of
14 Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, yet 2016 was
15 the busiest year we have ever had in our
16 93-year existence. We averaged 30
17 television shows per day, most employing
18 150 to 250 people per show. The volume
19 is solely due to a tax credit program
20 producers can rely on. A tax credit
21 program need not be overly large or
22 generous, just reliable.

23 In conclusion, I wish you the
24 best for a successful, informative
25 hearing, and please feel free to contact

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2 me personally if you have any further
3 questions.

4 John Ford, President, Local 52.

5 So I've read that into the
6 record.

7 At this time, I'd like to open
8 up for questions.

9 Councilman Derek Green.

10 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
11 Mr. Chair.

12 Just listening to some of the
13 testimony from the panel, it made me
14 think that this benefits not just the
15 City of Philadelphia, as Mr. Rotwitt was
16 saying, but also the region. And
17 considering that Representative Costa is
18 from the Pittsburgh area, if there's been
19 any thought of both regional groups
20 coming together to lobby in our General
21 Assembly to benefit. So it's not just
22 the Greater Philadelphia region with the
23 four counties including Philadelphia but
24 also Pittsburgh, Westmoreland, Greene and
25 kind of working together some type of --

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2 I don't want to use the word "caucus,"
3 because that's used so often, but really
4 coming together to lobby the General
5 Assembly to look at trying to take off
6 the cap and to increase the tax credit
7 going forward. Because I think it
8 demonstrates a greater benefit to the
9 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and also how
10 it benefits both parts of our region.

11 So has there been any other
12 conversations in that regard that any of
13 you are aware? And I see Holly Kins (ph)
14 in the back shaking her head.

15 MR. SAMUELS: There is an
16 organization called PaFIA, which
17 represents the film community across the
18 Commonwealth and has a lobbyist in fact
19 and coordinates all those individuals.

20 Having said that, I think your
21 idea is an excellent one, and we would be
22 more than happy to work with our brothers
23 and sisters in Allegheny County and
24 beyond to coordinate.

25 We recently had our annual

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2 meeting, and the prime directive that
3 went out to our members is, we will be
4 asking you to call your legislators later
5 this year, and we'd be happy to
6 coordinate that with folks out in the
7 western part of the Commonwealth.

8 COUNCILMAN GREEN: And then the
9 other thing -- and this is a thing I've
10 been talking about, and this is more
11 local to Philadelphia -- that there
12 hasn't really been a strong push from a
13 marketing perspective to demonstrate why
14 businesses should do business in the City
15 of Philadelphia. I know just yesterday
16 there was a meeting with the various
17 marketing entities from the hospitality
18 side, like Visit Philadelphia, Select
19 Greater Philadelphia, the Chamber of
20 Commerce, Commerce Department, to really
21 just talk for the first time of what do
22 each one of these groups do from a
23 marketing perspective. And when I was
24 looking at the slide show, it made me
25 think of if we could do that same thing

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2 for Philadelphia as we do business
3 attraction but for different industries
4 like Philadelphia. Even the phrase
5 Filmadelphia I think is something that
6 would be very attractive in marketing to
7 jurisdictions and industry publications
8 would be very smart, and that's something
9 hopefully that the group that met
10 yesterday will think about as they're
11 trying to pull together resources and not
12 duplicate resources of marketing from a
13 business perspective and would focus on
14 different business sectors like the film
15 industry. So that's something that I'll
16 take back to Harold Epps in the Commerce
17 Department.

18 MR. SAMUELS: Thank you.

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

21 Are there any other questions?

22 Councilman Squilla.

23 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you,
24 Mr. Chairman.

25 I know when we talked about, I

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2 guess, Philadelphia's lack of
3 infrastructure for filming and Pittsburgh
4 has that ability, do we need to add
5 companies here that could provide that or
6 because we don't have the work here, that
7 there's no companies willing to come to
8 Philadelphia to provide that?

9 MR. WHALEN: In my opinion,
10 obviously the lack of work does
11 contribute to nobody wanting to set up
12 shop here, but there's also -- there are
13 companies that want to set up -- your
14 location is actually -- you could have a
15 business located in the Philadelphia area
16 that could service New York, New Jersey,
17 as well as Pittsburgh. For some reason,
18 I don't know why nothing has been
19 established. But even as far as lighting
20 and grip houses, I mean, there's very --
21 there's a couple of smaller mom-and-mop
22 type shops, but, I mean, as the gentleman
23 that owns the stage will tell you, that
24 most of the equipment you have to
25 basically bring in, right, from -- City

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2 Lease we did?

3 MR. ROTWITT: I think this
4 gentleman here just spent --

5 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Just state
6 your name again.

7 MR. ROTWITT: Jeff Rotwitt.
8 I think you said you spent the
9 last six months at our sound stage with
10 the Harvey Weinstein production, and I
11 think Councilman Oh was there to meet
12 Kevin Hart and Nicole Kidman and Brian
13 Cranston.

14 I would probably respectfully
15 disagree. I think that the issues that
16 have been raised by the other speakers
17 are legitimate, but they stem from the
18 lack of work. If we had productions
19 here, there would be -- the exodus of
20 people leaving would stop and people
21 would come back. They're only leaving
22 because there's no work here.

23 And it is true that in terms of
24 lighting and grip, that most lighting and
25 grip is being brought in from elsewhere,

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2 and that's because it's a huge
3 investment. And we use Universal Studios
4 lighting, grip, and facilities. And,
5 quite frankly, most productions do
6 anywhere. There's not a lot of large
7 competitors to them that set up, because
8 their business is that they're the best
9 in the country and their equipment moves.
10 That's not a problem. It just comes to a
11 negotiated rate.

12 You know, I've done a lot of
13 real estate development in town, and real
14 estate developers decided to do three
15 things to make real estate successful.
16 Location, location, location. And in
17 film production, there's three things.
18 Tax credits, tax credits, tax credits, if
19 I haven't been clear.

20 I think the problem is that
21 most tax credits -- while I think you
22 mentioned there are some incentives in
23 certain cities, by and large they come in
24 from the state, and the requirement is
25 that the money be spent in the state. So

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2 you have to be careful to the extent you
3 were provincially looking at Philadelphia
4 and adding to that, because -- and if you
5 required the money to be spent in the
6 City limits as opposed to Bucks County,
7 then that would be a problem, because
8 then there would be an issue of how many
9 locals would qualify for that.

10 I think that you're going to
11 find, as I said when I first spoke, the
12 larger your regional appeal, the more
13 clout you have in Harrisburg. And, quite
14 frankly, I think it was an excellent
15 comment from the Councilman about
16 Allegheny County and Philadelphia County
17 using its combined muscle as the two
18 leading cities in the state to try to get
19 the attention, but the attention actually
20 starts with the Governor. The Governor
21 really should be relatively sympathetic
22 to the interest of Philadelphia and
23 Pittsburgh, and he started the budget
24 process and didn't change the film tax
25 credit by even one dollar. So as a

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2 result, it's an uphill battle to go to a
3 legislature that is looking at shortages
4 and trying to get them to increase it.
5 It would be one thing if you start at a
6 higher number and would bring it down,
7 but it's a heavy lift in the world of Tea
8 Parties.

9 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: We're
10 aware of that. We do the same thing
11 here, but we start high and then go low.
12 But it is --

13 MR. ROTWITT: Try to go low
14 because --

15 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Starting
16 low and try to go high is very difficult.

17 MR. ROTWITT: It's almost an
18 impossible lift.

19 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: So then --
20 you want to answer that question?

21 MR. SAMUELS: Yes.

22 COUNCILMAN OH: I think your
23 microphone is working now. Let's give it
24 a try.

25 MR. SAMUELS: Hello. Hello.

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2 COUNCILMAN OH: Maybe they
3 could adjust the volume or something.

4 MR. SAMUELS: With regard to
5 the question about infrastructure, it is
6 a chicken and an egg, but we are in so
7 much better shape because of the stage
8 that we have here now. That is a huge
9 investment. It opens up all kinds of
10 possibilities and you've seen.

11 I don't want to paint the bleak
12 picture that I've heard a little bit.
13 Let's also remember that while the
14 Greater Philadelphia Film Office has been
15 in operation, \$4 billion in economic
16 activity has been generated in this
17 region. So that is a record of success.
18 What we're talking about here is how do
19 we build on that success, how do we do
20 more. And typically these kinds of
21 initiatives require multiple tracks.
22 There are small things that we can do
23 that can make a big difference. There
24 are things that we can do long term that
25 help.

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2 Philadelphia is hip now with
3 young people. We are retaining more of
4 our graduates than we used to, and we
5 want to keep them here.

6 MR. ROTWITT: We have one hip
7 person here on the panel.

8 MR. SAMUELS: And I will just
9 say, I do know of young people in their
10 20's who have applied for film credits
11 and gotten them on \$30,000 productions.
12 So all of this is helping long term, and
13 we have to not put all our eggs in one
14 basket.

15 I totally agree the tax credit
16 program is central to all of this, but
17 it's not the only thing. Let's make sure
18 we're doing all the other things too that
19 help attract business and retain it.

20 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: And I
21 agree. That's why I asked that question,
22 because I think as a city, we're excited
23 about this. And, listen, you can't pay
24 enough for advertisement when you see
25 pictures of Philadelphia or pictures of

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2 Pittsburgh or Delaware County, Montgomery
3 County, whatever it may be, it's a big
4 plus, and that's sort of priceless. But
5 to know that we have building and
6 infrastructure and we need to get more
7 people working in the City of
8 Philadelphia, whether they're from the
9 region. I think when we say
10 Philadelphia, we mean Philadelphia
11 region, because being on the DVRPC Board,
12 you sort of look at it in terms of a
13 region that benefits everybody. And
14 whether the stage is out in Montgomery
15 County or Bucks County or wherever, it's
16 still a benefit to us in the region here,
17 and I think if Philadelphia tax credits
18 would have to have some sort of local tie
19 into it because workers have to be from
20 the region. So I think that would be
21 very important, and I'm sure the
22 Teamsters -- we want to have local
23 members in the Teamsters working in those
24 things. So, I mean, they would either --
25 if they don't have as many here, we could

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2 grow that number of adding more local
3 guys into this business.

4 So thank you for willing to
5 work with us on that. And knowing that
6 the local business is really what's going
7 to drive it, because if you do have work
8 here, people will live here, people will
9 spend their money here, and people will
10 do movies here. So it's a win-win-win
11 for both the unions, for the businesses,
12 for the trades, and for the City. But we
13 have to get -- besides just the tax
14 credits, I think we have to do a little
15 bit more.

16 MR. SAMUELS: There are
17 examples of jurisdictions who have done
18 things like that local hire component,
19 and as I mentioned, San Francisco, for
20 example, has a preferred vendor program.
21 So you can pretty much ensure where those
22 jobs are going to land.

23 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you.
24 Thank you very much.

25 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you,

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2 Councilman.

3 I will say that this morning I
4 had about an hour and so meeting with the
5 Speaker of the House, Michael Turzai. So
6 folks roll in, we have conversations
7 about all kinds of things, and obviously
8 being from the Pittsburgh area, he
9 understands the value of film tax
10 credits. I can't speak on his behalf.

11 All I can say is I'm a big fan of it.

12 And we do understand that there are many
13 perspectives when we look at items and
14 issues and even varying perspectives
15 about how to improve filmmaking in
16 Philadelphia. Each experience and
17 perspective is important. And so what is
18 good for one perspective may not be quite
19 adequate for another.

20 We are very interested in jobs,
21 employment, along with everything else
22 that we're hearing. We're so
23 appreciative, because we're not experts
24 in this topic.

25 I will say that we did start a

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2 music initiative that ultimately ended up
3 with Grammy-Award winners, venues,
4 producers, all kind of like top-notch
5 people that ultimately we formed a task
6 force and off they go to do what they do
7 best. And it may be that after this
8 process, particularly listening to things
9 like the Bridge Loan -- and I will say I
10 have actually explored for a while the
11 idea of a tax credit. It's a little
12 challenging locally, but it just seems to
13 be that we would have to come up with a
14 grant program. And I will say that we
15 certainly are looking at what's good for
16 Pennsylvania, what's good for our region,
17 what's good for us, and ultimately if
18 we're more competitive as a country
19 versus our challenging countries, but
20 ultimately, yeah, we do want to -- when
21 people come to Philadelphia, it does
22 spill out. It is very beneficial.

23 So I think the best thing for
24 us to do is probably form some type of
25 task force and let all of you begin to

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2 have meaningful input into what we should
3 be doing and how we can advocate for
4 those tax credits in an intelligent
5 manner in Harrisburg.

6 So with that, thank you so very
7 much, and let me ask the Clerk to call
8 the final panel.

9 THE CLERK: Jeff Rush, S.L.
10 Sawyer, Suzanne Landau.

11 (Witnesses approached witness
12 table.)

13 COUNCILMAN OH: For the record,
14 I just have to note that whenever a
15 well-known City official says they have a
16 twin sister, we somewhat are suspicious,
17 but in fact there she is.

18 All right. So we're going to
19 start, and I will ask that we begin with
20 Mr. Rush. Would you please state your
21 name, your title, and provide us with
22 your testimony. Thank you so very much.

23 MR. RUSH: Certainly. My name
24 is Jeff Rush, the Chairperson of the
25 Department of Film and Media Arts in the

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2 School of Theatre, Film and Media Arts in
3 the Center for Performing and Cinematic
4 Arts at Temple University. I'm going to
5 try to speak for all my colleagues and
6 all the film schools in the Philadelphia
7 area, and I just want to mention the sort
8 of major programs in the City - Drexel,
9 University of the Arts, LaSalle, Bryn
10 Mawr, Haverford, Swarthmore, Penn, St.
11 Joe's, and Villanova, as well as programs
12 just outside the City in Rowan and
13 Princeton.

14 The Department of Film and
15 Media Arts at Temple enrolls 600
16 undergraduate and 40 graduate students.
17 They come from all over the world. There
18 is another large production program at
19 Temple which enrolls about 1,000
20 students. So between us, we have about
21 1,600 students. We believe if you look
22 at all the students in the Philadelphia
23 area, we're talking about two or three
24 thousand students in Philadelphia at any
25 time.

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2 Philadelphia is one of the top
3 four cities for enrolling some students.
4 The other four are LA, Chicago, and New
5 York. Temple is -- its graduate program
6 is known internationally and it's one of
7 the top-ranked programs in documentary
8 and experimental and independent
9 narrative film production. Our one
10 department produces several hundred films
11 a years, which are shown in venues all
12 over the world. One film just was one of
13 the 16 selected as the top American
14 documentaries at Sundance this year.

15 Most of the students who work
16 in the area are concerned about film
17 production for several reasons. One of
18 them is the ability to get internships in
19 productions, and all of the film schools
20 work very closely with the Greater
21 Philadelphia Film Office to get those
22 internships. Our students have worked in
23 every major production that has come
24 through the City and have benefited
25 greatly from them, and many of them have

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2 turned into jobs. This is true of the
3 other programs in the City.

4 Another reason why we benefit
5 from a robust Philadelphia film industry
6 is that the Film Office frequently is
7 able to invite the professionals that
8 come into town to come visit with our
9 students. They've done this over the
10 years, and this is an enormous benefit to
11 our students.

12 Finally, our students are aware
13 when they choose where to go to school of
14 the support facilities in any given city.
15 Philadelphia, really until recently, had
16 actually quite good equipment rental
17 houses, prop houses, studio facilities at
18 the level that our students needed. That
19 has actually dropped over the last few
20 years and is something they're aware
21 about and concerned about.

22 Finally, we send more than 100
23 students a year to Los Angeles where we
24 have a branch campus where we offer
25 internships and studies, fall, spring,

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2 and summer. The students go to Los
3 Angeles to work in the film industry.
4 Many stay and continue to work in LA.
5 However, just as many want to come back
6 to Philadelphia and would prefer to work
7 in the Philadelphia film industry.

8 They have in the past been able
9 to pursue film careers in the City. It's
10 become increasingly difficult to do so,
11 and with the decline of the film
12 production in Philadelphia, many have
13 chosen to stay either in Los Angeles or
14 New York in pursuit of production
15 opportunities. These are very talented
16 students, and it would behoove all of us
17 to find ways to keep them coming back to
18 their hometown where they would prefer to
19 be.

20 Thank you.

21 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
22 much.

23 Next witness, please state your
24 name, your title, and provide us with
25 your testimony.

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2 MR. SAWYER: Good afternoon.

3 My name is S.L. Sawyer and I'm an
4 independent filmmaker here in
5 Philadelphia. I run a project called 5
6 Shorts where I assist aspiring filmmakers
7 with creating short film.

8 Basically I just want to say
9 that, you know, being an independent
10 filmmaker here in Philadelphia is a bit
11 tough, simply because we are looked at as
12 being expendable, and a lot of the
13 resources are not generated in our
14 direction because we are not viewed as
15 the people as bringing in the big bucks
16 to the City.

17 With that being said, there's a
18 lot of talented people here in
19 Philadelphia, a lot of students here that
20 would love, as previously mentioned, to
21 stay here, but we end up going to
22 Georgia, we end up going to California,
23 we end up going to New York simply
24 because there's more opportunities there
25 for independent filmmakers like myself to

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2 get noticed and to get funding basically.

3 Also I would like to point out
4 that, you know, there's films like 12
5 Monkeys, District 9, Boogie Nights that
6 started off as independent films that
7 went on to screen at film festivals and
8 were picked up to become the feature
9 films they are today. So independent
10 films shouldn't really be overlooked,
11 because we do tirelessly submit to film
12 festivals.

13 When we shoot in Philadelphia,
14 we're promoting Philadelphia in our
15 films, and when we talk about our films,
16 we are from Philadelphia. So we
17 represent Philadelphia across the
18 country, across the globe. So I think
19 that should serve as some notoriety for
20 the independent filmmaker and the
21 independent film market.

22 Lastly, I would like to say I
23 wish that we had more programs that help
24 to incubate filmmakers here in
25 Philadelphia. I know the colleges offer

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2 great programs, but not everyone can
3 afford college tuition. So it would be
4 nice if we had an alternative to that to
5 help foster our independent film market.

6 Thank you.

7 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
8 much.

9 MS. LANDAU: I'm Suzanne Landau
10 and I am President of the Board of
11 Philadelphia Women in Film and
12 Television.

13 COUNCILMAN OH: I am just going
14 to ask you to pull that microphone right
15 up to you.

16 MS. LANDAU: I sure will.

17 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you.

18 MS. LANDAU: I wanted to thank
19 you, Councilman Oh, for advancing this
20 initiative to bring more films to
21 Philadelphia. PWIFT, Philadelphia Women
22 in Film and Television, is a non-profit
23 corporation dedicated to recognizing,
24 celebrating, and advancing the
25 professional development and achievement

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2 of women working in all areas of film.

3 PWIFT is committed to creating
4 economic and social stimulus for its
5 members and the community at-large by
6 helping emerging artists and established
7 professional members reach their full
8 potential and by attracting new jobs,
9 investment, and production to the
10 creative economy in the Philadelphia
11 area.

12 Our community of women media
13 makers is very diverse and is comprised
14 of independent filmmakers in both
15 scripted and documentary, professionals
16 in television, digital arts, film and
17 radio, women in advertising, along with
18 technical freelancers, writers, and
19 visual artists. Our community embodies
20 both women new to the industry and
21 seasoned professionals, and inclusivity
22 and diversity are paramount to us,
23 especially since Philadelphia has such a
24 rich and varied population.

25 I think this resolution is spot

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2 on. We need more films to come to
3 Philadelphia, but we cannot discuss that
4 without talking about the lack of
5 diversity in the film industry.

6 Research shows that women, who
7 are more than half of the population,
8 write only one-third of the stories, and
9 we direct only 17 percent of what we see
10 on film and television. Media tells us
11 our roles in society, who we are and what
12 we can be. The women engaged in PWIFT's
13 community are concerned that most of our
14 entertainment is directed by white men
15 and most of the stories are told through
16 the eyes of men.

17 In the past few years,
18 initiatives outside of Philadelphia
19 commenced in an attempt to decrease the
20 gender gap for women in the film
21 industry. In fact, the ACLU launched an
22 investigation into discrimination against
23 female directors in Hollywood. Geena
24 Davis initiated the Gender Institute that
25 studies women's roles in media. Patricia

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2 Arquette pleaded for equal pay for women
3 at the Oscars, and Meryl Streep followed
4 up by funding a writing lab for
5 Hollywood's untouchable caste, which is
6 women screenwriters over 40 years old.
7 And recently filmmaker Alma Har'el
8 launched a new historic initiative to
9 #FreeTheBid for female commercial
10 directors to be included in every agency
11 bid. So in 2010, the Academy Award for
12 Best Director went to Kathryn Bigelow for
13 the Hurt Locker, making her the first
14 woman to ever win the category. Six
15 years later, she is still the only one
16 who has won, and no other woman has been
17 nominated since.

18 The first step in changing this
19 picture is to recognize that there is a
20 problem. That's where we come in. PWIFT
21 brings women in the industry together to
22 learn, bond, and succeed. We are more
23 powerful together and stronger when we
24 can rally together locally and be part of
25 a strong global community. Recently

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2 PWIFT became a member of the Women in
3 Film and Television International
4 organization, which addresses arts,
5 business, and cultural media around the
6 world.

7 Women are an underserved
8 community in the media industry,
9 especially in Philadelphia. Only 6
10 percent of the films produced here in the
11 Philadelphia area are made by women.
12 Statistics like these discourage women
13 from entering the entertainment business.
14 PWIFT, along with our male allies in the
15 profession, is working to improve parity
16 in the industry, to take part in the
17 conversation, to help raise the profile
18 of women in film, and to encourage women
19 to stay in the industry. Most
20 importantly, PWIFT seeks to improve
21 opportunities in film for women in
22 Philadelphia so they stay here and create
23 film here.

24 To note what these guys said,
25 that PWIFT is currently in discussion

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2 with three local universities to help
3 launch an incubator that will encourage
4 filmmakers to stay in Philadelphia to
5 hone their craft. We hope this project
6 will contribute more opportunity for
7 women, women of color, LGBTQ people, and
8 make Philadelphia a place filmmakers grow
9 their art and their business.

10 It matters what stories are
11 told and it matters who makes them.
12 PWIFT was formed to help cultivate the
13 talent of female media makers here in
14 Philadelphia, and PWIFT will help put
15 Philadelphia on the map as a place where
16 women in film and all areas of media will
17 be championed.

18 We hope we can work together to
19 advance gender equity in the film
20 industry.

21 Thank you for this opportunity
22 for letting me testify.

23 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
24 much for your testimony.

25 Councilman Green.

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2 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
3 Mr. Chair.

4 I just have two questions for
5 the panel. The first question is to
6 Mr. Rush. When I think about
7 jurisdictions around the country that
8 have been able to really grow from an
9 economic development perspective, often
10 it's the combination of the for-profit
11 sector, the education sector, and then
12 the public sector kind of coming
13 together. I think of like Silicon
14 Valley, Palo Alto, Stanford and others
15 kind of coming together. And you look in
16 more recently in the Austin, Texas area
17 where you have University of Texas at
18 Austin and the community kind of coming
19 together with South by Southwest.

20 Is there an ability to do that
21 from a film perspective considering that
22 there's clearly interest at the local
23 level? We've had a state tax credit.
24 We've had a film office here, but then
25 you also have universities who have a

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2 strong track record in media and film.

3 So is there an ability to kind of do that
4 and galvanize to kind of better promote
5 film and television here in the region?

6 MR. RUSH: I think there would
7 be great interest to do it. I think we
8 may feel a lack of kind of essential
9 organization to bring us together. I
10 think speaking for Temple, but I think
11 for my colleagues around the City, we
12 would all be very responsive to such an
13 opportunity.

14 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Because even
15 if it was a regional perspective or a
16 state perspective where you bring in both
17 Pittsburgh and Philadelphia and just kind
18 of bringing together, you could look at
19 the University of Pittsburgh, Carnegie
20 Mellon and the public sector there, Mayor
21 Peduto and others, and then looking here
22 at the Philadelphia side, just trying to
23 bring that energy together to try to
24 really promote, and maybe film and
25 television is one way of doing that. I'm

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2 not sure what entity or event or
3 organizing aspect could help do that, but
4 it seems there's an opportunity to do
5 that.

6 MR. RUSH: I mean, I think that
7 would be a terrific idea. The University
8 of Pittsburgh is one of the world's
9 leaders in film studies, the academic
10 studies. Temple is one of the sort of
11 leaders in production. So we frequently
12 have since gone back and forth. I think
13 building that connection could be a very
14 rich experience.

15 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. Thank
16 you.

17 And then to Ms. Landau and Ms.
18 Sawyer, I guess one of the thoughts I was
19 having listening to both of your
20 testimonies is that you have Sundance,
21 you have the American Black Film
22 Festival. So you have other type of
23 festivals that focus on any specific
24 niche of people in the industry.

25 Are there any type of festivals

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2 that focus primarily just on women in
3 film, and is there an opportunity to
4 maybe kind of look at that as a
5 possibility locally?

6 MS. LANDAU: We do. We have --
7 it's in its third year, the Women's Film
8 Festival, and one of our Board members on
9 PWIFT, Phuong Nguyen, has started it, and
10 it's doing very well and actually it's
11 been growing like crazy.

12 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Are there
13 now other similar type of film festivals
14 in other parts of the country?

15 MS. LANDAU: Yes. There are
16 women's film festivals in other parts of
17 the country as well.

18 COUNCILMAN GREEN: And is there
19 any way that we could distinguish the
20 local film festival compared to some of
21 the others to make it unique from a
22 branding perspective to help it grow?

23 MS. LANDAU: Maybe, yeah. I
24 think that's interesting, yeah. Yes.

25 COUNCILMAN GREEN: I just look

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2 at trying to find how do we take
3 something that's Philadelphia based and
4 make it unique and different so you can
5 attract more people.

6 And it's for you, Ms. Sawyer,
7 as well, any thoughts you may have.

8 MR. SAWYER: Well, so far as I
9 think the issue is, that we get labeled
10 as women filmmakers and we just want to
11 be filmmakers at the end of the day. You
12 know, we do understand that there is a
13 limited number of representation of women
14 in film as producers, directors, so forth
15 and so on. Even in crew, you know, we're
16 limited in that capacity as well,
17 especially as an African American woman,
18 very limited.

19 So I think there are other film
20 festivals that are catering specifically
21 to women, but I think we need to figure
22 out a way to make women feel like they're
23 a part of the overall conversation and
24 not just generalize to a specific sector.
25 That's just my opinion.

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2 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. Thank
3 you.

4 MR. RUSH: One of the nation's
5 biggest African American film festivals
6 was founded and happened in Philadelphia.
7 It's called BlackStar, and I hope you
8 bring the person who founded that in.

9 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
10 Mr. Chair.

11 COUNCILMAN OH: All right.
12 Councilman Taubenberger.

13 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Thank
14 you, Mr. Chairman.

15 Ms. Landau, I was very
16 intrigued with what you're saying, and I
17 couldn't agree more. I mean, you're on
18 target.

19 And, Ms. Sawyer, when you just
20 said it's only my opinion, that's why
21 you're here. We need to know what you're
22 thinking. So your opinion is very
23 important.

24 But what I was going to ask,
25 Ms. Landau, your organization, is that

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2 really just Philadelphia or is there a
3 New York Women in Film?

4 MS. LANDAU: We are a
5 Philadelphia chapter of Women in Film.
6 There's chapters in every city around the
7 world and internationally.

8 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Okay.
9 I understand. Now I see more your
10 national focus and understand it a little
11 bit better, but unfortunately we're not
12 the U.S. Senate here. We're the Council
13 of the City of Philadelphia. On a local
14 perspective -- and you now understand
15 film as much as -- much more than me and
16 very deeply -- what is the one thing we
17 could do that we are empowered by this
18 Council to do to help the film industry
19 in Philadelphia?

20 MS. LANDAU: So everyone is
21 talking tax credits. I do think that one
22 we could do is offer a diversity tax
23 incentive. So with whatever else we form
24 here, I think that a tax incentive to
25 make the crews more diverse -- I mean,

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2 women are behind the camera and in front
3 of the camera all the time. So I think
4 that that could be very helpful, and we
5 would love to join your task force.

6 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Okay.
7 I think that would be very, very, very
8 important.

9 And from Temple University,
10 you're seeing a lot of young people going
11 into and really want to participate in
12 this industry, and that's a great thing.
13 What would be the one thing you could do
14 that would recommend to us as a City
15 Council that we could do to help keep
16 those folks here or they can go to Los
17 Angeles, but bring them back?

18 MR. RUSH: Well, I like very
19 much this idea of a diversity tax credit.
20 You know, the City has produced and as
21 the home of the film festival, this might
22 be something to really distinguish the
23 City as a place where people can go
24 specifically who want to speak to what I
25 think is the mission of this city,

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2 diversity, a larger progressive view of
3 the world, and I think that's true of
4 most of our students, who I think if the
5 City had kind of a mission to advance
6 that in film, that would attract students
7 from around the world.

8 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER:

9 That's a great idea. The film festival
10 that you had mentioned, is that still
11 going on?

12 MR. RUSH: It's still going on,
13 yes.

14 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: When
15 is that?

16 MR. RUSH: In July.

17 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: In
18 July? Okay. That's something we want
19 to --

20 MR. RUSH: And it does bring
21 people from around the world. It's run
22 by one of our grads and it's -- you know,
23 we also have in the City the Scribe Media
24 Center run by Louie Massiah, which is one
25 of the great urban media centers.

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2 There's an awful lot of community
3 production being done that really crosses
4 diversity and every kind of access you
5 can think of. So I do think the City is
6 ripe to be framed in this way.

7 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER:

8 That's very interesting. And I guess the
9 participants in this film festival I
10 would assume come from all over the
11 country, maybe all over the world?

12 MR. RUSH: All over the world,
13 yeah.

14 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: I
15 mean, I'm kind of shocked as a
16 Philadelphian I don't know much about it
17 or anything about it. I mean, not to say
18 that I know everything, but my point is,
19 I guess we need to tell the story better,
20 whether it's from this Council, from you,
21 from everybody, because I think that's a
22 pretty neat thing.

23 MR. RUSH: One of the things
24 that I think we're all sort of interested
25 in is that there's both bringing in the

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2 Hollywood film industry, which everyone I
3 think supports, but there's also
4 supporting the range of independent
5 production that happens in the City that
6 is an expression of the particular nature
7 of the City, and that could really be
8 even further highlighted.

9 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Ms.
10 Sawyer, because you're actually in the
11 business, you have to be successful. You
12 don't represent a trade association.
13 You're really there.

14 MR. SAWYER: Yes.

15 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER:
16 You're on the films that you make.

17 What is the one thing we could
18 do in the City that would help you?

19 MR. SAWYER: I will say if we
20 had a place, a designated place, where
21 filmmakers can go for if they need to
22 rehearse, if they need to film scenes,
23 like a studio or anywhere that's
24 affordable for independent filmmakers.
25 What I've noticed in Philadelphia is that

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2 we do cater more to the bigger budget
3 films, especially for locations and all
4 of those great things, simply because
5 it's money involved. You have to buy
6 permits and you have to have insurance
7 and things of that sort.

8 What happens with independent
9 filmmakers, we're limited on our budget
10 obviously. It's why we're independent.
11 So we cannot afford a lot of the things
12 that we need. So it would be nice if we
13 had a one-stop shop that catered to the
14 independent filmmaking market, simply
15 just with locations --

16 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: It's
17 a little less expensive.

18 MR. SAWYER: Yeah, just a
19 little less expensive.

20 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: And I
21 would assume an independent filmmaker,
22 every penny counts.

23 MR. SAWYER: Right. You know,
24 and the Philadelphia Film Office is great
25 at what they do, but I do think that

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2 there is a market that feels a little
3 left out because they're not at that
4 level of a Hollywood film, you know. So
5 we have to hope that someone will let us
6 shoot at a certain location, you know.
7 We have to raise the money for our
8 permits and things of that sort. So I do
9 know like Georgia, they have an incubator
10 program where you can come in and you can
11 learn everything, and I think they do
12 that because they want to foster the
13 talent, because no one forgets where they
14 come from.

15 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER:

16 Right.

17 MR. SAWYER: So if my film gets
18 picked up by Phil Jackson, you know, a
19 great director, I'm advocating for
20 Philadelphia, because that's where I'm
21 from, and those are the stories that I
22 tell. So I want to bring that production
23 back here. So I think Georgia is very
24 smart in doing so with the incubator
25 program, because they know if they foster

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2 the talent, when the talent goes out,
3 they're more than likely willing to come
4 back home to where they started because
5 those are the stories that they tell.

6 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: And
7 where is their incubator studio? Who
8 sponsors that?

9 MR. SAWYER: I know over in
10 Georgia, their film office has an
11 incubator program and --

12 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: You
13 mean actually has a studio?

14 MR. SAWYER: Well, just a
15 program, which is different from a
16 studio.

17 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Yeah.

18 MR. SAWYER: Their program will
19 help you with learning the ins and outs
20 of producing films and making films, but
21 I'm not sure if they have an actual
22 studio set up for it, but I do know
23 there's a couple of studios coming over
24 there to Georgia. It's building up over
25 there. So there's more job

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2 opportunities. There's more educational
3 opportunities there as well.

4 In Philadelphia, not so much.
5 You know, you don't hear about studios
6 building up here that you can go to and
7 intern and learn difference things. You
8 hear about different organizations that's
9 doing things and the colleges, of course,
10 but there is -- it's very limited as to
11 what you can learn outside of those two
12 places. You have places like PhillyCAM
13 and Scribe Video Center, but all of them
14 are limited on space and equipment. So
15 if you have six or seven people trying to
16 rent out equipment to shoot something,
17 you're limited, because they may not have
18 the cameras. They may not have the
19 lights. So you have to wait. Or you can
20 rent from an actual store, but that can
21 be expensive, you know.

22 So those are just some of the
23 issues that we face, and many of us, we
24 learn on our own. We go to YouTube and
25 things of that sort, but those places

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2 don't teach you everything about creating
3 a film, and some people learn better in a
4 classroom setting, you know, opposed to
5 online. So we're missing out on
6 developing talent that can do great
7 things and actually bring business here
8 to Philadelphia because we're not
9 fostering that talent. We think of
10 independent filmmakers as just not being
11 as important because we don't bring as
12 much money in to the City as a bigger
13 budget, but people do forget that we are
14 the ones that's going out to these film
15 festivals. We're submitting to these
16 festivals, and when you're watching my
17 film, you're seeing Philadelphia. And so
18 even if someone doesn't pick up my film,
19 there's people in the audience. Philly
20 is a great place that you see that shot
21 or, you know -- we're very diverse here
22 even with our neighborhoods, because you
23 can find a neighborhood that looks like
24 you're out in the country, but then you
25 can go to another neighborhood that's

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2 very urban, very city-like. So we have a
3 lot to offer. It's just, you know,
4 getting the support to bring that stuff
5 to the forefront.

6 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Thank
7 you.

8 MR. SAWYER: I hope I answered
9 your question.

10 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Well
11 said. And I thank you all very, very
12 much.

13 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

14 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
15 much. Thank you.

16 The Clerk will call our last
17 witness.

18 THE CLERK: Sharon Pinkenson.
19 (Witness approached witness
20 table.)

21 COUNCILMAN OH: Good afternoon.
22 Thank you for joining us. Please state
23 your name, your title, and provide us
24 with your testimony.

25 MS. PINKENSON: Thank you.

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2 Thank you, Councilman. I am Sharon
3 Pinkenson. I am the Executive Director
4 of the Greater Philadelphia Film Office,
5 and I want to apologize to all of you
6 Councilmen for my tardiness in meeting
7 here.

8 COUNCILMAN OH: No. We
9 understand. You were engaged in
10 something very important, and we thank
11 you for making it over here and
12 testifying.

13 MS. PINKENSON: Thank you.
14 Thank you for your consideration.

15 I unfortunately was not able to
16 hear the testimony of any but this last
17 panel. I do want to respond, however, to
18 the last speaker's comments, because I
19 was very disappointed to hear that she
20 was not aware of programming for
21 independent filmmakers and services for
22 independent filmmakers.

23 The Greater Philadelphia Film
24 Office is unique among film commissions
25 because we have a program called Greater

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2 Philadelphia Filmmakers, which has been
3 in existence for my entire tenure, which
4 I'd rather not state how long that is,
5 but it is 25 years. And in the Greater
6 Philadelphia Filmmakers program, that is
7 a pure non-profit side of what we do. We
8 serve the local indigenous film
9 community, or at least try to, with
10 everything that they need, and those
11 services are all free. We have to
12 fundraise to support those services.

13 So, for example, every month we
14 have -- perhaps maybe not in July and
15 August, but every month we have free
16 programming, usually in the last few
17 years at the Prince Theatre in the Black
18 Box where we provide educational and
19 informational programming in various
20 different areas. We have hosted for
21 Justice Long the Set in Philadelphia
22 Screenwriting Competition, which has a
23 \$10,000 top prize, a \$2,500 prize for the
24 best set in Philadelphia screenplay by
25 anybody who lives in the five counties.

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2 The \$10,000 prize is for anyone who lives
3 anywhere in the world that writes the
4 best set in Philadelphia screenplay. We
5 have a student prize, and we just added
6 this year a prize for the best screenplay
7 by a non-white diverse screenwriter, and
8 we are incredibly excited about that, and
9 that is a \$2,500 prize for that best
10 screenplay.

11 We are the, as far as I know,
12 the only film commission in the world
13 that has a full-time multicultural
14 affairs director -- that's what we call
15 the position -- whose mission it is to
16 engage the multicultural filmmaking
17 community and those who would like to be
18 a part of that to be connectors to
19 provide programming. Many of our
20 filmmakers' programs are just for diverse
21 filmmakers, women filmmakers, all
22 different types and categories, LGBT, how
23 to be able to get work on a set.

24 So we are quite devoted to the
25 filmmaking community. We do not own a

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2 studio or equipment, but certainly when
3 it comes to locations, we are -- we do
4 that as a matter of course, and it's all
5 free. And all you have to do -- I invite
6 you all to go on film.org, which is our
7 website, just to get a sense of the vast
8 programming that we do, all of which is
9 free to filmmakers, and we will help them
10 find those locations, you know. And if
11 we're asked, we will certainly do it. We
12 don't know about projects that we don't
13 know about.

14 We certainly shoot a lot more
15 independent films than we do major
16 productions. We work with Temple
17 University and Drexel University and all
18 the universities and colleges and schools
19 in the area. We have an internship
20 program. I'm very involved certainly
21 with Temple and Drexel and U Arts and
22 many of the other schools. And our
23 interns have gone on to have great
24 careers in the film industry and all love
25 Philadelphia and come back and try to

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2 bring films here.

3 I know that you spoke -- there
4 was a lot of conversation about the
5 Pennsylvania Film Tax Credit. It is the
6 coin of the realm indeed in the film
7 industry internationally, and
8 Pennsylvania was -- had its first tax
9 credit in 2004. The first tax credits in
10 the United States were in 2003 in New
11 Mexico and Louisiana. The following
12 year, 2004, five states got the tax
13 credit.

14 We are, by the way, the only
15 country in the world that does not have
16 an office in Washington, DC, does not
17 have a national film commission. So when
18 Canada first started luring film and
19 television projects to Canada, they did
20 it through their Canadian film
21 commission, their national film
22 commission, and then the provinces added
23 on additional incentives, and then other
24 countries around the world did the same.
25 And basically the United States was late

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2 in the game because there was no national
3 film commission, so we film commissioners
4 had to do it state by state, legislature
5 by legislature, and it was -- it is the
6 reason why the tax credit programs from
7 state to state are very different.

8 They also -- please.

9 COUNCILMAN OH: Let me
10 interrupt for a second. I mean, so kind
11 of let me just bring you a little bit up
12 to where we are and then just ask you a
13 very direct question.

14 MS. PINKENSON: Please.

15 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you. So
16 we did hear from Representative Paul
17 Costa, who has introduced the bill to
18 take the film tax credit from 60 million
19 to 150 million, and he has explained some
20 of the problems, along with Michael
21 McCann, President and Founder of MVM
22 Associates, Treasurer of the Pennsylvania
23 Film Industry Association, about the fact
24 that there are limitations to our tax
25 credit and the fact that the tax credit

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2 can be borrowed against, which leaves
3 less money in the future.

4 We have heard from Jeffrey
5 Rotwitt sitting behind you, Sun Center
6 Studios, and from Neil Samuels and Steve
7 Leshinski from SAG-AFTRA, as well as Jim
8 Whalen, Business Agent and Trustee for
9 Teamsters Local 817 from New York, and
10 Jozef Jozefowski. Is that right? He
11 said it's kind of okay.

12 MS. PINKENSON: Jozef.

13 COUNCILMAN OH: As himself
14 being a grip. Jeff Rush, who you heard
15 from, S.L. Sawyer, Suzanne Landau, and I
16 introduced the written testimony of John
17 Ford from IATSE, Local 52, Motion Picture
18 Studio Mechanics out of New York.

19 And so really our question that
20 we'd love to hear from you, what is the
21 state of filmmaking in Philadelphia
22 today? And, in summary, it seems that
23 there has been an increase and then a
24 decrease, and right now we're struggling,
25 in part because of the tax credits, but

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2 other witnesses have also identified some
3 other things that the City could do from
4 a Bridge Loan program out of PIDC against
5 tax credits --

6 MS. PINKENSON: We have that
7 program, Councilman.

8 COUNCILMAN OH: And increasing
9 it from 4.5 million to a higher level,
10 those type of things. And there was
11 testimony that there is not as good
12 organization and infrastructure in
13 Philadelphia as in maybe Pittsburgh, and
14 there's issues about the ability of some
15 of the younger, my interpretation,
16 younger production folks and not enough
17 work and the challenge in terms of their
18 union, the organization, the leadership.
19 And we seem to be somewhat of a
20 disorganized, not uniform, not kind of
21 like on the same page type of city.

22 Are we getting -- Pittsburgh is
23 saying that basically they have a lot of
24 projects coming in and, in fact, the lack
25 of tax credits, they've had to turn a lot

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2 away, turn away from the work that's
3 there, and it sounds to me like they're
4 using up a lot of those tax credits.
5 Whereas here in Philadelphia, I know we
6 just had the Untouchable in Sun Center
7 Studios.

8 So how are we doing? What's
9 good? What's bad? What should we do
10 better?

11 MS. PINKENSON: Well, I would
12 make a couple of comments, one with
13 regards to the labor situation. We have
14 a very different situation than they have
15 in Pittsburgh. Pittsburgh has all their
16 own local unions. So they have their own
17 IATSE local and they have their own
18 Teamster local. So they are -- their
19 biggest interest, those locals, is
20 Pittsburgh. That's the most important
21 thing to them.

22 We were -- we never had our
23 own -- we had our own Teamster local. We
24 had Teamster Local 107, and then they
25 lost that work a few years back, you may

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2 remember, Teamster Local 107, and the
3 Brotherhood of Teamsters came in and gave
4 that piece of business to the New York
5 Teamsters. And the New York IATSE came
6 down back in the mid '90s and took over
7 Philadelphia. In fact, they took over
8 Connecticut and then New Jersey and then
9 all of Pennsylvania, with the exception
10 of a 50-mile radius around Pittsburgh.
11 So that leaves us in a position where we
12 have major union leadership whose primary
13 consideration is not Philadelphia. This
14 is a challenge that we've had for a very,
15 very long time. And we've talked about
16 it. I understand that the union
17 leadership says that individually we'll
18 say that we are not that much more
19 expensive than Pittsburgh. And so the
20 IATSE will say that and the Teamsters
21 will say that, but the reality is if you
22 are a businessman, which a filmmaker --
23 or business person, pardon me, which a
24 filmmaker will want to come and access
25 the tax credit, because when it is

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2 available, it is a great program, they
3 will -- if they don't have to be in
4 Philadelphia or they don't have to be in
5 some particular location, they will
6 compare budgets. They will do budgets
7 for multiple places and multiple states,
8 because you can shoot in a lot of places
9 and ultimately Philadelphia is going to
10 be more expensive.

11 I think the idea which I heard
12 about a Philadelphia incentive is an
13 excellent idea. I think that is
14 something that we should address, and if
15 City Council would support that, that
16 would be tremendous, because we need that
17 extra push.

18 We also -- I think the idea of
19 having a statewide as well as
20 Philadelphia incentive for diversity is
21 very, very important. Governor Wolf
22 recently announced his diversity
23 incentive -- or I would say his diversity
24 push. I got a call from the state Film
25 Office last week saying that the

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2 Governor's diversity incentive meant that
3 we had to on our website be able to
4 identify who in our crew who wish to be
5 identified or anybody who had listings or
6 companies whether they were diverse or
7 not, and I said, We've been doing that
8 for a long time. We already do that.
9 We're Philadelphians, you know. We do
10 that.

11 So we will now add, however --
12 we did not put on there LG -- you
13 couldn't check off LGBTQ, but we will
14 now. We will add anything that they want
15 to do that identifies diversity, assuming
16 that the individual wants to identify,
17 label themselves in that way.

18 But we think that, as an
19 example, we had the film Creed. That
20 film had an African American director.
21 It was very important to him to shoot in
22 the City of Philadelphia, which is a very
23 diverse city, and to have a crew that
24 looked like Philadelphia and had a more
25 diverse crew, and it was extraordinarily

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2 successful and the crew was a great crew.

3 We got to see a lot of people that we

4 hadn't seen, who were local, who we

5 hadn't seen working on sets before. And

6 if we can incentivize that kind of

7 diversity, I think that that will set

8 Philadelphia -- set a new standard for

9 Philadelphia, and it will be a great

10 marketing tool for us as we use in other

11 areas of business.

12 So I would love to see that as

13 an incentive, and I would highly

14 recommend that. Does that answer --

15 COUNCILMAN OH: Yes, it does.

16 MS. PINKENSON: I would also,

17 if I could add, you know -- I know you've

18 heard that the film tax credit runs out

19 very quickly, and in fact it does. Sixty

20 million dollars by the time we actually

21 get it is down to \$40 million, is about

22 all that we have left in a given year

23 before -- we don't get to give out more

24 money in advance unless one of our

25 projects were able to take advantage of

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2 that.

3 There are a lot of issues with
4 regards to the tax credit, and we are
5 working with the legislators in
6 Harrisburg on that. We certainly hope
7 that our elected officials in
8 Philadelphia will be interested in
9 picking up the phone and calling their
10 legislators in Harrisburg to help us.
11 But we have a number of productions that
12 are talking about coming, and some have
13 submitted applications. The question is,
14 will the state Film Office in Harrisburg
15 approve those applications or are they
16 more interested in approving applications
17 in Pittsburgh? Because, frankly, the
18 political power right now in the
19 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is not in
20 Southeastern Pennsylvania. So any help
21 that we could get from City Council and
22 the Mayor's Office would be very, very
23 welcomed.

24 COUNCILMAN OH: I had mentioned
25 that I had met with Speaker Turzai this

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2 morning. In fact, just got a text from
3 him. So I do very much hope to speak
4 with him about the tax credit. I will
5 say publicly that we tried to get DCED
6 and the Film Office to respond to us over
7 many weeks, and I think we got basically
8 three- or four-word answers from them.
9 So I just don't know that we got much
10 rapport with them. I don't know why. I
11 actually called Secretary Davin, and he
12 was traveling and I got a very nice
13 person and basically -- got basically the
14 same thing.

15 I don't know. It doesn't leave
16 me with the kind of a feeling that
17 there's much interest in Philadelphia, at
18 least from whoever is in charge over
19 there. Great concern to me. Fortunately
20 we have elections and we can call them
21 out, as I am doing now, for basically not
22 giving us even written testimony of a
23 paragraph or two. Now, I even got
24 written testimony from John Ford from New
25 York, and the Teamsters sent someone from

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2 New York. We can't get a paragraph from
3 the state Film Office. I hope they do
4 better by us in the future. But we will
5 be on this, I can guarantee you that.

6 MS. PINKENSON: Thank you.

7 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
8 much.

9 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Thank
10 you.

11 MS. PINKENSON: Thank you.
12 Appreciate your interest.

13 COUNCILMAN OH: Yes. Thank
14 you.

15 Well, that concludes our
16 hearing. I thank you. I have a list of
17 things I think we can do and begin
18 working. Thank you so very much and
19 especially Sharon for all your work and
20 coming down here. I understand the
21 extraordinary circumstances. I know you
22 got to run out, but thank you so very
23 much.

24 And I will conclude this
25 hearing to the call of the Chair.

1 5/12/17 - GLOBAL OPPORTUNITIES - RES. 170258

2 (Committee on Global
3 Opportunities and the Creative/Innovative
4 Economy concluded at 3:35 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

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

MICHELE L. MURPHY
RPR-Notary Public

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