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COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

3

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

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Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Wednesday, October 25, 2006
9:40 a.m.

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PRESENT:

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COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE BLACKWELL, CHAIR
COUNCILMAN W. WILSON GOODE, JR.
COUNCILWOMAN DONNA REED MILLER

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RESOLUTION 060708 - Resolution calling on the
Council Committee on Finance to hold hearings
for a Call to Action to stop the violence by
providing additional funding for job training
programs, extended hours of operation for
school and recreation facilities, extended
TANF benefits for those working in schools and
neighborhoods and tax credits and other
initiatives for reintegrating ex-offenders.

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COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good

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morning, everyone. This is a

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continuation of a hearing from the

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Committee on Finance with regard to a

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Call to Action to reduce violence in our

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City. We're happy to have all of you

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here.

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We're now going to have the

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Clerk to read the title of the

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resolution.

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THE CLERK: Resolution No.

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060708, resolution calling on the Council

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Committee on Finance to hold hearings for

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a Call to Action to stop the violence by

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providing additional funding for job

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training programs, extended hours of

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operation for school and recreation

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facilities, extended TANF benefits for

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those working in schools and

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neighborhoods, and tax credits and other

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initiatives for reintegrating

23

ex-offenders.

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COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank

25

you very much.

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2 As you know, many of you may
3 know, we had approximately 35 people
4 testify yesterday with regard to this.
5 The Mayor was here for about, I don't
6 know, maybe close to an hour. The Police
7 Commissioner was here, many
8 representatives.

9 Fleetway Leasing brought an
10 ex-offender, who was grateful for the
11 opportunity to talk about their job
12 training program and car detailing. We
13 had the Prison Commissioner who said
14 that -- the Police Commissioner said you
15 can't arrest your way out of it, and
16 obviously you can't lock up your way out
17 of the problem either.

18 And certainly we had the Health
19 Commissioner, as we said, the DHS
20 Commissioner. We had many, many
21 Commissioners who were here yesterday,
22 people who talked about job training,
23 people from City services, like Bilal
24 Qayyum, who walked to Harrisburg, and so
25 forth and so on. Certainly we won't

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2 repeat all of it, but we just wanted to
3 give you a background to frame what this
4 is about.

5 We believe that after the
6 marches to Harrisburg, the task forces,
7 after the many meetings and discussions,
8 as was named by Jeff Felder from my staff
9 who created the whole title and the whole
10 concept of a Call to Action, we believe
11 it's now time to go the next level,
12 create a Call to Action. And this Call
13 to Action calls for not only job training
14 and employment, but programs for
15 ex-offenders, after-school programs and
16 programs in our recreation centers to
17 reach us closer to the curfew. So that
18 gives you a quick overview.

19 We'll have a short beginning
20 from Pastor Reed and Sharon Baptist
21 Church, who also worked with us and are
22 working on a whole issue of violence and
23 the whole issue of Call to Action.

24 To my left is Councilman W.
25 Wilson Goode, who is a part of this

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2 Committee and who himself has come up
3 with a tax issue for businesses who hire
4 others in our City, and he'll speak to
5 that at some point today.

6 And now, again, we will begin
7 this short tape to help frame the
8 discussion and we'll begin our testimony.

9 (Tape begins.)

10 * * *

11 PASTOR REED: "Hello,
12 Councilwoman Blackwell and distinguished
13 constituents. Pertaining to this issue
14 about violence in our City of
15 Philadelphia, I am Pastor Keith W. Reed,
16 Sr., the senior pastor of Sharon Baptist
17 Church. We are consulting with you and
18 coming to you to talk about this whole
19 issue of violence in our City,
20 particularly among our young
21 African-American young men from the ages
22 of 18 to 25. The number of killings are
23 just off the scale, it's off the record,
24 and we are concerned about it as a
25 church, and the church has not said

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2 anything publicly.

3 "I'm making this appeal to
4 you -- and I do say an "appeal," because
5 it is such a great burden on our hearts
6 about our City and what's happening to
7 our young men and our young ladies here
8 in Philadelphia.

9 "We as the Sharon Baptist
10 Church are offering a possible solution
11 to the problem. We've experienced some
12 success with it, and this is a drama
13 presentation of the drama and the
14 violence that's going on in our City.
15 And I think this play will be a good
16 piece of demonstrating and sharing with
17 other human beings about human life.

18 "And I know that there's
19 separation between church and state, but
20 you have to let the church do what the
21 church does. And we are concerned about
22 human beings, but we also realize as a
23 church that without God in our lives, we
24 really don't stand a chance to do
25 anything successful.

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2 "So if you would just give us a
3 listening ear by seeing clips from this
4 play of what we performed or allowed to
5 be at our church, and that night
6 afterwards, we had about 20 young people
7 come down the aisle in prayer, as well as
8 getting their relationship together with
9 God.

10 "And we'll tweak it if we have
11 to, but we can't X out God, because
12 that's who we are and that's what we
13 represent.

14 "So, please, I ask you, I
15 appeal to you, will you please just hear
16 what could be a solution to the problem
17 that we're having in our City. I pray
18 that you enjoy the clip that we want to
19 share with you about the play.

20 "Bless you and thank you for
21 giving us the opportunity to share it
22 with you.

23 UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: The
24 Paxton is Signed is a play that
25 specifically addresses the epidemic of

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2 violence that's currently existing
3 primarily in Philadelphia, because that's
4 where we're closest to and that's where
5 we are, but I think it's actually a
6 problem that's throughout the inner city
7 areas in the United States.

8 "Personally, my personal
9 motivation has come from two incidents.
10 I had one younger cousin actually in
11 Baltimore get gunned down on his way home
12 from work, which was actually -- he was
13 an upstanding individual. He wasn't
14 involved in any problems. And that was a
15 retaliatory strike against his brother.

16 "But then most recently, this
17 summer, April 30th, my nephew, 15 years
18 old by the name of Anthony Williams, was
19 shot and killed on his front step. And
20 from what I understand, the only
21 motivation for that was that he chose to
22 hang out with some guys a few blocks away
23 and the guys closest to where he lived
24 didn't appreciate it, and he got gunned
25 down. His sister right in the doorway,

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2 grandmother right next door, father
3 upstairs.

4 "So I just felt in my heart and
5 in my spirit that I had an opportunity
6 and an obligation to do something that
7 kind of showed the other side of what
8 happens in the midst of one of these
9 tragedies.

10 "I believe that if people are
11 more educated about the kind of pain that
12 they inflict on that victim's families
13 and the people who love them and the
14 disruption of life that occurs just
15 because of some senseless argument over a
16 few dollars or over some disrespect or
17 whatever the case is, that maybe it will
18 just teach some of these younger people
19 to be more sensitive and more rational in
20 their thinking and not be so quick to
21 jump to violence as a mean to settle
22 whatever score there is.

23 "And also I would like to
24 represent a Call to Action to the
25 parents. Parents have to be a lot more

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2 responsible as to what their children's
3 activities are, as to what's coming in
4 and out of their houses.

5 "I mean, there's not one simple
6 solution to this problem, but there's a
7 multitude of solutions, and this play,
8 what we hope to do is ruffle some
9 feathers and kind of get some people who
10 may not be thinking about solutions in
11 that mindset where they are.

12 "So we're open to seeing how
13 much impact this is going to have and how
14 much work we can do with this, and
15 hopefully it will play a part in making a
16 change."

17 MR. TEWAZ: "Shaboi Tewaz.

18 "My involvement with the play,
19 I'm doing the concert at the beginning of
20 the play just to, I guess -- really
21 entertainment, the musical entertainment
22 for the play. The importance of the
23 play, even in my life, has a lot to do
24 with the violence that's going on, these
25 homes with fathers not being present.

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2 "It tugs at my heart a lot,
3 because my ministry is geared towards
4 that families -- seeing that family knit
5 come back together, and the play hits
6 home with it. It is exactly what, I
7 guess, if I was a writer of a play what I
8 would write just to touch base with this
9 community becoming a community again, the
10 church becoming the pinnacle in the
11 community again. And I think the play
12 shows every aspect of that.

13 "And, you know, I just know
14 it's going to do great things and I'm
15 just happy to be a part of it. You know,
16 I see it going outside of Philly and
17 going to other communities so that this
18 message can get out there, because it's a
19 very important message. Not just in
20 Philly are fathers not home, not just in
21 Philly are they shooting.

22 "But one thing I do know about
23 Philadelphia is -- and I say this
24 jokingly but in serious -- we can't win a
25 Sixers championship, we can't win a

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2 Flyers championship, nor can we win a
3 Super Bowl, but we manage to be number
4 one in the nation in violence."

5 (Tape stopped.)

6 * * *

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
8 you very much. That will give you a
9 backdrop. At the conclusion of our
10 hearings, as we did yesterday, we will
11 play a DVD of the entire play. So those
12 of you who would like to watch it, we
13 invite you to come back or we invite you
14 to remain. We won't take more time now,
15 but we wanted you to know how sincere we
16 are, how provocative it is and how
17 widespread the concern in our community
18 is.

19 Having said that, the Chair
20 realizes that the Honorable Judge Paula
21 Patrick has to go back to court. We
22 thank her for coming in this morning, and
23 she will be our first witness to testify.
24 Thank you very much.

25 Again, we thank you all for

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2 being here and for being a part. These
3 are some of the most -- these hearings
4 are -- in all my years in Council, I
5 don't know that there's been any that are
6 more important than what we're doing
7 today, because we are talking about --
8 feel free to take the witness table,
9 Judge.

10 All right. While we are
11 duplicating the Judge's testimony, we
12 will call the Honorable James Roebuck.
13 Thank you for coming. They were in
14 Harrisburg last night. And the Honorable
15 James Roebuck is also a member of our
16 ward.

17 We missed you, because instead
18 of you giving everybody the -- going
19 through the pink sheet, talking about who
20 votes and talking about the questions, I
21 had to do it. So you were especially
22 missed last night. We told everyone
23 about the important issues you were
24 voting on in Harrisburg.

25 Thank you for being here and

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2 thank you for being here to talk about
3 the issue of violence in our City.

4 REPRESENTATIVE ROEBUCK: Thank
5 you, Councilwoman Blackwell, Councilman
6 Goode. I might just preface by saying
7 that in fact the House was in session
8 last night until 12 o'clock and we
9 managed to do a number of important
10 pieces of legislation, but certainly I'm
11 very pleased to have the opportunity to
12 be here this morning to speak on this
13 topic.

14 I first want to thank City
15 Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell and the
16 Philadelphia City Council for providing
17 me the opportunity to present testimony
18 on how we can reduce violence in our
19 City, particularly in our schools and
20 among our City's youth.

21 I agree with the sentiments of
22 City Council's resolution for a Call to
23 Action to stop the violence, as well as
24 its focus on job training programs for
25 the unemployed, tax credits for hiring

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2 ex-offenders and expanding the definition
3 of, quote, work-related activities for
4 TANF recipients.

5 However, we need to go further
6 to address as a community one of the
7 major underlying issues that is behind
8 rising violence among youth in our City,
9 and that issue is the issue of the high
10 school dropout crisis.

11 The issue of high school
12 dropouts is not just an education issue,
13 but is an issue that affects the entire
14 City in terms of its effect on poverty,
15 crime and hopelessness among many of our
16 City's youth.

17 When a student drops out of
18 school, they may no longer be a problem
19 to the education system, but they do
20 become a problem for our health and
21 welfare system and for our criminal
22 justice system. Studies confirm that
23 high school dropouts are far more likely
24 than high school graduates to live in
25 poverty and to be on welfare and far more

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2 likely to be incarcerated.

3 There is a real cost to our
4 society in terms of increased welfare
5 spending and increased spending on
6 prisons when a child drops out of school.
7 It is a sad statement about the spending
8 priorities of our state that it costs
9 more to house a prisoner in the State
10 Penitentiary than it does to educate them
11 at Penn State University.

12 The extent of this dropout
13 crisis was made clear last week with the
14 issuing of the report "Philadelphia's
15 Dropout Crisis" from Johns Hopkins
16 University researchers that found that
17 only 48 to 54 percent of students who
18 start the ninth grade between the years
19 2000 and 2005 graduated within four years
20 and only 60 to 63 percent graduated
21 within six years. The study also found
22 that Latino and African-American students
23 had the lowest graduation rates. While
24 the study noted that Philadelphia's
25 findings were similar to graduating rates

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2 in other major cities, this does not
3 excuse a nearly 50 percent dropout rate
4 from our schools.

5 As Democratic Chairman of the
6 House Education Committee, I held a
7 hearing this past spring on this issue in
8 Philadelphia and heard testimony from
9 numerous groups on the dropout crisis and
10 its impact on not only Philadelphia but
11 the entire state. I am presently
12 developing legislation with the input of
13 several organizations here in
14 Philadelphia that I believe will help
15 address this issue. And I would note
16 that I'm especially pleased that
17 Councilwoman Blackwell was a part of one
18 of those planning sessions and continue
19 to work as we shape that state
20 legislation.

21 I would note also that I did
22 submit my testimony for the record and
23 I'm not going to read the entire document
24 word for word. I do want to just add
25 some additional points here.

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2 In addition to addressing the
3 dropout crisis, I'm hopeful that the
4 Governor and the General Assembly will
5 take serious action as specifically
6 expanding funding for alternative
7 education programs that can work to keep
8 at-risk youth in school, as well as to
9 promote dropout recovery programs where
10 students who have dropped out of school
11 can return to an alternative school
12 program with the goal of achieving their
13 high school diploma. These programs, as
14 well as dual enrollment programs like the
15 recently established Gateway to College
16 program at the Community College of
17 Philadelphia where I serve on the Board
18 of Trustees, will make a real difference
19 in lowering high school dropouts.

20 However, these programs are not
21 enough if we don't have the entire
22 community working on this problem.
23 Luckily, we do have in Philadelphia
24 numerous organizations which are
25 addressing this problem, and I would take

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2 particular note of the efforts of the
3 Philadelphia Youth Transitions
4 Collaborative. This collaborative is a
5 consortium of local organizations and
6 City agencies, including the School
7 District, whose mission is to promote
8 enhanced opportunities for struggling
9 students and out-of-school youth. The
10 Philadelphia Youth Transitions
11 Collaborative released the aforementioned
12 "Philadelphia Dropout Crisis" report and
13 last Thursday launched Project U-Turn, a
14 campaign aimed at galvanizing the
15 district, City agencies, the business
16 community, neighborhood groups and
17 parents to work together to keep students
18 in school. I support their efforts and
19 hope that Philadelphia City Council will
20 assist this collaborative with possible
21 funding for their initiatives, as well as
22 provide assistance from other various
23 City agencies.

24 Together as a community and
25 with the help from Governor Rendell and

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2 the General Assembly, we can make a
3 difference in reducing the number of high
4 school dropouts. In doing this, I
5 believe we will make a major impact on
6 reducing violence in our City and give
7 our City's youth hope for a better future
8 through education.

9 Once again, I thank you for
10 this opportunity. I would certainly be
11 glad to answer any questions that you
12 might have.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
14 you very much, Representative Roebuck.

15 And as you know -- and we say
16 this for the record -- he is Chair of the
17 State Committee on Education, as I am
18 blessed to chair that locally in City
19 Council, and so we work together to deal
20 with these issues like dropout rate.

21 It's very disparaging to learn
22 that yesterday the Prison Commissioner
23 told us it costs about \$88 a day to house
24 prisoners. We've just got to make better
25 use of our dollars. And now we know

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2 there's prison overcrowding that
3 exacerbates it, where they're sleeping in
4 kitchens and other space.

5 So we are all our brother's
6 keeper, and we work with the prison
7 guards as well as the Prison
8 Commissioner, and I think everybody is on
9 the same page in being concerned about
10 this whole dropout rate.

11 Yesterday we talked about how
12 many -- more than 80 percent of the
13 inmates who have reading problems, who
14 don't read well, who haven't finished
15 high school, and if we look back,
16 unemployment and education certainly are
17 big issues that cause problems for us.
18 And that is why these hearings are so
19 important to deal with educators such as
20 yourself who are also State officials and
21 to talk about job training and employment
22 and programs.

23 We thank you certainly for your
24 input. Thank you for coming here this
25 morning.

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2 Are there any questions?

3 (No response.)

4 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
5 you very much.

6 REPRESENTATIVE ROEBUCK: Thank
7 you very much.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
9 you.

10 Judge Paula Patrick. Thank you
11 for coming, and we appreciate you taking
12 time from your schedule on the bench to
13 join us this morning.

14 The courts, I will say, have
15 really, really been involved in a big way
16 on this whole issue. When we had
17 hearings on the dropout rate, when we had
18 hearings on crime in schools, we had
19 Judge Lori Dumas and we've had
20 Administrative Judge Kevin Dougherty
21 speak, as well as yourself, on the whole
22 issue of problems with youngsters.

23 So, again, welcome. Please
24 identify yourself for our record and
25 begin your testimony.

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2 JUDGE PATRICK-JOHNAKIN: Yes.

3 Good morning, Councilwoman Blackwell and
4 Councilman Goode. On behalf of my
5 Administrative Judge, Kevin Dougherty, I
6 offer my thanks and appreciation for the
7 opportunity to testify regarding the
8 importance of funding programs to help
9 alleviate youth violence in the City of
10 Philadelphia.

11 My name is Paula
12 Patrick-Johnakin and I'm currently a
13 Judge of Court of Common Pleas, Family
14 Court Division, Juvenile Section. I
15 preside over juvenile cases, which
16 include delinquent, dependent and truant
17 youth. Juvenile crime, including gang
18 violence, sex offending, substance abuse,
19 property theft and truancy, continue to
20 be a serious problem in our nation and in
21 our community. I see firsthand the
22 impact of what the ills of society have
23 done to our children and families.

24 Under the leadership of
25 Administrative Judge Kevin Dougherty, the

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2 goal of the Juvenile Court is not only to
3 rehabilitate delinquent children, but
4 also to ensure public safety by providing
5 delinquent children and their families
6 with the tools they need to become
7 productive members of society.

8 I believe that juvenile justice
9 is a serious problem in our community and
10 that it takes all of us, the four C's,
11 the court, City Council, the Commonwealth
12 and the community, working together to
13 come to a reasonable solution.

14 Daily, I and my colleagues on
15 the juvenile bench are faced with making
16 challenging decisions that must balance
17 the interests of these children and
18 families with the protection of the
19 community. The late Dr. Martin Luther
20 King, Jr. stated "the ultimate measure of
21 a man is not where he stands in moments
22 of comfort and convenience, but where he
23 stands at times of challenge and
24 controversy."

25 My personal vision for the

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2 Philadelphia Juvenile Court is that every
3 child be reared in a safe, permanent and
4 nurturing family where love,
5 self-control, concern for others and
6 responsibility for the consequences of
7 one's actions are experienced and taught
8 as fundamental values for a successful
9 life. Moreover, one of my greatest
10 concerns is that families are equipped
11 with the tools necessary to produce a
12 strong family unit which enables a child
13 to have a chance to take his or her place
14 in a society being fully prepared
15 emotionally, academically, financially
16 and also spiritually. It is with this in
17 mind that I, under the administration of
18 Judge Kevin Dougherty, created the KOI
19 Program. That's K-O-I. KOI stands for
20 knowledge, opportunities and incentives
21 for access to a better life.

22 We have collaborated with the
23 Missionary Baptist Pastor's Conference of
24 Philadelphia and vicinity, as well as the
25 Leon H. Sullivan Charitable Trust to

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2 develop this program. I will give you a
3 brief overview of the program.

4 The first facet of K0I is
5 knowledge. Ben Franklin said that "an
6 investment in knowledge always pays the
7 best interest." The K0I program will
8 solicit some of the best boarding schools
9 and charter schools within the
10 Commonwealth to accept and award
11 scholarships to mentally gifted inner
12 City youth who are in the juvenile court
13 system. I found that some of our youth
14 in the system have talent and would
15 certainly benefit from a better
16 educational opportunity. Some of these
17 children will be placed in boarding
18 school programs, thereby diverting them
19 from crime and violence that often plague
20 their schools and their neighborhoods.

21 The second facet of the K0I
22 program is opportunity. The program will
23 allow at-risk and truant youth the
24 opportunity to work in a program at
25 minimum wage for four days a week

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2 learning life skills, communication
3 skills, education alternatives and
4 college preparation and enrollment. This
5 is similar to the AAIM program under the
6 direction of Dr. Audrey Brunson that is
7 in operation in West Philadelphia. We
8 need this program to be Citywide. In
9 addition, youth would also learn skills
10 for web building and design and are
11 guaranteed employment upon completion of
12 the program.

13 The third facet of the KOI
14 program is incentives. I believe that
15 everyone should be rewarded or at least
16 recognized for his or her
17 accomplishments. The largest incentive
18 offered will be guaranteed job placement
19 for students and/or college admission.
20 We will also solicit donations of tickets
21 from our local professional sports clubs,
22 museums, cultural organizations and movie
23 theatres so that program participants and
24 their families can participate in
25 positive social activities as a reward

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2 for hard work, dedication and commitment.
3 These children will receive incentives
4 for their compliance and will learn that
5 hard work does breed compensation and
6 reward. I am proud to say that this
7 program was recently approved by the
8 Administrative Governing Board of Judges.

9 The next issue that we're
10 working on is Housing Court. Another
11 program I am working to develop with
12 Judge Dougherty is Housing Court.
13 Housing Court would operate out of the
14 Family Court under the Juvenile Division.
15 The concept is that being poor is not a
16 crime and poor families should not be
17 faced with the removal of their children
18 if inadequate housing or lack thereof is
19 their sole dependency issue. Housing
20 Court would have units made available to
21 us through the Philadelphia Housing
22 Authority.

23 PHA was established in 1937 and
24 is the nation's fourth largest housing
25 authority. PHA is the largest landlord

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2 in Pennsylvania, and its funding comes
3 primarily from the federal government
4 working in partnership with the City and
5 State government sources. There are a
6 total of 33 PHA sites in the City of
7 Philadelphia that have been either
8 renovated or completely rebuilt brand new
9 homes.

10 Our proposal would simply be
11 that PHA would reserve three units from
12 each of these sites for the families that
13 are in need in Family Court. All
14 applicants would have to meet the PHA
15 criteria for application, and the family
16 must be in immediate need of housing.
17 This means that the Court would no longer
18 be forced to have the children removed
19 forthwith from the parents' custody to be
20 committed to the Department of Human
21 Services for placement in a foster home
22 due to the inadequate or lack of housing.

23 Housing Court would place a
24 three-year limit on families assigned to
25 public housing under this program. Also

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2 during this three-year period, the
3 parents must enroll and complete IT
4 training programs through either Verizon
5 or Comcast, of which we are seeking to
6 partner with for parent training and
7 employment.

8 Second, Housing Court would
9 also have the authority to immediately
10 refer a Section 8 housing violation case
11 to Landlord/Tenant Court. This is
12 necessary if the General Protective
13 Services report for DHS has found that
14 the premises that where the family lives
15 under Section 8 is deplorable and in an
16 uninhabitable condition as to no fault of
17 the family. The family would then be
18 relocated to another Section 8 home with
19 a Section 8 voucher once the proper
20 administrative channels have been
21 addressed.

22 Third, the Court would convene
23 monthly to ensure that the family is
24 compliant with PHA and the order of the
25 Court. The Court would also have a

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2 housing liaison, similar to the probation
3 officer, to report the progress of the
4 family and the new housing situation.

5 Moreover, DHS would have services to
6 children in their own homes to also help
7 monitor the families to ensure their
8 safety and that the children's needs are
9 being met. The family would be monitored
10 for an entire year by the Court.

11 Recreation centers, community
12 youth programs, after-school and summer
13 programs undoubtedly provide youth with a
14 constructive alternative to destructive
15 behaviors and violence. I am convinced
16 that additional funding is needed for
17 these programs. Adequate funding not
18 only provides a more promising future for
19 our youth, but also creates a more
20 productive, more peaceful, safer and
21 happier society in general.

22 The great English philosopher
23 Edmund Burke said "evil triumphs because
24 good men do nothing." Let us work
25 together so that this evil of youth

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2 violence, crime and poverty will cease to
3 have a place among us. Dr. King said "in
4 the end, we will remember not the words
5 of our enemies, but the silence of our
6 friends." Let us not be silent any
7 longer.

8 Thank you for your time. If
9 you have any questions, I will take them.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
11 you, Your Honor. I will tell you that we
12 are so pleased. This shows you the
13 caliber of judge that we have on the
14 court today. Years ago this would not
15 have happened. We would not have had
16 judges who decide that when they see
17 youngsters who don't know where they live
18 or their education is not in place or
19 they're not sure where they live from day
20 to night, who would have taken on the
21 whole issue of developing a proposal and
22 a program and working with the
23 Administrative Judge and other judges to
24 create such a program.

25 It's so very, very, very

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2 important, because we all know that it
3 takes -- every aspect, as Dr. Robinson
4 said, takes a village to raise a child,
5 and certainly this is a vital part of
6 what happens, what we can do to help
7 children who are in the court system or
8 who get there to certainly become stable
9 members of our society.

10 Thank you very much.

11 Are there any questions?

12 (No response.)

13 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
14 you, Your Honor.

15 JUDGE PATRICK-JOHNKIN: Thank
16 you all.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
18 you very, very much.

19 Alan Butkovitz represented by
20 Deputy Commissioner Harvey Rice.

21 Thank you very much. Thank you
22 so much for coming.

23 MR. RICE: Thank you,
24 Councilwoman. Good morning, Councilwoman
25 Blackwell, Councilman Goode. I am Harvey

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2 Rice, the First Deputy City Controller.
3 Controller Alan Butkovitz is in
4 Washington today and he asked that I
5 present his testimony in support of
6 Resolution 060708.

7 Accompanying me here today are
8 Drae Jones, Director of our Financial and
9 Policy Unit, and Anthony DiMartino of the
10 Finance and Policy Unit.

11 First off, I would like to
12 thank you for this opportunity to testify
13 and present the Controller's position on
14 this resolution. The Controller would
15 like to commend Councilwoman Blackwell,
16 Councilman Goode and Council as a whole
17 for their concern and leadership in
18 addressing the causes of violence and in
19 seeking solutions to make our City safe.

20 As you know, violent crime has
21 reached epidemic proportions in some of
22 our neighborhoods. Today we stand at 328
23 murders in our City since the first of
24 the year. In addition, there are over
25 1,500 shooting victims who have not died.

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2 Part of the City Controller's
3 job is to help improve the quality of
4 life in our City and recommend ways for
5 City departments to improve upon the work
6 they do and the services they provide to
7 the people of this City.

8 Gun violence and the murder of
9 our citizens, some innocent bystanders
10 and others, is alarming and has rocked
11 the confidence of our citizens.

12 In my role as Controller and
13 auditor of the Philadelphia Police
14 Department, I have been working with both
15 City Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell and
16 Police Commissioner Sylvester Johnson to
17 help find ways for the Philadelphia
18 Police Department to improve how it
19 protects our citizens and ensure the
20 public's safety.

21 Together, Councilwoman
22 Blackwell and I recommended to the
23 Governor and the legislature legislation
24 to permit searches without a warrant of
25 parolees who have committed violent

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2 crimes or have been convicted of firearms
3 offenses.

4 Police tell us that most gun
5 crime in the City is perpetrated by
6 individuals who have repeatedly been
7 arrested and/or convicted of violent
8 crimes and weapon offenses. This
9 legislation will provide police with
10 another tool to assist them in reducing
11 violent crime, while making law
12 enforcement more efficient and effective
13 in the performance of their duties.

14 This legislative initiative,
15 sponsored by Philadelphia State
16 Representative William Keller, passed
17 overwhelmingly in a non-binding vote
18 during the special House session on crime
19 and violence. This non-binding vote is a
20 good indication of the support for this
21 measure, which is scheduled for a vote
22 before the current legislative session
23 ends in December.

24 While this legislation will
25 help police better monitor parolees, it

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2 will also serve as a deterrent for
3 parolees who would normally feel safe
4 carrying a weapon because there is no
5 fear of automatic search and seizure by
6 law enforcement.

7 In addition, currently, there
8 are 275 probation and parole officers
9 within the Adult Probation and Parole
10 Department. These officers monitor
11 approximately 50,000 offenders, many of
12 whom have multiple cases. The City's
13 ratio of probation and parole officers to
14 offender caseload is one to 182. The
15 ratio for the Commonwealth of
16 Pennsylvania is one to 75. Philadelphia
17 ranked first statewide in all of the
18 counties having the highest total
19 caseloads.

20 More probation and parole
21 officers will result in better overall
22 management of offenders and will help
23 reduce repeat violent incidents.
24 Consequently, a reduction in
25 incarceration rates will result.

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2 Another tool which will
3 significantly decrease the level of
4 violence is the expansion of the Youth
5 Violence Reduction Partnership. Far too
6 often the violence we have seen on our
7 streets involves our young people.
8 Statistics show that 40 percent of
9 homicides, as well as 25 percent to 56
10 percent of all other violent crimes are
11 committed by males between the ages of 16
12 and 24. This program encompasses
13 teenagers in the 12th, 19th, 22nd, 24th
14 and 25th Police Districts. It identifies
15 a specific number of youth adults at high
16 risk of violence.

17 Currently, there are 949
18 individuals being monitored in YVRP, and
19 567 are active participants in the
20 program. The program's goal is to
21 prevent repeat offenses by high-risk
22 adolescents and divert them away from
23 criminal and delinquent conduct. This
24 partnership includes collaboration with
25 the Police Department, human service

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2 agencies, juvenile probation, schools,
3 community organizations and the District
4 Attorney's office. The main goal is to
5 provide intensive monitoring and guidance
6 for at-risk young adults and to provide
7 intensive intervention.

8 Some of the services provided
9 include specialized life skills training,
10 family and individual counseling, and
11 parenting education.

12 Again, Controller Butkovitz
13 asked me to express his regrets and to
14 commend Councilwoman Blackwell and City
15 Council as a whole for seeking solutions
16 to crime in our City and finding ways to
17 decrease the level of violence that is
18 permeating our City. There is no magic
19 solution, but a collaboration of numerous
20 different ideas, approaches and solutions
21 will help alleviate violent crime and
22 make our City streets safer.

23 Thank you.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
25 you very much. And let me say that we

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2 know there have been some who question
3 the bill that was introduced by the
4 Representative and overwhelmingly passed,
5 but the other side of it is that if those
6 who have had gun offenses are asked to
7 sign a waiver that they can be stopped,
8 generally unless they stick out in some
9 way, it's a deterrent from the public who
10 are afraid to snitch or tell on offenders
11 for retaliation, and I know this was one
12 of the motivations behind the bill being
13 introduced initially.

14 MR. RICE: Yes, it was,
15 Councilwoman.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: So we
17 thank you very much.

18 Are there any questions?

19 (No response.)

20 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
21 you very much, Commissioner Rice. Thank
22 you very much.

23 MR. RICE: Thank you.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:

25 Maureen Rush, Vice-President of Public

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2 Safety, University of Pennsylvania.

3 Thank you very much. As you
4 may know, yesterday we talked with the
5 University about some of the programs
6 that they enjoy. We talked about that
7 they work with us, with which we work
8 together in the community, including the
9 Sayre School, the Center for Community
10 Partnerships, school programs,
11 after-school programs and, of course,
12 their Lucien E. Blackwell apprenticeship
13 program that we're developing.

14 Thank you for being here.

15 MS. RUSH: Thank you very much.
16 Good morning, Councilwoman Blackwell,
17 Councilman Goode. It's my pleasure to be
18 here this morning. My name is Maureen
19 Rush. I'm Vice-President for Public
20 Safety at the University of Pennsylvania.

21 A little bit about my
22 background. I've been at Penn for 11
23 years, and prior to my career at Penn, I
24 had an exciting and fulfilling 18-year
25 career with the Philadelphia Police

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2 Department. During my over 30 years of
3 law enforcement and public safety sector
4 areas, I have witnessed the pain and
5 suffering of victims of crime, as well as
6 the wasted potential of perpetrators of
7 crime.

8 Thank you for inviting me to
9 share my thoughts and observations about
10 violence and possible solutions that the
11 City can put forth to mitigate it with
12 this Committee.

13 Penn is the largest private
14 employer in the City of Philadelphia and
15 the second largest in the Commonwealth of
16 Pennsylvania. Penn has a total regular
17 workforce of approximately 25,000
18 employees between the University and the
19 University Health System.

20 Each year, over 20,000 of the
21 best and brightest U.S. and international
22 students apply to Penn for the rich
23 intellectual and cultural experience
24 offered both at Penn and the City of
25 Philadelphia. An accomplished faculty,

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2 committed to excellence in scholarship
3 research and service, also come to Penn
4 to pursue knowledge without boundaries.

5 The safety and security of our
6 students, faculty and staff is the number
7 one priority for our President, Amy
8 Gutmann, and all of us in the Division of
9 Public Safety.

10 Last year, the University City
11 area experienced a startling increase in
12 violent crime, as did the entire City of
13 Philadelphia.

14 This crime up-tick dramatically
15 affected the quality of life of members
16 of the Penn community and created doubt
17 in the minds of prospective students,
18 faculty and staff regarding their plans
19 to join the Penn community.

20 In addition to the numerous
21 community outreach programs that the
22 University and the University Health
23 System engage in, President Amy Gutmann
24 felt compelled to allocate an additional
25 \$5 million to fund a public safety

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2 initiative to fight back against this
3 frightening increase in crime.

4 Unfortunately, a large number
5 of both the perpetrators and victims in
6 this recent upsurge in crime are
7 juveniles. We are confronted with a
8 younger, more vulnerable population in
9 Philadelphia and we need to respond
10 specifically to the needs of our youth in
11 order to counter this alarming increase
12 in violent behavior.

13 According to the National
14 Center on Juvenile Justice, the peak
15 hours for violent juvenile crime are
16 between 3:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. The
17 young men who videotaped their beating of
18 a Drexel student late 2005 had been let
19 out of the University City High School
20 early that day to wander aimlessly on the
21 streets.

22 So what are we doing at the
23 University of Pennsylvania? First, we
24 meet regularly with the Philadelphia
25 public schools to find ways to enhance

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2 safety at the Penn Alexander School and
3 the University City High School, and at
4 the request of the principal at
5 University City High School, we have
6 arranged for Penn Police, along with
7 SEPTA Police and the Philadelphia Police
8 to have a police presence on Market
9 Street at the dismissal times for the
10 University City High.

11 We also reach out to
12 organizations that are working with
13 troubled youth. We communicate on a
14 daily basis with the Philadelphia's Adult
15 and Juvenile Probation and Parole
16 departments and regularly attend meetings
17 of the West Philadelphia Truancy
18 Stakeholders group.

19 We proactively try to steer
20 youth who we become involved with on
21 criminal activities and before criminal
22 activities towards the Tucker PAL, Police
23 Athletic League. This is where the
24 University of Pennsylvania Police
25 Department, in partnership with the

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2 Philadelphia Police Department, engage
3 youth in positive activities.

4 PAL, as you know, is Cops
5 Helping Kids, a non-profit corporation
6 that helps youngsters develop meaningful
7 and productive lives through a variety of
8 educational and recreational programs.

9 The 27 PAL centers throughout
10 the City of Philadelphia are open during
11 this time frame that I mentioned earlier
12 after school, providing more than 27,000
13 young people with a safe and engaging
14 alternative to the temptations of the
15 street.

16 The University of Pennsylvania
17 has embraced the Tucker PAL center with
18 an increasing number of students, faculty
19 and staff volunteering and the Penn
20 Athletics Department hosting events for
21 PAL youth, like rock climbing, basketball
22 tournaments and things like that.

23 Yesterday you heard from the
24 University of Pennsylvania's Cory Bowman
25 and Glenn Bryan outlining the

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2 University's plans to establish an
3 apprenticeship program, as well as our
4 own Skill Development activities program.

5 We believe more opportunities
6 like these programs are needed throughout
7 the City in order to give people coming
8 out of prison an opportunity to learn
9 skills that will assist them in gaining
10 lawful and productive employment.

11 These programs will also allow
12 a young person an opportunity to choose
13 between selling drugs on the street and a
14 real job that will allow them to make
15 money and build a future.

16 Again, I thank you very much
17 for this opportunity to present to
18 Council on Finance, and I applaud you for
19 continuing your efforts to find solutions
20 to the violence in the City of
21 Philadelphia.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
23 you very much. We thank you all for what
24 your department does. Frankly, we need
25 the support in the district, and with UCD

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2 and with yourself and with our regular
3 Police Department, we can really kind of
4 keep hands on and know who is doing what
5 where, and we commend you for the great
6 job you've been doing there.

7 MS. RUSH: Thank you,
8 Councilwoman.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
10 you very much.

11 MS. RUSH: Thank you very much.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
13 you.

14 Jeff Blumberg, Acting Director,
15 Community Services. Is Jeff here?

16 Next, Commissioner Portner,
17 we'll call you.

18 Mr. Blumberg, good morning,
19 welcome, and please identify yourself for
20 the record and begin your testimony.
21 Thanks for coming.

22 MR. BLUMBERG: Thank you. My
23 name is Jeffrey Blumberg and I'm the
24 Acting Director of Community Services
25 Department, Philadelphia County

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2 Assistance Office, State Department of
3 Public Welfare, and we commend
4 Councilwoman Blackwell and the rest of
5 the Committee for holding these hearings
6 on such a serious issue and one that has
7 such a major impact on so many people.
8 We welcome the opportunity for being
9 here, and I will testify now on some of
10 the services we offer and benefits and
11 supports that we can provide. I will
12 submit my testimony after the fact to the
13 Committee members just so you have the
14 information, and I'll get that to you.

15 Philadelphia County Assistance
16 Office is responsible for overseeing the
17 TANF program for the State, and not only
18 just TANF but also food stamps and
19 medical assistance. And these programs
20 have a major economic impact on the City
21 of Philadelphia, in that one in three
22 Philadelphians are currently receiving
23 some type of benefit. So we welcome
24 anybody accessing these benefits in terms
25 of income supports and helping stabilize

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2 families in terms of involvement or in
3 terms of receiving the support.

4 We also have a lot of
5 initiatives in terms of employment and
6 training opportunities. We've heard the
7 data on getting people involved and in
8 terms of what they can, once involved
9 with programs and opportunities, how it
10 can reduce any kind of violence and
11 criminal activity.

12 We collaborate with community
13 agencies throughout the City and also
14 identify a number of employment and
15 training opportunities so that,
16 therefore, we can be an access point for
17 information to these programs. We would
18 welcome that involvement with any program
19 and also provide information on where
20 people can access these programs.

21 We ourselves fund some of these
22 programs, but we also work through other
23 funding streams. But we also offer
24 auxiliary support benefits, such as
25 transportation and child care, for people

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2 to attend the programs as well. So there
3 are major opportunities through our 17
4 full-service district offices throughout
5 the City and also the number of programs
6 that are out there in community agencies,
7 like I said, that we collaborate with.

8 So we welcome the opportunity
9 to be a partner with any kind of efforts
10 to address this issue and offer the
11 benefits and services we provide.

12 Thank you.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
14 you very much. I wanted to ask you a
15 question. With regard to parents who
16 receive TANF assistance, can these
17 parents work in the neighborhood schools
18 that their children attend and receive
19 baby-sitting, car fare, if necessary, and
20 other services from TANF?

21 MR. BLUMBERG: Yes. Our goal
22 would be to tie that into what we call an
23 employment plan with them. Everybody has
24 to have an employment plan with us. They
25 also can volunteer. So we would try to

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2 tie that into an employment plan that
3 they're doing with us, activities focused
4 on getting people into permanent
5 full-time employment and off of public
6 assistance, and we can do that in a lot
7 of creative and flexible ways.

8 Some of our people already are
9 doing things like that and also employed
10 by the School District. Many work part
11 time there, some full time. So we
12 address when they're not employed there
13 during the summer, for example.

14 So there are a lot of creative
15 activities, and we would be willing to
16 discuss any initiative and further
17 collaborate with anything on that order,
18 including making it part of their
19 employment plan.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
21 you. That's exactly what we hoped you
22 would say.

23 MR. BLUMBERG: Okay.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
25 you very much. We'll stay in touch.

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2 Any questions?

3 (No response.)

4 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
5 you very much.

6 MR. BLUMBERG: Thank you for
7 the opportunity.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
9 you.

10 Commissioner Harvey Portner.

11 Many of you may know, I think
12 Harvey's like a brother to me. Many of
13 you know him from Professional Healthcare
14 Institute and Jean Bunn.

15 Gosh, Harvey, I don't know.
16 How long have we been working together?
17 I can't remember. Maybe we shouldn't
18 say.

19 MR. PORTNER: Longer than ten
20 years, Madam Chair, which doesn't date
21 you, but it ages me.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Why
23 thank you.

24 He's a Commissioner in
25 Montgomery County, as well as the head of

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2 Professional Healthcare Institute, and we
3 invite you to give your testimony and
4 introduce yourself to the record first.

5 MR. PORTNER: Thank you very
6 much. Let me introduce myself formally.
7 I am Harvey Portner, sometimes referred
8 to as Harry Potter, unfortunately. I
9 happen to be a Commissioner in Cheltenham
10 Township, Montgomery County. I'm also a
11 partner in the Professional Healthcare
12 Institute, and I also wear several other
13 hats which, for the record, I think are
14 important, because I have not issued a
15 missile to this Committee, Madam Chair,
16 but rather a general outline of the areas
17 that I personally feel are important.

18 I am the Chairman of the
19 Workforce Investment Board for Montgomery
20 County. I'm the President of the Board
21 of the Community Action Agency in
22 Montgomery County. And as most people
23 know, Community Action was initiated by
24 President Lyndon Johnson in 1964 with the
25 admonishment that this country had to

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2 eradicate poverty. And as Chair of the
3 Workforce Investment Board in Montgomery
4 County, we oversee CareerLink. We make
5 sure that people are employed.

6 And my appearance here today is
7 to, number one, congratulate the
8 Committee. This is very important. But
9 I would like to zero in on job training
10 for the unemployed, job training for
11 ex-offenders. I would also like to
12 address a very important piece of
13 legislation that inhibits and prohibits a
14 lot of the students that we service at
15 our school, and all of them come from the
16 shelters in the City of Philadelphia and
17 from Philadelphia housing.

18 One of the three courses that
19 we teach is certified nursing assistant,
20 and there is a piece of legislation under
21 Act 14 passed in 1997 by the State
22 legislature which indicates if an
23 individual coming for training in that
24 specific course has two misdemeanors or
25 one felony, they cannot participate and

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2 get training. And so I would urge this
3 Committee and I would urge the Council as
4 a whole to please indicate to the
5 legislators in Harrisburg that somehow
6 and some way we have to have a
7 grandfather clause.

8 I'll give you one example only.
9 We occasionally have grandmothers and
10 grandfathers coming in who apply to take
11 that training to become certified nursing
12 assistants, and 30 or 35 years ago when
13 they just reach the majority in terms of
14 being an adult, they committed an
15 offense, but in the intervening time
16 frame, they were free and clear.

17 They cannot take that course,
18 and the legislators have not been wise
19 enough to notice that many of those who
20 apply for that course who eventually can
21 go into nursing are not qualified under
22 that piece of legislation.

23 The unemployment piece that I'd
24 like to talk to you about today, Madam
25 Chair and Councilman Goode, involves the

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2 fact that in Montgomery County, the most
3 important thing is to get a job for a
4 single individual, and we do that through
5 CareerLink. Your CareerLink here,
6 Workforce Investment Board sometimes
7 referred to as PWDC, does an outstanding
8 job. My understanding is, they're short
9 of funding.

10 I'm not here to ask for funding
11 on their behalf, because the funding is
12 another source of aggravation to all of
13 us who are part of the Workforce
14 Investment Board program, but certainly
15 with adequate funding, they can do much
16 more than they've been doing, and it's
17 not their fault.

18 A single individual who needs a
19 job, who qualifies, should be given a
20 job, and there are jobs available. The
21 unemployment piece in what you're doing,
22 Madam Chair, is the most important part.
23 I'm front line, I'm in this every day,
24 and I can tell you point blank,
25 recidivism is part of the program, too.

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2 We're initiating now at our
3 school, Professional Healthcare
4 Institute, a program for ex-felons in the
5 automotive field, with the idea in mind
6 that if an ex-felon comes out, what
7 employer is going to employ them unless
8 they have some kind of background and
9 quality education, and therein lies the
10 problem and therein lies the problem with
11 recidivism.

12 Someone comes out. They serve
13 two or three years for theft of some
14 kind. They would like to get a job, earn
15 a living and perhaps feed the family that
16 they've come back to. No job is
17 available. Consequently, they go back to
18 the old way. This is unfortunate.

19 And so I appear before you
20 today with the understanding as a
21 front-line worker on a daily basis that
22 the unemployment aspect of what your
23 Committee is trying to do is perhaps the
24 number one priority. If you give people
25 jobs and an opportunity to earn a living,

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2 a matter of fact, our next series of
3 courses begins at the end of November,
4 and when I left the school today, we were
5 testing at least a dozen or more PHA
6 candidates. And I thank you for that
7 plug, Madam Chair.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
9 you. I know that you also offer courses
10 in medical billing, lead abatement in
11 addition to certified nurses assistant
12 and front desk for those who get jobs in
13 hotels.

14 MR. PORTNER: That is correct.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: And
16 the new area we've been discussing?

17 MR. PORTNER: The new area will
18 be automotive body, where we get
19 ex-felons in on a ten-week-course basis,
20 with the idea in mind that we will train
21 them and after the training, we will help
22 place them. And I might add in each one
23 of the courses that we train in, we
24 place, and we have a remarkable record of
25 placement, which is well over 85 percent.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
3 you. That's one of the issues I wanted
4 to make clear, that PHI, Professional
5 Healthcare Institute, agreed to take on
6 this challenge for doing car detailing,
7 towing, some repairs to allow
8 ex-offenders to have a hope so that they
9 can get out of prison and have job
10 training short term, eight to ten weeks,
11 and have a job on the other end.

12 So we've been working hard.
13 This is one of the reasons why we wanted
14 to have these hearings and why we wanted
15 to let people know, to document where it
16 is we're trying to go and what hope there
17 is and help there is for people in
18 trouble.

19 Commissioner, we thank you very
20 much. You've done a wonderful, wonderful
21 job.

22 MR. PORTNER: I thank you.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: You
24 have one of the highest records in the
25 State. We know that.

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2 MR. PORTNER: Thank you,
3 Councilwoman.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: And we
5 thank you. Thank you very much.

6 We want to call forward a
7 gentleman who has a "rest in peace" sign
8 here with us. Many of you see him around
9 the City. He's considered a candidate
10 for office next time, Mr. Tom Knox.

11 Thank you for coming. We
12 welcome you this morning. Unfortunately,
13 if those of you who are here could see it
14 more closely, you would see the many
15 names that are on this board that
16 Mr. Knox has been taking around the City,
17 those who have unfortunately lost their
18 lives in our City.

19 We thank you for coming and
20 certainly to deal with this very, very
21 important issue of violence in our City,
22 and ask you to identify yourself for the
23 record and, again, thank you for being
24 here.

25 MR. KNOX: Well, thank you,

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2 Mrs. Chairwoman. I appreciate the time
3 to be here. My name is Tom Knox. I am
4 the former CEO of the United Healthcare
5 of Pennsylvania and right now I'm in the
6 process of preparing to run for Mayor of
7 Philadelphia.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
9 you.

10 MR. KNOX: And I do have that
11 sign up there. I've listed all the
12 people that have died in the past two
13 years on it and the date that they've
14 died, and I think that people need to be
15 remembering these folks when they pass
16 some new legislation or come to the
17 conclusions of what they want to do here
18 in Philadelphia.

19 I want to talk to you today
20 about crime and how to abate it. I agree
21 with a lot of the people that have come
22 here before me on what they intend to do.
23 I believe that crime has -- there's two
24 parts to crime. I think there's some
25 long-term solutions and some short-term

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2 solutions.

3 I'd like to address first the
4 long-term solutions, and basically
5 there's three of them. Let me give them
6 to you in reverse order of importance.
7 One is, as has been pointed out, we need
8 to educate and train people that have
9 been incarcerated before they're
10 released, before early release. It's
11 important that these men and women and
12 sometimes children get an education
13 before they get released. They need to
14 be able to read and write, add and
15 subtract, apply for their GED and learn a
16 trade.

17 People with jobs don't shoot
18 people. So we need to get these people
19 acclimated back into the community. We
20 need to make sure that the State, the
21 City and, if possible, the federal
22 government gives them the ability to
23 work. Right now these people can't
24 become a barber or a hair dresser in
25 Pennsylvania. You can't even cut

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2 people's nails. We need to get those
3 laws changed so that these folks can get
4 acclimated into the community, they can
5 get good-paying jobs so that they can
6 support their families. Instead of
7 coming out of jail finding that there's
8 no employment, taking a gun and getting
9 readmitted, instead of doing that, let's
10 get them back to work and make them
11 productive citizen of our community.
12 They deserve that opportunity.

13 The second thing we need to do
14 is, we need to get our workforce trained
15 and educated. We used to have 380,000
16 manufacturing jobs in Philadelphia.
17 Today we have 31,000 manufacturing jobs.
18 Those people that had these previous jobs
19 need to get training. They need to get
20 educated on how to get jobs. They need
21 to get a clear career path. We have the
22 opportunity to do that.

23 I've talked to a number of
24 employers in Philadelphia, and they
25 outsource jobs to other parts of the

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2 country because they can't find qualified
3 people. They bring people in from the
4 four counties and from New Jersey because
5 they can't find qualified people in
6 Philadelphia.

7 The people in Philadelphia are
8 just as bright, just as qualified and
9 just as energetic as the people in our
10 surrounding communities. We just need to
11 get them retrained. We need to come up
12 with programs. Programs are available.

13 City of Philadelphia underfunds
14 Community College, which has these
15 programs available, underfunds it by over
16 50 percent. They're supposed to put in a
17 third. They put in 16 percent. The
18 State does the same thing. They're
19 supposed to put in 33 percent. They put
20 in 28 percent.

21 This puts the most vulnerable
22 part of our community at risk. Some
23 people think \$15 is a lot of money. We
24 need to make sure that we completely fund
25 Community College and get opportunities

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2 available for our workforce.

3 And last, but not least and
4 probably the most important, is our
5 children. You read in the newspaper that
6 45 percent of them don't graduate high
7 school, but in the underserved
8 neighborhoods, that number approaches 60
9 percent. We need to give these children,
10 these young adults, the opportunity to
11 stay in school. We need to give them
12 options. Some people don't see the light
13 at the end of the tunnel. They believe
14 that there's no hope for them and they
15 leave school.

16 Not everybody is college bound.
17 We know that, because 45 percent of the
18 kids are dropping out. Let's give them
19 the option -- only eight percent of them,
20 by the way, somewhere between eight and
21 nine percent of our kids have the
22 opportunity to have career training in
23 school. By "career training," the
24 opportunity to work in the sciences, work
25 in technology, work in the hospitals as

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2 an x-ray technician. There are hundreds
3 of jobs in hospitals that we can train
4 people for. Independence Blue Cross has
5 jobs over there that are outsourced. We
6 can train our young men and women and our
7 early releasees for these jobs.

8 We need to do a better effort.
9 We need to make opportunities available
10 for our kids in school. At least 50
11 percent of them should have the
12 opportunity to have career training.

13 Now, I said there were also
14 some short-term objectives. One that I
15 believe we need to do is get ourselves
16 into the 21st century. Right now we have
17 an organization called Town Watch, and
18 they do a great job. The problem is,
19 most people would like to help, but
20 they're not willing at 2 o'clock in the
21 morning to get in a car and drive around
22 neighborhoods, and some of them aren't
23 willing to even do it during the day,
24 because they're homebound. Wouldn't it
25 be nice if we could take up on the

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2 referendum that a majority of
3 Philadelphians approved last year of
4 putting observation cameras around the
5 City, especially near our schools, so
6 that a mother who wants to watch and see
7 that her child has a safe passage to
8 school can go on to the Internet, dial,
9 let's say, www.citywatch.com, plug in a
10 particular camera and watch her son or
11 daughter going to school in a safe
12 manner? I believe that observation can
13 help us. I believe that we can do the
14 same thing on our streets.

15 We need to revitalize our
16 neighborhoods. Frankford Avenue,
17 Germantown Avenue, Ridge Avenue, and
18 there's 50 other avenues that need to be
19 revitalized. You take a look and you
20 walk down these avenues, you see metal
21 grates in front of their windows. As
22 soon as they close the store, they put
23 locks on these metal grates so that you
24 can't see their merchandise.

25 We used to do the same thing in

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2 Center City on Chestnut Street. What we
3 do on Chestnut Street was, we got more
4 lighting, we got officers on the beat,
5 and people started taking the locks off,
6 started rolling up the grates, started
7 taking down the chain links, and now
8 Chestnut Street has been revitalized. We
9 can do the same thing for our
10 neighborhoods. One of the things we can
11 use is the surveillance system. It's
12 good for Philadelphia. Most
13 Philadelphians want it. The people that
14 don't want it are the people that are
15 going to create the problems. We need to
16 get the City into the 21st century.

17 Thank you for listening to me
18 today, Jannie. I appreciate your time
19 and I appreciate everybody else's. Thank
20 you.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
22 you very much. We appreciate your coming
23 here and realizing the importance of this
24 issue and the hearings and that we really
25 are trying to go to the next level, too,

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2 as you have on this large board "stop the
3 violence." So we're all connected.
4 We're all about the same agenda, and we
5 thank you very much for being here today,
6 Mr. Knox. Thank you very much.

7 MR. KNOX: Thank you.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Stan
9 Straughter, Chairman, Mayor's Commission
10 on African and Caribbean Immigrant
11 Affairs.

12 Let me say that working with
13 Mr. Straughter is a pleasure. I have not
14 met anyone in all my travels who does
15 more for the African and immigrant
16 community hands-on, takes care of
17 immigration issues, takes care of
18 business issues and is absolutely a
19 wonderful leader in our City.

20 Thank you for being here.
21 Please introduce yourself for the record
22 and thank you again.

23 MR. STRAUGHTER: Thank you very
24 much. My name is Stanley Straughter and
25 I have the honor and pleasure of serving

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2 as the Chairman of the Mayor's Commission
3 on African and Caribbean Immigrant
4 Affairs for the City of Philadelphia.
5 I'm also honored to serve as the Honorary
6 Consul for the Republic of Guinea for
7 Philadelphia and I serve on the Board of
8 Nationality Services Center in
9 Philadelphia. And all three of these
10 voluntary roles, I regularly meet with
11 representatives from the various
12 immigrant communities that live in our
13 City and, in particular, with the African
14 and Caribbean immigrants, refugees and
15 asylees living here.

16 I want to thank you, Council
17 Lady and also Councilman Wilson Goode,
18 Jr., for convening this hearing. I think
19 it's important for me to share with you
20 some of the concerns of the African and
21 Caribbean immigrant community.

22 I also want to take a second to
23 publicly thank you, Councilwoman
24 Blackwell, for your keen insight and
25 wisdom for joining with Mayor Street to

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2 create this Commission in 2005.

3 The Commission was created to
4 protect the rights of African and
5 Caribbean immigrants, refugees and
6 asylees that live in Philadelphia. The
7 Commission works with other organizations
8 and agencies to assure that barriers
9 caused by language and cultural
10 differences are eliminated, and to
11 promote public awareness of the benefits
12 of diversity in the City of Philadelphia.

13 And I also want to point out
14 that we have some very -- I'm fortunate
15 to have two upstanding members of the
16 Commission here with me today, the
17 esteemed and famous Dr. Ed Robinson, who
18 is a Commissioner you will hear from and
19 great educator, and also Tonic Garunda,
20 who is the Chairperson of the African and
21 Caribbean Business Council that was
22 formed out of it. I thank him and the
23 African and Caribbean business community
24 for supporting the Commission as well.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank

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2 you for being here. Welcome.

3 MR. STRAUGHTER: It is reported
4 that we have over 60,000 African and
5 Caribbean immigrants in Philadelphia, and
6 they have empowered me to thank you,
7 Council Lady Blackwell and the Mayor, for
8 establishing this Commission. They also
9 want to extend their sincere appreciation
10 to the Council Committee on Finance for
11 holding this important hearing this
12 morning.

13 Education for African and
14 Caribbean immigrant children is just as
15 important as it is to other parents and
16 citizens of this City. Immigrant
17 families arrive in Philadelphia believing
18 that by getting an education, their
19 children will get exposed to better
20 opportunities.

21 Many of the African and
22 Caribbean parents are forced to work two,
23 three jobs to take care of their families
24 and send their children to schools in
25 Philadelphia. So many African and

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2 Caribbean immigrant families think
3 sending their children to a safe and
4 wholesome learning environment is
5 important and critical to their core
6 beliefs, that by educating their
7 children, they are taking the path out of
8 poverty and towards economic freedom.

9 Historically, immigrants have
10 made a significant contribution to this
11 City and to the region, and in 2006, they
12 continue to do so. Some sections of our
13 City would be devoid of any economic
14 activity at all or retail establishments
15 if it were not for the immigrant
16 community.

17 In the most recent census, it
18 was reported that ten percent of
19 Philadelphia's population are immigrants.
20 There was a 31 percent increase in
21 immigrant populations in the entire
22 Philadelphia area during the 1990s.
23 Twenty-seven percent of those entered
24 Philadelphia between 1995 and 2000.

25 Nationally, Philadelphia is

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2 ranked as the 16th largest city in
3 immigrant populations. Philadelphia is
4 the first of the largest U.S. cities in
5 immigrants becoming naturalized.

6 Five neighborhoods in
7 Philadelphia have experienced an 83
8 percent growth in foreign-born in the
9 1990s, including south central parts of
10 the City, South Philadelphia, Elmwood,
11 the far Northeast, Olney and Oxford
12 Circle.

13 Many of these immigrants come
14 from China, India, Vietnam, Cambodia and
15 many, many African countries, Russia and
16 the Caribbean nations, Philippines, Latin
17 America as well. It's reported that if
18 it were not for immigrants moving into
19 our City during the last decade,
20 Philadelphia would have suffered a loss
21 of 100,000 people.

22 I share this information with
23 you because the contribution of
24 immigrants are often overlooked, but we
25 can also see in many sections of our City

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2 immigrant children are a significant part
3 of the population and, in particular, in
4 the school system.

5 I'm happy to report to this
6 audience that George Washington High
7 School for Boys' soccer team is in the
8 public league -- is a public league
9 defending champion with a record of 10
10 and 1 in the soccer league. The
11 Philadelphia Inquirer reports that only
12 four of the team's 24 members are
13 native-born Americans. The other team
14 members are from Liberia, Russia,
15 Columbia, Haiti, Nigeria, Albania, Brazil
16 and Kenya.

17 Also, this year, Bartram's
18 soccer team has a record of 12 and 0, is
19 in the top ten soccer teams in the
20 region. That team has 18 players, and of
21 those 18, 17 of them are from West Africa
22 and one is from Jamaica.

23 There are African soccer
24 players at other public schools,
25 including Lincoln and Fels and a number

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2 of others. These young boys, through
3 their exceptional soccer playing, are
4 uniting the students in their schools and
5 bringing a sense of pride to their
6 schools. They are actually leaders and
7 growing up in our community.

8 Unfortunately, these
9 foreign-born students are subjected to
10 random acts of verbal and physical
11 violence in the school system. In
12 October last year, you may remember that
13 a young boy from Guinea was brutally
14 attacked, stabbed with a knife. His
15 spine was severed, and this child will be
16 in a wheelchair the rest of his life.

17 In November of last year, you
18 may remember young Jacob Gray, a
19 13-year-old Liberian boy, who was
20 brutally attacked by a group of boys and
21 grown man on his way home from school.
22 This child was on the critical list for
23 many weeks.

24 Certainly the violence visited
25 upon African and Caribbean children in

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2 many instances stems from their either
3 speaking another language or maybe
4 because they speak English with an
5 accent. These children stand out because
6 they either speak funny or sound
7 different from their peers. In some
8 instances, it's reported that even
9 teachers make fun of these students. And
10 this is, of course, a shame, because
11 these teachers can set a bad example for
12 their students that are hearing and
13 listening to them.

14 One of the recommendations that
15 I would make is that we, for the
16 Philadelphia School District, consider
17 inviting many African and Caribbean
18 volunteers into the classrooms. This
19 would help give sensitivity training to
20 students and teachers and may help to
21 enlighten and educate our community to
22 the cultural practices of many
23 foreign-born students that go to our
24 schools.

25 The central point we have to

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2 deal with is that immigrants, African and
3 Caribbean immigrants in particular, are
4 an important growing part of our
5 population in this City. They are in the
6 school system and they will continue to
7 be here. If given an opportunity to get
8 a quality education in a safe
9 environment, they will continue to make
10 valuable contributions to our City in the
11 area of science, economic, business,
12 finance, information technology, and help
13 to keep our business and community
14 environment in what we now call the
15 global economy.

16 On behalf of the Mayor's
17 Commission on Caribbean and Immigrant
18 Affairs, I want to endorse Resolution
19 060708 and the call to all levels of
20 government to provide funding for
21 after-school and summer programs,
22 additional funding for job training
23 programs for students in schools and for
24 those boys and girls that drop out of
25 school early. Without this training and

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2 skills, our children will be forced to
3 work in low-skilled jobs, being paid
4 minimum wages, leading into a cycle of
5 poverty, crime and violence.

6 The private sector and
7 government and the School District should
8 join together to discuss what
9 Philadelphia will look like in maybe ten,
10 15 and 20 years from now. I am sure that
11 the data could tell us what types of
12 jobs, what skills we would need to fill
13 those jobs and what will be required for
14 Philadelphia and our region to continue
15 to be competitive in the global economy.

16 Armed with this data, the
17 government could offer tax credits, as
18 proposed in the resolution, to the
19 private sector to train our students and
20 young people in our communities to
21 prepare them for these jobs of the
22 future.

23 In closing, I want to make sure
24 that you understand that the School
25 District and the City have worked with

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2 the African and Caribbean community, and
3 we certainly appreciate that. Our
4 problem is, we need more help, more
5 training programs, more funding and more
6 cooperation and collaboration from our
7 leaders in the City. If educated and
8 trained, immigrant students as well as
9 other students can be the key to
10 competitiveness in the global economy for
11 our City.

12 I want to thank you for
13 allowing me to be here today and I want
14 to pledge that the cooperation of the
15 Mayor's Commission and the African
16 immigrant community will continue
17 throughout my tenure as Chairman.

18 Thank you, Madam Chair and
19 Councilman Goode.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
21 you very much. Again, let me say thank
22 you for all that you continue to do for
23 the Mayor's Commission on African and
24 Caribbean Immigrant Affairs in a hands-on
25 way. We have many legitimate issues that

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2 we have to discuss and work on always,
3 and thank you for your excellent,
4 committed leadership.

5 MR. STRAUGHTER: Thank you very
6 much.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
8 you.

9 Rick Young, Mantua Community
10 Improvement Committee.

11 Thank you for being here.

12 Thank you all. Please come forward.

13 In West Philadelphia, we have a
14 lot of exciting things. MCIC, the Mantua
15 Community Improvement Committee, is one
16 of them.

17 Thank you all for coming. No
18 wonder Jeff says I'm keeping you from
19 working. Thank you. We appreciate your
20 committed leadership. We'll have some
21 more comments. Please identify yourself
22 for the record and begin your testimony.

23 MR. YOUNG: I'd like to thank
24 members of City Council, especially
25 Honorable Jannie Blackwell, for allowing

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2 me to speak at such an important issue.

3 My name is Rick Young. I'm President of

4 Mantua Community Improvement Committee,

5 also referred to as MCIC. Beside me I

6 have Joe Blake, my Administrative

7 Director and Chief of Operation, and I

8 also have Board Member Tony McCoo, who is

9 our CPA, accounting, and John Fenton, who

10 is also a member of our Board and

11 Director of Operations for University

12 City District here. So I want thank them

13 for coming and for their support.

14 MCIC is a Neighborhood Special

15 Service District started in 2003 after a

16 conversation that I had with Councilwoman

17 Jannie Blackwell on how to improve the

18 quality of life in Mantua.

19 The conversation came in a

20 response to a number of requests from the

21 University City District asking for

22 support of their organization, despite

23 the fact that their services never made

24 it north of Spring Garden Street. So I

25 suggested to the Councilwoman that we

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2 start a similar service in our own
3 community of Mantua and we will employ
4 the people in the community, people
5 actually that come from Mantua.

6 On the subject of safety, I
7 think the Mayor's Safe Street program was
8 very successful in eliminating much of
9 the drug dealing in the communities.
10 Unfortunately, the little money left on
11 the street became so much more valuable
12 to that particular community. There has
13 yet to be an alternative in the form of
14 legitimate jobs to replace the money
15 which has made some people more -- let me
16 start over again.

17 There has yet to be an
18 alternative in the form of legitimate
19 jobs to replace the money which has made
20 some people more willing to risk
21 everything to get it. The results of
22 this can be seen in an increasing number
23 of homicides throughout the City.

24 Also, no one has encouraged
25 developers currently building in these

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2 communities to give back something in the
3 form of jobs. Instead, we hear the same
4 tired excuse about using only union
5 workers, which is almost impossible to
6 join or requires more resources than
7 anyone can afford who actually lives in
8 the community.

9 People between the ages of 17
10 and 26 have few options in terms of
11 making legitimate money, and despite the
12 belief that they don't want to work, the
13 few alternatives that used to exist in
14 recreation, including after-school
15 programs, sports, has almost disappeared
16 from communities like Mantua and other
17 urban communities.

18 MCIC is a Neighborhood Special
19 Service District that offers them an
20 option or at least an opportunity to
21 begin hiring some of what you could call
22 the toughest guys on the streets or some
23 of the thugs that other people will call,
24 which we now call some of the positive
25 influences in the community. By saying

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2 that, our goal was to hire some of the
3 people that used to be the negative
4 influence or which some of the younger
5 teenagers, 13 to 14, look up to, because
6 the street has role models as well. So
7 now those kids look at MCIC as a positive
8 thing, because these guys that sat here
9 on my right here influenced the youth in
10 the community, because just like sports
11 players have role models, well, so do
12 gang members and thugs and everybody
13 else. So now that they see those people
14 that they used to look up to as a
15 negative influence being a positive
16 influence, now we have no shorter than
17 five to ten people a day asking to work
18 for MCIC, which I think is a good thing.

19 Eight out of the ten people who
20 work for MCIC have some sort of
21 delinquent past, but everyone deserves a
22 second chance. If given the opportunity,
23 I believe that a person's life or the
24 course of their life can be different.
25 There's no guarantees, but without

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2 options or a continuous walk down the
3 same path, we think that at least if
4 you're given an opportunity or a chance
5 to prove that you deserve a second
6 chance, that you should be given a second
7 chance, because I think everyone in their
8 teenage years has some sort of delinquent
9 past, and we can't hold that against
10 everyone.

11 There should also be a
12 Neighborhood Special Service District in
13 every community next to every major
14 university. We're talking about Temple,
15 LaSalle, Drexel, the University of
16 Pennsylvania. And we should also force
17 developers to be more a part of the
18 programs that's going on to say that
19 there should be a Neighborhood Special
20 Services District or MCIC in every major
21 community, be it North Philly, South
22 Philly, any urban neighborhood where you
23 have these universities and these
24 developers coming in and taking advantage
25 of all the jobs and the environment of

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2 the urban community. Now, who do you
3 hold responsible for that? Do you hold
4 the developers responsible for not giving
5 back or do you hold City officials for
6 allowing developers to come in and take
7 advantage of communities?

8 I mean, we think that
9 communities are growing closer. We think
10 universities can play a major part in
11 establishing Neighborhood Special Service
12 Districts that employ people actually
13 from the community and not just people
14 coming out of jail. I think we need to
15 gear more towards people with the risk of
16 even going to jail. So we think that
17 that could be a very, very good thing for
18 communities.

19 And I don't think anyone wants
20 to be killed, shot or chased by police on
21 a daily basis, but, once again, living in
22 an environment where you see no other
23 alternatives and no one choose to hire
24 you because of your past, it leads you to
25 believe that nothing else is left to do.

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2 So we think that it could be a very
3 positive thing if more developers or City
4 officials made it more important that if
5 developers come in to build these \$20 and
6 \$30 million developments look back to
7 give back to the communities. Just like
8 it wasn't the City's responsibility to
9 come up with the idea of building this
10 \$20 or \$30 million development, it
11 shouldn't be the City's responsibility to
12 find out where the developers get the
13 money from.

14 I think that should be a part
15 of their plan when they come in on how
16 we're going to give back to the
17 community. I mean, the church asks you
18 to give back ten percent of your income.
19 Well, what percentage do we ask
20 developers for? Well, I think ten
21 percent is a good place to start. And
22 from there, I think we can solve a large
23 amount of this crime. Because you can
24 have as much -- you can have police, you
25 can hire more police, we could talk about

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2 as many programs as we want, but unless
3 the youth or the community people are
4 actually hired -- when I say "community
5 people," these guys that's targeted,
6 these 17, 18 to 20-year-old guys who have
7 never had a job before -- there is no
8 solution to it. There's no way that we
9 can solve this conflict, and signs like
10 this are going to continue to grow and
11 City crime is going to continue to grow
12 as well.

13 Success is not based on a
14 position in which we stand, but the
15 direction in which we look, and I think
16 the way City government and the legal
17 system has looked to solving problems
18 hasn't worked. So I think now we need to
19 start looking into a different direction
20 and coming up with new solutions to
21 actually find solutions for some of these
22 problems.

23 I want to thank you for giving
24 me the opportunity to bring my ideas and
25 my concerns to City Council on this

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2 issue. Thank you very much.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
4 you very much, and let me say that Mantua
5 Community Improvement Committee Special
6 Services District is an organization that
7 we kind of toughed up. Rick Young came
8 to us many years ago, said he was
9 committed to the community. He had young
10 men and women who needed a chance who
11 were committed to their community and
12 that he wouldn't go away, he would
13 continue to fight.

14 And if any of you know the
15 history of Mantua, you will know that it
16 was one of the most depressed areas in
17 our City, whether it be lead paint,
18 unemployment, infant mortality. And all
19 of that has changed, and much of that has
20 changed in a large part to MCIC, who keep
21 it clean, who keep it neat, who let
22 people know they care about their
23 community.

24 Rick Young hires, as he said,
25 young men and women from the community

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2 who otherwise would not have had a
3 chance, gives them a positive life-style
4 image and certainly does what he can, and
5 our neighborhood finally in our lifetime
6 is turning around. We commend you for
7 all that you do.

8 MR. YOUNG: We hold developers
9 responsible. We hold institutions like
10 Drexel University responsible, where
11 they're going further in the community
12 and it's becoming a smaller community in
13 reference to ethnic background, and we
14 think that they have a large
15 responsibility to keeping the community
16 clean and safe as well. I mean, I don't
17 think that anyone just wants to live --
18 if you have to live in University City
19 District to have a clean -- that has to
20 be clean just because it's University
21 City or you have to have safety only
22 because it's in University City. I think
23 any community, be it by Temple, be it by
24 LaSalle, University of Pennsylvania, St.
25 Joe's, communities are entitled to the

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2 same respect, and I think that with City
3 government having or putting their hand
4 down on it, letting them know that this
5 is one of the things that you have to
6 consider if you want our help to expand
7 and develop, that you have to establish
8 these kind of organizations, and I think
9 this will be a template or a role model
10 for the rest of the City.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
12 you. We agree.

13 We do want to thank Drexel
14 University. We thanked Penn yesterday.
15 We want to thank University City District
16 for the partnership and for understanding
17 that we are all part of the same
18 neighborhood, part of the same community,
19 and when we partner together, it improves
20 the quality of life for us all. So we
21 thank them for their investment and we
22 thank you for your plan of vision to
23 carry it out and to initiate it. Thank
24 you very much.

25 MR. YOUNG: Thank you.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: John
3 Fenton, Senior Director of Operations,
4 University City District.

5 John is a brother. We thank
6 him as well and thank him for certainly
7 investing in MCIC and in our community.
8 But John is part of our extended family,
9 and University City District is loved
10 because of him and his commitment. Thank
11 you.

12 MR. FENTON: Thank you,
13 Councilwoman Blackwell.

14 Before we start testifying, I
15 would like to introduce two of my
16 employees. This is Kevin Norris. He's a
17 lead employee in the Public Space
18 Maintenance program and he's also the
19 Anti-Graffiti Network personal in
20 University City District. He takes down
21 all the posters and graffiti.

22 And this is Christopher
23 Andrews. He's working with us from a
24 program that we started with Ready,
25 Willing and Able. I'll talk about that a

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2 little bit more in the testimony.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
4 you.

5 MR. FENTON: Good morning,
6 Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell and
7 distinguished members of the Finance
8 Committee. Thank you, Councilwoman
9 Blackwell, for inviting me to speak to
10 the City Council Committee for the Call
11 to Action on reducing violence in the
12 City. My name is John Fenton and I am
13 the Senior Director of Operations for
14 University City District, the Special
15 Service District in West Philadelphia.

16 An independent, not-for-profit
17 organization, University City District
18 was established in 1997 to improve the
19 quality of life in a 2.2 square mile area
20 of West Philadelphia. We provide
21 supplemental cleaning, safety, marketing,
22 planning and neighborhood initiatives
23 such as pedestrian lighting and facade
24 improvements. University City District's
25 mission is to build effective

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2 partnerships, to maintain a clean and
3 safe environment, and to promote, plan
4 and advocate for University City's
5 diverse urban community.

6 UCD has a Philadelphia Police
7 substation connected to our office at
8 3940 Chestnut Street. Lieutenant Jason
9 Smith, the commanding officer, leads the
10 substation with two sergeants and 25
11 police officers. Those officers conduct
12 joint roll calls with our UCD safety
13 ambassadors to coordinate our efforts in
14 public safety. UCD safety ambassadors
15 act as extra eyes and ears on the street
16 for the City police officers, the
17 University of Pennsylvania police and
18 Drexel Public Safety operations.

19 I'm here representing
20 University City District and I am pleased
21 to provide testimony on reducing violence
22 in the City. I will outline a few of the
23 initiatives we have utilized aimed at
24 reducing violence in our district.

25 UCD is part of a group to

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2 replace cobra-head streetlights with the
3 new brown rounds that illuminate 25
4 percent brighter from 30th to 43rd Street
5 from Market to Baltimore Avenue. The
6 project partners in this are the
7 University of Pennsylvania, Drexel
8 University, University of the Sciences in
9 Philadelphia, the Philadelphia Streets
10 Department and the Science Center.

11 This past February, our
12 Executive Director, Lewis Wendell, made a
13 presentation to the Education Committee
14 and he gave a brief overview of some of
15 the things that the University City
16 District was doing to combat school
17 violence. One of the things he talked
18 about was creating a summer jobs program,
19 which UCD initiated this year in
20 collaboration with the Greater
21 Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition and
22 with funding from the Philadelphia Youth
23 Network and University City District.

24 Eleven jobs were created, and
25 ten high school juniors and seniors from

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2 low-income families in Philadelphia were
3 introduced to the workforce. For most of
4 them, it was their first job. Nine out
5 of the ten stayed with the program for
6 the eight weeks of work, helping the
7 University City District's Public Space
8 Maintenance Program. We want to expand
9 this program for next year, provided that
10 additional funding can be found.

11 UCD is working to find
12 employment for the homeless and is
13 collaborating with Ready, Willing and
14 Able and SELF, Incorporated. So far I
15 have instituted a program with our
16 security contractor, Allied Security, to
17 provide employment opportunities for
18 graduates of Ready, Willing and Able.
19 Allied-Barton Security will hire two
20 graduates from their program for a
21 six-month period of time at the end,
22 which the graduate employee's performance
23 will be evaluated. If found
24 satisfactory, they will be hired as
25 permanent employees and moved on to

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2 different Allied-Barton Security
3 accounts. And another two graduates will
4 then be hired at UCD for a six-month
5 evaluation period and so on.

6 We are also working with the
7 neighbors in the Kingsessing section to
8 assess the viability of hiring SELF,
9 Incorporated Outley House to clean from
10 49th to 53rd Street from Chester Avenue
11 to Woodland Avenue. This will depend on
12 financial support.

13 I'm on the homeless outreach
14 committee for the City of Philadelphia
15 and am a participant in the City's
16 ten-year plan to end homelessness. The
17 UCD safety ambassadors also provide
18 homeless outreach services. We transport
19 approximately 400 homeless people a year
20 to various shelters and hospitals in the
21 City.

22 UCD is currently working with
23 the University of Pennsylvania, USP,
24 Drexel University and the Philadelphia
25 Police Department in exploring ways

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2 ex-offenders released from incarceration
3 can be assisted in reentering the
4 community in constructive ways.

5 UCD has hired ex-offenders into
6 our public space maintenance program and
7 has experienced success with this
8 practice.

9 In addition, UCD participates
10 in Community Court. Since February 2002,
11 extra hands have been helping to clean
12 and beautify University City's sidewalks
13 and vacant lots, these people who have
14 been sentenced to perform community
15 service by the Philadelphia Community
16 Court. If a person is caught committing
17 certain minor crimes within this area,
18 he/she may be brought to Community Court
19 and sentenced to community service in the
20 area.

21 Community service members'
22 assignments include helping to plant
23 trees, graffiti removal, watering plants
24 and assisting with community gardens in
25 West Philadelphia. This is in addition

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2 to the social service assistance offered
3 to these individuals by Community Court,
4 such as health screening, mental health
5 assistance and drug and alcohol
6 rehabilitation referrals.

7 There is a discussion about
8 expanding the program to include night
9 court so that more people can participate
10 in this program, and we support that
11 initiative.

12 UCD has provided funding for
13 the Mural Arts Program, most recently the
14 Philadelphia Zoo on 34th Street Bridge
15 that involved a number of local youths
16 from Mantua who helped with painting.

17 UCD works very closely with UC
18 Green, Philadelphia Green, the
19 Pennsylvania Horticulture Society and
20 Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell's office
21 and has helped to plant over 600 trees
22 throughout West Philadelphia, maintain
23 traffic triangles, care for parks and
24 trim trees in West Philadelphia.

25 University City District and

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2 the University of Pennsylvania have
3 worked with Councilwoman Jannie
4 Blackwell's office to provide
5 supplemental cleaning services at Malcolm
6 X Park and Clark Park. These parks are
7 the most used in West Philadelphia, and
8 the supplemental cleaning program will be
9 for 12 months of the year. We believe
10 this enhances the quality of life in West
11 Philadelphia and helps to reinforce a
12 community atmosphere.

13 UCD subcontracts with the
14 Mantua Community Improvement Committee, a
15 group dedicated to improving Mantua and
16 which prides itself on helping local
17 youth from the Mantua community find
18 productive work. Rick Young has been an
19 inspirational driving force behind
20 helping people, changing behaviors and
21 providing job opportunities for people in
22 the Mantua.

23 UCD has provided funding for an
24 after-school football program, the
25 Hurricanes Youth Program located at 49th

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2 and Chestnut.

3 UCD welcomes any programs to
4 provide additional funding for summer and
5 after-school employment programs, reentry
6 job training and assistance programs for
7 ex-offenders and the homeless.

8 And that's part of my
9 testimony, and what I would like to say
10 is, on my right-hand side is Kevin
11 Norris, who is an ex-offender and has
12 been a model employee from the inception
13 of UCD and is now a lead person in our
14 organization. And Christopher Andrews is
15 in a pilot program from Ready, Willing
16 and Able so we can help get homeless
17 people back to work.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I tell
19 you, Mr. Fenton, I wonder why I didn't
20 know all that you did, and I don't know
21 how you do all that you do and know it.
22 Whenever we call you, you'll say, We can
23 handle that or We'll take care of it, and
24 you make it all seem easy, but I see here
25 it is because you are involved in

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2 everything.

3 But what you do to try to
4 assist the community -- and certainly I
5 see Kevin all the time. I mean, I see
6 him all the time. We are so grateful and
7 appreciative of all that you do over and
8 beyond the call of duty. If they knew
9 how many things we call you for and you
10 say you'll take care of them, we know you
11 don't have to do those things and aren't
12 required to do them, but we ask John
13 Fenton to do anything we can think of.
14 Everybody in my office says, I'll call
15 John. And he's never said no.

16 You've never said no. You've
17 been an invaluable partner in this. And
18 so much of the -- piece isn't the right
19 word. So much of the cooperative
20 environment that we enjoy with the
21 University is because of you and your
22 team, and we thank you very much. We
23 love you and thank you.

24 MR. FENTON: Thank you very
25 much. Thank you.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
3 you very much.

4 Cindy Preston. And then I know
5 Micro Society has to catch a plane.
6 We'll get you next.

7 Cindy Preston, Squirrel Hill
8 Substation.

9 And Cindy Preston, as she's
10 coming forward, on Halloween last year
11 they did, I don't know, 1,500 kids came
12 for Halloween Haunted House Night, and
13 she does an excellent job with Town
14 Watch, the Squirrel Hill Substation.
15 Halloween is her signature event to help
16 kids in her community. She does
17 everything. She's a committee person,
18 Town Watch leader, block captain, you
19 name it. Cindy Preston is that person.

20 Thank you for coming, Cindy.

21 MS. PRESTON: Thank you,
22 Councilwoman Blackwell, and hello, Wilson
23 Goode.

24 I wanted to make it known we
25 are operating out in my area with a City

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2 repeater; that is, a chat line. You can
3 only hear each other or whoever else may
4 be on the radio. At this point, it is
5 very dangerous. I'm steady training
6 people, but not to patrol, because the
7 police officers at this point aren't
8 safe. Our life is really on the line.

9 I want to say that really the
10 solutions, I can't find any. I've tried
11 them all. I'm at my last resort where I
12 started sit-ins Monday, Wednesday and
13 Friday nights from 8:00 at night until
14 12:30, 1:00 in the morning to try to
15 deter a lot of the suspects and
16 criminals.

17 Now I'm a little perturbed
18 about it because an individual of an
19 organization got a hold of the
20 information, sent it on e-mail to 21
21 several different people, and now I was
22 exposed to what I was doing, how I was
23 doing it and when I was doing it. So it
24 sends me a message I see why a lot of
25 people do have fear in participating in

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2 regard to crime.

3 I was awarded three officers in
4 1994 from Cops Ahead program. In return,
5 I did a fundraiser. I raised \$6,300 in
6 two months to put the first bike officers
7 on bikes in West Philadelphia, which we
8 had none. I have no businesses in my
9 area. The money came from the neighbors.
10 Some gave \$5, \$10, \$15 to make a
11 difference.

12 When I look, I notice there's
13 changes a lot, and you have to move with
14 change, but when I find that you bring in
15 another identity as UCD District, which
16 is part of the 18th and part of the 16th,
17 take and utilize the bike patrol guys
18 that are left for Drexel's detail, I feel
19 as though Drexel, University of Penn has
20 enough money to do whatever they need to
21 do as far as crime and any other programs
22 need to be. These people in the
23 community, you cannot deprive them of
24 something that they earned and paid for
25 to protect their community. A priority

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2 is one thing, but continuously I cannot
3 accept.

4 A bike training should be held
5 at least once in three months. An
6 officer leaves, then you would have
7 another officer in place, because they do
8 escalate. They get promoted. They go to
9 corporal, sergeant, lieutenant, captain.
10 But in the meantime, if no one is
11 trained, this is equipment that the
12 community has paid for that's sitting
13 idle and is of no use. So what was the
14 purpose? They always told me the bikes
15 made a big difference when they were out
16 here.

17 I did the first three bikes,
18 the Farmers Market did the following two,
19 and our Police Advisory Board took on the
20 next phase of bikes.

21 We have two bike officers as I
22 speak right now. I am in the street
23 Monday to Sunday, day and night. My
24 whole community can tell you who I am.
25 People are reaching out for me at Cobbs

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2 Creek, 58th Street, but I can't take care
3 of the world.

4 I have another issue I would
5 like to say. We don't even have a
6 representative on the Town Watch Advisory
7 Board, and you're entitled to two. I
8 would like that answer addressed. I want
9 to know why, because someone should be
10 there at least for the 18th Police
11 District. We're southwest.

12 I have another suggestion about
13 youth solutions, because children is very
14 dear to my heart and seniors. I listen
15 to the radio constantly. I attend a lot
16 of meetings. And I know when I was a
17 kid -- we always kids. Drop boxes came
18 in mind to me. If you were to put a box
19 in a school and a kid was seen putting
20 that envelope in that box and four weeks
21 later a person was arrested, that kid
22 would be targeted because somebody saw
23 him. My suggestion is the mailboxes.
24 Mailboxes are scattered all over the
25 City. If they want to form a panel, this

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2 panel of volunteers that want to
3 participate. Say, for instance, here's
4 an envelope in the mailbox and it says
5 "police." All of those envelopes go into
6 a bin. Twice a week someone or two
7 volunteers will go to the bin, remove
8 them, take the time that they sit there,
9 separate to what police district they go
10 to, feed that information to that
11 commanding officer, CROs and special
12 victims. The kids would not be put at
13 risk, because they can put in any mailbox
14 they want anywhere in the City and we
15 would get the information.

16 I'm looking if it can't go to
17 the post office, I look at the libraries.
18 Anywhere there is a common place and a
19 safe place for a child to drop this
20 envelope. Even adults, because they're
21 in fear, and I know they're in fear. And
22 just like I said previously, I'm just not
23 a person that's afraid of anything or
24 anybody, but if I was in the position to
25 fear that e-mail, for example, that was

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2 put across to everybody, I wouldn't be
3 sitting here right now. But I don't have
4 no fear and I don't care, because what I
5 do I do from my heart and I'm going to
6 continue doing that, and I thank you.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
8 you very much.

9 MS. PRESTON: Is there any
10 questions?

11 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
12 you very much. We appreciate all that
13 you do. We'll take your suggestions to
14 heart and deal with the other issues you
15 mentioned here today.

16 Micro Society, then
17 Mr. Stephens for Representative Thomas
18 and then Dr. Robinson.

19 Thank you very much. We're
20 trying not to hold you very long. We see
21 our Jane Golden there. We'll get you
22 shortly. You know we love you and all
23 you do.

24 Thank you very much. We hope
25 we didn't hold you too long. I know you

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2 have a plane to catch. Let me ask you to
3 identify yourself for the record and
4 begin your testimony.

5 MR. PIERCE: Thank you,
6 Councilwoman. My name is Keith Pierce.
7 I'm the Senior Vice-President from Micro
8 Society, and sitting with me is CEO and
9 President of Micro Society, Carolyn King
10 Richmond.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:
12 Welcome.

13 MS. RICHMOND: Good morning,
14 Councilwoman Blackwell and Councilman
15 Goode. Thank you for having us and for
16 holding these hearings.

17 Micro Society is an
18 organization based in Old City. We have
19 a proven track record of turning around
20 the lives of children for over 15 years
21 in 250 sites and over 40 states in the
22 country. We've been this successful
23 because we believe that looking at
24 children to help solve the solutions of
25 children is the way to go. So I applaud

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2 several of the speakers that I am
3 privileged to listen to, particularly
4 Rick Young from MCIC and the notion of
5 engaging the youth in the answers.

6 Micro Society is based on the
7 philosophy that if children are engaged
8 in the process of addressing some of the
9 problems they face, then they can turn
10 their own lives around, and they do this
11 by building a miniature society inside
12 schools and in after-school sites, but
13 Mr. Pierce will explain that momentarily.

14 I just want to comment on an
15 article that appeared in the Philadelphia
16 Inquirer on October the 19th. Just to
17 quote a few of the -- to actually go to
18 the source of where the problem is,
19 quoting a few of the children in this
20 article. One child said, I was just
21 bored in school. Another was talking
22 about he thought school was a waste of
23 time, and another says, I want to be
24 somebody and do something. And
25 addressing those goals of children is

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2 what Micro Society is all about.

3 I'll turn it over to Keith.

4 MR. PIERCE: At one time, West
5 Middle School in Sioux City, Iowa had as
6 many as 17 gangs, and now they have none.
7 This was attributed to the success of an
8 anti-gang program and Micro Society
9 created at the school. That's a quote
10 from Senator and former First Lady
11 Hillary Rodham Clinton.

12 A student's decision to engage
13 in acts of violence is often the end
14 result of a long series of negative
15 school experiences, academic failure,
16 grade retention, frequent suspensions,
17 and they begin often well before ninth
18 grade. Violence and dropout prevention
19 strategies, therefore, must be targeted
20 at the elementary and middle school
21 grades and before the stresses of a
22 complex curriculum, a less personal
23 environment and the growing need for peer
24 acceptance poses danger to already
25 disadvantaged students.

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2 To pull Philadelphia out of the
3 cycle of violence that it's in today, we
4 must start early. After-school
5 destinations must exist to offer kids of
6 diverse backgrounds and diverse interests
7 meaningful activities that motivate them
8 to make positive choices, while also
9 enhancing their academic performance and
10 restoring hope in their communities that
11 have been broken by violence.

12 Micro Society After School, one
13 of the programs of Micro Society, has the
14 potential to do just that for
15 Philadelphia. It addresses things like
16 after-school violence, dropout
17 prevention, life skills and civic
18 engagement. In a Micro Society, students
19 learn the value of integrity, the
20 importance of making ethical decisions,
21 the significance of having a caring and
22 non-violent attitude about life. And its
23 students also learn to take ownership of
24 their own learning, their own choices and
25 their own future.

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2 Having a significant number of
3 after-school programs, Micro after-school
4 programs in Philadelphia, would increase
5 student motivation, would produce
6 noticeable eagerness on the part of
7 students to make better choices. It
8 would increase parent and community
9 involvement. It would raise student
10 achievement and would boost children's
11 self-esteem.

12 There are a number of
13 reasons -- and I won't quote them because
14 we all know them. There are a number of
15 reasons why urban violence is so much
16 higher in the urban areas than suburban
17 areas, but one of the differences is
18 clear and it was said best by the
19 Executive Director of Education Trust,
20 Kati Haycock, when she said, We take kids
21 who have less to begin with and we give
22 them less in school. And I take that
23 further and say that we not only give
24 them less, but we take things away. We
25 cut programs. We cut funding, and then

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2 we act surprised when we get the results
3 we get.

4 And Micro Society right now is
5 just poised to do something great for
6 Philadelphia, and we're pleased to offer
7 this opportunity for putting Micro
8 Society after-school programs in
9 Philadelphia and to create safe havens
10 during the after-school hours, the most
11 vulnerable hours for children, and to
12 generate opportunities for creativity and
13 responsibility that develop students in
14 several areas that are not fully
15 addressed during the school day, such as
16 character building, career preparation
17 and financial literacy.

18 So an investment in after
19 school in Philadelphia is an investment
20 in the communities of Philadelphia. More
21 importantly, it's an investment in
22 children. Philadelphia must fund
23 programs that work. Micro Society works,
24 and it restores hope in our children and
25 our families and our communities, and

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2 they all deserve it, and our future
3 depends on it.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
5 you very much. As you know, I'm well
6 affiliated with the Micro Society, and I
7 thank you, because having programs to
8 engage young people and help create
9 leaders, which is what you do, and help
10 them know who they are and what their
11 contributions can be is absolutely vital.

12 We thank you for all that you
13 do and for your commitment to the young
14 people in our City and beyond. Thank
15 you.

16 MR. PIERCE: We do thank you
17 for this opportunity. We thank you also
18 for your commitment to us.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
20 you. Certainly.

21 Mr. Stephens. Seitu Stephens
22 for State Representative Curtis Thomas,
23 and then, Dr. Robinson, we'll call you
24 up. Forgive me for holding you.

25 Welcome. Thank you,

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2 Mr. Stephens, for staying so long this
3 morning, and please thank the
4 Representative for his commitment to this
5 issue. I've been to many meetings with
6 him and know of his commitment to this
7 area.

8 Thank you. Micro Society, this
9 is very lovely. Thank you.

10 Mr. Stephens, please identify
11 yourself for the record and make your
12 statement. Thank you.

13 MR. STEPHENS: My name is Seitu
14 I. Stephens. I'm the District Office
15 Coordinator for the Office of State
16 Representative W. Curtis Thomas.

17 First and foremost, thank you,
18 Madam Chair Councilwoman Blackwell, for
19 your visionary leadership. Thank you for
20 taking the initiative in developing this
21 resolution initiating a hearing for a
22 Call to Action to stop violence.

23 I want to thank participating
24 City Councilmembers and other elected
25 officials for standing by this resolution

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2 and supporting it. To all participants
3 of this hearing, thank you for taking
4 time off your busy schedules to address
5 in unity the issues of violence and
6 solutions to overcoming the grip it has
7 taken on our beloved city.

8 Violence in the City of
9 Philadelphia is a complicated social
10 issue. Although the criminal component
11 of violence is inherent in nature, there
12 are other components of violence that
13 need to be adequately addressed. State
14 Representative W. Curtis Thomas supports
15 a multi-disciplinarian approach along
16 with strategic policing strategies to
17 create the social reform necessary to
18 stem epidemic violence.

19 In regards to behavioral health
20 and social services, often acts of
21 violence are manifestations of
22 deep-rooted psychological issues. City,
23 State and federal funding are needed to
24 develop a cadre of behavioral health
25 specialists and psychologists to identify

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2 citizens who are at risk of committing
3 violent crimes. Voluntary therapy and
4 counseling should be administered to
5 these citizens to make sure they are
6 dealing with any psychological issues
7 they may have in a healthy and safe
8 manner.

9 Every ex-offender who is
10 released back into society needs to have
11 a full psychological evaluation to
12 determine their mental status.
13 Incarceration can be extremely mentally
14 damaging, especially when there is a lack
15 of therapeutic services for offenders to
16 benefit from during their incarceration.
17 Halfway houses should be equipped with
18 residential psychologists and behavior
19 therapists to monitor the emotional and
20 psychological state of recently paroled
21 ex-offenders.

22 In regard to extended hours of
23 operation for schools and recreational
24 facilities, every public school in the
25 City of Philadelphia should be equipped

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2 with a beacon program, not just for the
3 children who attend but for the community
4 that surrounds it. Keeping all schools
5 open during evening hours allows working
6 parents to have their children monitored
7 in a safe and sound environment.
8 Additionally, schools should be opened to
9 community organizations for meetings,
10 activities and events at a nominal charge
11 to encourage greater community
12 participation.

13 The school counselor model we
14 currently use is outdated and antiquated
15 when you look at the problems of children
16 today. Every middle school and high
17 school should have a staff of behavioral
18 therapists to monitor students who are at
19 risk for violent behavior. All high
20 schools should house no more than 400 to
21 800 students. All schools should adopt a
22 small learning community model.

23 Public schools need to utilize
24 enforceable contracts that require
25 parents to actively participate in their

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2 child's learning experience. The
3 parent-school contract should have
4 emphasis on the parents' role in staying
5 on top of their child's attendance,
6 school performance and their attendance
7 at PTA and home association meetings.

8 Recreational facilities in
9 North Philadelphia and certainly
10 throughout the City are ill equipped to
11 handle the recreational needs of the
12 present generation of children. All
13 outdated box-type recreational facilities
14 throughout the City need to be demolished
15 and replaced with 21st century facilities
16 that are equipped to service their
17 respective communities. Newly built
18 community centers must be able to offer
19 21st century job skills training
20 sensitive to local and global economic
21 trends.

22 Staffing for these community
23 centers should consist of members
24 directly from the community. An effort
25 should be made by all levels of

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2 government to extend TANF benefits to
3 qualifying staff who work in recreational
4 community centers and schools.
5 Additionally, community centers need to
6 be stocked with in-house behavioral
7 therapist, social workers and educational
8 personnel to handle the social needs of
9 the community.

10 In regard to employment
11 opportunities, State Representative W.
12 Curtis Thomas is confident that
13 Pennsylvania and, more specifically, the
14 City of Philadelphia can compete globally
15 in the service and manufacturing
16 industries. The City of Philadelphia
17 should aggressively seek employment
18 opportunities for jobs that are
19 continuously being outsourced to other
20 countries. Establishing manufacturing
21 jobs that pay above minimum wage and
22 offer healthcare coverage is an
23 innovative way for the City of
24 Philadelphia to tap into the global
25 manufacturing industry.

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2 All levels of government must
3 support efforts to provide meaningful
4 jobs for youth age 17 through 26, the
5 largest group of violent offenders. They
6 must be provided with more than seasonal
7 employment. The focus should be on long
8 term. Additionally, the City of
9 Philadelphia should aggressively prepare
10 their youth for the future by training
11 them for the next generation of
12 vocational jobs, such as fiber optics
13 maintenance, geo-spatial engineering and
14 digital telemarketing interface.
15 Securing relevant jobs for the future
16 workers of Philadelphia will ensure that
17 unemployment and violent crime rates are
18 kept low.

19 Laws that create unnecessary
20 and arbitrary roadblocks for employment
21 for ex-offenders must be repealed. Until
22 such repressive laws are eradicated,
23 City, State and federal jobs specifically
24 for ex-offenders must be created.
25 Federal expansion of tax credits for

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2 employing ex-offenders is greatly needed
3 to help secure employment opportunities
4 for reintegrating ex-offenders that will
5 help reduce recidivism and violent
6 crimes.

7 In conclusion, State
8 Representative Curtis Thomas offers a
9 solution called strategic counter
10 imaging. Currently, the image of black
11 males as gangsters and thugs and young
12 black females as degrading sexual objects
13 help cultivate a culture lacking of
14 values and sensibility. A positive
15 counter-image campaign of young black
16 males and females is critical to help
17 stem the present negative perception of
18 black youth. Creating a counter-image
19 campaign will help neutralize the
20 negative images that young black children
21 are readily exposed to, either via their
22 neighborhoods or televisions.

23 A counter-image campaign is
24 critically needed for young black males.
25 The African-American male is being

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2 thoroughly exploited by a global drug
3 trade economy. The City of Philadelphia
4 must realize that it is competing against
5 a trillion-dollar-a-year industry for one
6 of its greatest resources, young black
7 males. Perceiving young black men as
8 valuable resources and not as social
9 burdens is the first step to eradicating
10 violence within the City. Positive
11 counter images can help weaken the
12 pervasive stereotypical image of young
13 black males held in today's society.

14 Counter imaging can also be
15 done in various ways, public service
16 campaign ads, recruitment of retired
17 black male professionals to teach in
18 public schools, increasing the level of
19 black male elementary school teachers and
20 graciously funding organizations that
21 offer rights of passage programs for
22 urban adolescents.

23 Once again, Honorable
24 Councilwoman Blackwell and elected
25 officials, on behalf of State

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2 Representative W. Curtis Thomas and the
3 181st Legislative District, I thank you
4 for this opportunity to offer testimony.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
6 you very much. We appreciate your
7 patience. Certainly we agree. You
8 mentioned ex-offenders having
9 psychological evaluations. You mean
10 while they're in prison? In other words,
11 I think it's something we can work on,
12 because we have so many issues with not
13 only ex-offenders but youngsters getting
14 into behavior-altering drugs. The whole
15 issue of how we deal -- right now in
16 public schools, I agree and Paul Vallas
17 does with the size of schools, but right
18 now in schools, you don't have counselors
19 who are available every day. I mean, our
20 old problem used to be that they would
21 tell, especially African-Americans, you
22 can't succeed and you should try to get a
23 vocational job. Now you don't even have
24 them to negatively impress young people.
25 But nurses and counselors are hard to

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2 have -- they're shared and they could
3 have three or four schools in a week. So
4 that's a real issue.

5 But certainly I'm happy to talk
6 about the issue and how you and the
7 Representative feel about psychological
8 evaluations for ex-offenders and how we
9 use the information and how we use it to
10 help them and how it is disseminated
11 certainly throughout the City where
12 they're trying to find their rightful
13 place and get employment.

14 We thank you very much and look
15 forward to working with you on the issues
16 you mentioned and others, and thank the
17 Representative as well.

18 MR. STEPHENS: Thank you, Madam
19 Chair.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
21 you.

22 Dr. Robinson.

23 Many of you know that his
24 nephew was the Honorable State
25 Representative David P. Richardson and he

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2 was Dave's mentor, and certainly I've
3 known Dr. Robinson my entire political
4 life.

5 Many of you know that he has
6 also written a curriculum for African
7 history in our public schools, and years
8 ago when we had the black history in
9 schools, he wrote that curriculum as well
10 under Dr. Clayton. So he's been a
11 leader.

12 And I'll never forget, one time
13 I heard him on radio and somebody -- or
14 maybe it wasn't. Maybe it was in a
15 meeting. I can't remember. It's been so
16 long. But somebody asked him about his
17 contribution to making a change in our
18 society, and he talked about the Songhai
19 Village and talked about all the things
20 he does and then said, That's my
21 contribution, what's yours?

22 So he's that kind of person.
23 This is what I think we should be doing.
24 What are you doing? You can't just
25 complain. That's easy. But what is your

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2 contribution to improving life for people
3 everywhere? And so I'm always impressed
4 whenever I see him.

5 It's always a gift to me and a
6 blessing, and we thank you, Dr. Robinson,
7 and welcome.

8 DR. ROBINSON: Thank you.
9 Council Lady Blackwell, do you have my
10 written --

11 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Yes.

12 DR. ROBINSON: Okay. It did
13 come through the fax? I was trying to
14 make sure that you got it yesterday.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: We
16 have it and we've made copies for our
17 Committee.

18 DR. ROBINSON: Very good.

19 I know the hour is late and I
20 want to say briefly that I'm representing
21 in my first part of two parts of my
22 presentation, I'm representing Mr. Sultan
23 Ahmad. You know him. And my first part
24 has to deal with what he has worked with
25 the late Rotan Lee in getting together to

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2 deal with violence.

3 Briefly, we want to say that he
4 wants the initiative of moving 25,000
5 youths into the workforce in full-time,
6 part-time, after-school and weekend jobs
7 in the public, corporate, private, civic
8 and community sectors.

9 He wants public safety, such as
10 after-school programs, Town Watch,
11 neighborhood police patrol, witness
12 protection; full funding of all
13 recreation facilities and staff Citywide;
14 infusion of grants and loans for
15 stock-on-the-shelf programs into economic
16 development business opportunities in the
17 neighborhood commercial corridors;
18 creation of a long-term dedicated funding
19 stream for community-based organizations
20 based on their scope of services.

21 Now, the projected results of
22 what he is saying should be our
23 initiative to stop the violence. In a
24 four-year period, there would be more
25 than 100,000 youths employed. In a

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2 four-year period through public safety
3 initiatives, there would be a major
4 reduction in homicides. In a four-year
5 period, we would create numerous safe
6 havens and educational/recreational
7 facilities. In a four-year period, we
8 would restore many of the small
9 businesses back into inner city
10 neighborhoods with an infusion of new
11 dollars.

12 Then he thought that we should
13 provide a thousand youths with tuition
14 being paid in a college/university in the
15 City of Philadelphia, with a commitment
16 to do an internship with a
17 community-based organization.

18 Now, the above are the
19 initiatives projected by my partner, and
20 we're working together on another big
21 program, whose name is Mr. Sultan Ahmad.

22 Now here's mine: It's very
23 interesting to me the emphasis there is
24 on having black children get educated.
25 How many people in here would believe

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2 that in Philadelphia the amount of
3 schooling for whites is 10.5 years and
4 the amount of schooling for blacks is
5 10.7 years? So it would seem now, if
6 we're going to be logical, that the more
7 education you have, the less crime.

8 It doesn't work that way. It
9 doesn't even work for blacks there is a
10 direct relationship between the amount of
11 schooling and the amount of money you
12 make. It does for whites, not for
13 blacks.

14 In Washington, DC, the amount
15 of schooling for whites is 11.9 years.
16 For blacks, it's 14.8 years, and yet the
17 crime is very high in Washington.

18 People have been very polite
19 today. They're not mentioning race. But
20 of the 329 murders in Philadelphia, on a
21 mathematical basis based on population,
22 94 percent of them were committed by
23 blacks and the victims were black.
24 Therefore, my approach for my second
25 thing, stopping the violence, is working

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2 on the African problem, the African
3 problem.

4 You see, 81 years ago, a great
5 black author, whose name was Carter G.
6 Woodson, wrote a book called The
7 Miseducation of the Negro, in which he
8 says that we are being miseducated. Not
9 uneducated, miseducated, because we're
10 not learning of the beauty and grandeur
11 and sophistication of our African
12 background.

13 Now, there were many, many
14 ideas projected here to Council Lady
15 Blackwell and Mr. Goode, but it seems to
16 me that you measure the worth of an idea
17 by their effect on a statistically
18 significant demonstration project. How
19 have they worked?

20 I would like to ask the
21 gentleman if he would take this up to
22 Council Lady Blackwell. This is for the
23 Committee.

24 What I have done over a 60-year
25 period -- I started when I came out of

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2 the Army in 1945 -- is try to figure out
3 what is the problem facing black people,
4 and I found out what the problem is. The
5 problem is that the total society, the
6 world society, has been brainwashed to
7 believe that our African background has
8 been one of the jungle, of taint, of
9 ignorance. We've been brainwashed by
10 Tarzan. So we've all been Tarzanized.

11 So to put my idea into action
12 to say what would happen if we became
13 de-Tarzanized, and I had 20 school
14 projects that I worked on, teaching the
15 children who they are, really who they
16 are, really what contributions did they
17 make, and I found out that our people
18 didn't contribute to civilization, we
19 created civilization and other races
20 contributed to it.

21 In your world book, in your
22 Encyclopedia if you look up algebra, the
23 history of algebra, it was created by a
24 black man 3,700 years ago. His name was
25 Amez, whose book today is in the British

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2 Museum. We have copies of the pages of
3 the creation of algebra. You should see
4 when our children learn who they are
5 algebraically. They straighten up.

6 When they found out -- and you
7 can get it on your Internet for Leo C.
8 Statini, historian/mathematician, found
9 that trigonometry, geometry and the
10 calculus was created by three black women
11 4,700 years ago, and we teach our
12 children that.

13 What happens when we teach our
14 children that? If Council Lady Blackwell
15 and Councilman Goode would look at this
16 page with African Genesis, Inc. Would
17 you look at that page.

18 Out of the many demonstration
19 projects in the various schools we've
20 done, I just brought one of them here,
21 and we did this at the Leeds School for
22 the seventh grade. And at seventh grade,
23 the children committed 328 offenses, 96
24 suspensions, 16 disruptive/offensive
25 language, 53 assaults on students.

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2 Ninety-eight percent of the children were
3 black.

4 We brought in our African
5 Genesis program in September. By January
6 of that year, only 65 offenses were made,
7 because the program hadn't gotten round
8 up good yet, but between January and
9 June, there were no offenses.

10 We don't have to guess, and
11 we're suggesting to the Committee, we're
12 suggesting to you, Mr. Goode and
13 Ms. Blackwell, you've heard these many
14 different ideas. Measure their worth by
15 their effect on the statistically
16 significant demonstration project. I've
17 done it. And I've presented this to
18 Mr. Vallas and Sandra Dungee Glenn and
19 the SEC, and they bought it. They said,
20 Well, you have proven that what you are
21 projecting for these children in the
22 schools of their African background,
23 along with the traditional white
24 background and so on.

25 I bought a book. They gave me

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2 the textbooks of 2004. Now, instead of
3 having a separate book on black history
4 and African history, I did what is known
5 as an infusion from kindergarten through
6 eighth grade and then wrote a separate
7 book, consulted a separate book separated
8 between the ninth and twelfth grade.

9 Now, what this infusion means,
10 on Page 1, there's something about white
11 history and European history. On Page 2,
12 there's something about Songhai history.
13 The Songhai Empire, from which 90 percent
14 of African-Americans' ancestors came
15 from, was an empire larger than Europe
16 for over 700 years. Frederick Blumenbach
17 told the southern plantations, Never let
18 white children or black children ever
19 learn that they came from a highly
20 sophisticated empire in West Africa.
21 Tell them they came from a jungle, then
22 their heads will hang low. They will
23 hate each other. They will believe
24 anything they hear.

25 On Page 3, there will be

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2 something about European history. On
3 Page 4, there's something about African
4 history in the context of what's in the
5 chapter.

6 So I wrote these books from
7 kindergarten through eighth grade, School
8 District of Philadelphia, consulted on
9 the separation between ninth grade and
10 twelfth grade, mandatorily taught, only
11 School District in the country that has
12 mandatory African history infused into
13 the curriculum of that School District.

14 What effect? The behavior
15 became exemplary in all our demonstration
16 projects. The academic proficiency
17 soared. You don't have to guess about
18 it. What we have done -- and that's why
19 they say, Well, don't be so blunt in your
20 speech, Dr. Robinson, because you might
21 affect your future. When you're
22 approaching 90 years old, you're already
23 in your future. I don't deal with
24 affecting my future.

25 What I am suggesting to you --

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2 and I know that the hour is late and I'm
3 not going into all that, but you can read
4 it. You can read all that. I don't have
5 to read it to you, because you know that
6 education of the same old stuff is not
7 going to do it. It doesn't do it in
8 Washington, and we have more education in
9 Washington of blacks than we have of
10 whites, more in Philadelphia than of
11 whites.

12 Our children learn that our
13 hair is the only hair on the planet that
14 does not have head lice. Our children
15 learn that our color keeps us from having
16 skin cancer. They learn that we gave
17 mathematics, reading and writing to the
18 world. The first book written in Europe
19 was by Homer and that was only 2,800
20 years ago. We had reading and writing
21 9,000 years ago with proof, 3,000 years
22 before the Mesopotamians.

23 And I can go on, and you know I
24 could go on for the next four hours, but,
25 look -- then about police brutality and

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2 police killings. When I was with your
3 father, I asked him to let me speak
4 before the police. Mort Solomon was the
5 Police Commissioner. Here's a
6 Certificate of Appreciation that he gave,
7 because for a brief shining moment,
8 police killings stopped after my series
9 of lectures, and Mort Solomon gave me
10 this Certificate of Appreciation. When
11 was it? 1980, May 1, 1980. Because
12 police are brainwashed against us, too,
13 and we're brainwashed against us,
14 brainwashed against our ancestral worth
15 called intrinsic worth, where you're
16 from. Not African-American history;
17 Songhai history. Songhai Empire made up
18 of university cities and rolling farm
19 lands, medical schools, not no village.
20 It wasn't a village. They were great
21 cities. Timbuktu, Gao, Jenne. And this
22 is what we teach our children.
23 And just one last point. We
24 have an organization of 1,800 black
25 youths we take to Africa, 200 and 300 at

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2 a time every year, called the d'Zert
3 Club, 1,800 of them. No violence, no
4 out-of-wedlock babies. Beauty and
5 grandeur.

6 So we have the proof that we
7 have to have our children learn who their
8 ancestors are from Songhai and the mother
9 culture of Ancient Egypt, and that turns
10 around the violence, just short-term and
11 long-term goals.

12 We have a motion picture in
13 operation in drama showing the beauty,
14 grandeur and sophistication of our
15 African background.

16 Thank you very much.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
18 you very much, and we know that you have
19 sung with Opera Ebony as well. We try to
20 follow you a little bit, Dr. Robinson.
21 What can we say, but thank you for your
22 lifetime of contribution.

23 Any questions?

24 (No response.)

25 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank

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2 you very, very much. Thank you.

3 Jane Golden, Mural Arts.

4 MS. GOLDEN: Good morning. My
5 name is Jane Golden and I'm the Director
6 of the City of Philadelphia's Mural Arts
7 Program, and to both of you, thank you
8 for inviting me here today. And,
9 Councilwoman Blackwell, you are indeed an
10 inspiration to us and have been for many,
11 many, many years.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
13 you, as are you.

14 MS. GOLDEN: And to Councilman
15 Goode, I got my start with your father.

16 And I thought that I would just
17 start out by just saying that we came out
18 of the wonderful Anti-Graffiti Network.
19 And there were many years where people
20 said that the graffiti crisis in
21 Philadelphia would never be solved and
22 that kids would just continue writing on
23 walls and we would have a city of defaced
24 properties, and we are getting calls from
25 cities from all over the world where

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2 people are wringing their hands about the
3 fact that graffiti is on the increase in
4 every city except Philadelphia, where it
5 has and was solved really effectively.
6 And I think that it was solved
7 effectively because opportunities were
8 made available to young people from every
9 part of the City, and they weren't just
10 opportunities cleaning walls, but they
11 were opportunities around real work, real
12 possibility, finishing high school, going
13 to college, and the seat of power was
14 open to kids from the poorest
15 neighborhoods of the City.

16 It was truly a visionary
17 program. So I feel fortunate indeed that
18 I had such a wonderful foundation and
19 incredible access my first years here in
20 Philadelphia.

21 Over the last stretch of years
22 since we have become the Mural Arts
23 Program in 1997, we have taken our
24 responsibility to work with communities
25 and young people very seriously. We have

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2 developed a range of after-school and
3 summer programs all around the wonderful
4 art of creating murals.

5 We're fortunate to be in a city
6 where murals are truly embraced. As of
7 today, we have 2,703 indoor and outdoor
8 murals and we're serving over 3,500 young
9 people.

10 What's really important is that
11 we see that art education can be merged
12 with social services, and since 2000, we
13 have been part of the Division of Social
14 Services, and we have a range of programs
15 now that I would like to talk about.

16 All our programs are free and
17 they're open to young people from every
18 neighborhood of the City. Big Picture is
19 a program for middle school kids. Mural
20 Corps is for teenagers. We have a
21 program for kids who are in trouble with
22 law. If you're arrested for a minor
23 crime in Philadelphia and you are under
24 18 and you like art, you are sentenced to
25 us, and that's Mural ARTscape.

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2 ArtWorks is a program for young
3 people who are chronically truant. Three
4 days a week they see us. The other two
5 days they see social workers.

6 We also work at the House of
7 Correction for young people adjudicated
8 as adults, at the Youth Study Center, at
9 St. Gabriel's Hall, at Glen Mills. And
10 then we have an extensive prison program
11 where we work at Curran-Fromhold,
12 Riverside Prison. We work at Graterford
13 Prison as well. And for young people
14 coming out of the House of Correction, we
15 have a reentry program. So if kids win
16 their appeal or have a shorter sentence
17 and they get out, they can come to Mural
18 Arts for employment. That's the same
19 thing at CFCF as well.

20 At Graterford Prison, we have a
21 wonderful mural component there where the
22 men are actually painting murals on a
23 light-weight material called parachute
24 cloth, and they're creating murals for
25 schools and community centers all over

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2 the City. It's a formal work program.

3 And that, to me, has been really
4 incredibly inspiring, because we feel
5 strongly that everybody has potential,
6 everybody can be productive. It's just
7 up to us to provide those opportunities.

8 I think, more importantly, what
9 we've seen over the years is kids grow
10 and thrive. And we just heard from
11 Dr. Robinson about questioning
12 effectiveness, and we have every year
13 that we do our programs, we embark on a
14 very serious evaluation. So we have data
15 that shows that what we're doing is
16 actually working.

17 A very high percentage of young
18 people that we work with graduate from
19 high school. That may not seem
20 significant at first glance, except that
21 many of these kids four years ago when we
22 meet them are in and out of the court
23 system. When young people stay with us,
24 in their junior year we take them to look
25 at Community College, art schools, trade

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2 schools and college. We do portfolio
3 development with them to help them
4 seriously facilitate their next step in
5 life.

6 Our programs are very rigorous.
7 They go three days a week during the
8 school year, five days a week during the
9 summer. For our older kids, they get
10 paid. Just like at Anti-Graffiti, they
11 get paid. If they do well, they get
12 promoted. We open up savings accounts
13 for them that they can't touch until
14 they're 18. We continually talk about
15 their future. But we really mean
16 business.

17 I think in trying to figure out
18 what works, I think it is our
19 responsibility. As Councilwoman
20 Blackwell said, what are we bringing to
21 the table. A lot of programs we're
22 always -- and I'm just as guilty as
23 everyone. I have my little cup out
24 always asking for funding, but our
25 responsibility is to make sure that every

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2 minute we have those kids in our site, we
3 are offering them the best programs
4 possible, the most rigorous and the most
5 challenging. We need to raise that bar.
6 And we have found consistently when we
7 raise that bar, when we approach the
8 young people with rigor, with challenge
9 and with love, then we see kids change.

10 All of those kids that we
11 worked with the Anti-Graffiti Network,
12 all of those kids that had failure etched
13 in their forehead, all of those kids that
14 told me by the time they were 25, they'd
15 be dead or at Graterford Prison, I can
16 sit here for hours and tell you where
17 they are. I'll tell you one thing,
18 they're not in institutions, they're
19 living productive lives. But it's
20 because at Anti-Graffiti we believed in
21 them and offered them the opportunity to
22 succeed. We saw them not for four weeks
23 or six weeks, because I think when we
24 deal with kids at risk, short programs do
25 not work. We need sustained programs

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2 that are substantive, and when we do
3 that, we will see real change.

4 The kids we work with at
5 ARTscape and ArtWork, our Corps kids,
6 they're doing fresco and mosaic.
7 Everybody should go down to 707 Chestnut
8 and see a mural about Lincoln's legacy
9 that's a million pieces of venetian
10 glass. It's about civil rights and civil
11 liberties, made by the young people in
12 the City.

13 Young people are doing public
14 sculpture now, extraordinary works of
15 public art, but beyond that, they're
16 believing in their ability to facilitate
17 social change around art. So when we
18 have these kids, we need to do everything
19 we can to ensure that they will succeed.

20 And moving forward, we feel
21 very, very committed to helping to do our
22 part in reducing violence in the City.
23 It is a heart break. Just like when we
24 lost kids at Anti-Graffiti, it was a
25 crushing blow, it's the same thing now.

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2 poetry, writing, we do painting. We have
3 discussions with lots of stakeholders
4 around the City about the impact of
5 juvenile crime.

6 We're trying to do bigger,
7 complicated projects along with the
8 regular murals we do every year. We do
9 about 150 indoor and outdoor murals and
10 serve lots of kids, but the big complex
11 issues bring together crime victims and
12 prisoners. They bring together kids in
13 placement, community groups and
14 prisoners. We're going to be embarking
15 on a new project that will bring together
16 police officers and young people. We're
17 doing a major restorative justice project
18 over the next two years, because
19 murals -- and it's not just murals we're
20 doing. As Councilwoman Blackwell knows,
21 we also do sculpture gardens and thinking
22 about not just the wall or the lot, but
23 the entire block, a major corridor. How
24 do we impact the City of Philadelphia
25 with public art? How do we do that? And

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2 kids, young people, should be part of
3 this process.

4 So when you think about
5 restorative justice, think about how
6 murals can be a form of visual
7 restitution for young people. We can
8 transform neighborhoods and we can save
9 lives. They do not have to be mutually
10 exclusive.

11 In the history of public art,
12 it's always been art that's parachuted
13 down from the sky. Well, not in
14 Philadelphia. It's art that's created in
15 partnership with neighborhoods and
16 created in a very painstaking way, with
17 lots of love by young artists in the City
18 who have a lot of potential gifts and
19 talents and strengths, but these things
20 have previously gone unrecognized.

21 So I just want you to know,
22 we're on a mission to continue to bring
23 these services to every citizen of the
24 City and every young person. Every
25 person should have an opportunity to have

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2 art education. If not, I think it's
3 criminal, and so we need to do everything
4 we can to keep providing services to the
5 citizens. It is not just a job for us,
6 it is a moral imperative. At the end of
7 the day, we believe that art can
8 transform and save lives. But it's not
9 art alone. It's art working in
10 partnership with DHS, the Department of
11 Public Health and prisons. It's an
12 integrated model of City government.

13 We feel truly privileged to be
14 able to do this work, and please know you
15 have our total commitment moving forward
16 in the years to come.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
18 you, Jane. We know how you feel about
19 pre-school, after-school, inmate
20 programs. We thank you. We thank you.
21 You mentioned former Mayor W. Wilson
22 Goode, so we got to mention Tim Spencer
23 from Mantua.

24 MS. GOLDEN: Tim Spencer.
25 Absolutely.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: And
3 certainly I only wish -- and I've made
4 this appeal for the last several years to
5 the Mayor -- that you did control art in
6 City Hall. We're ready to revisit that
7 again. The one percent art. If we had
8 more neighborhood involvement on a level
9 that you bring, grassroots involvement,
10 school-age involvement, ex-offender
11 involvement, there is that much more that
12 you could do.

13 So certainly we commend you for
14 your commitment in really making us not
15 only one in mural arts and in murals in
16 the country, but really showing, as you
17 always say, that art changes lives.

18 MS. GOLDEN: Yes. Thank you,
19 and please feel free to count on me in
20 any way for talking about programs. Or
21 anything that we can do to contribute, we
22 want to do. And thank you again, both of
23 you, for your support.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
25 you very much. Thank you.

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2 Mr. Mackey, I know you've been
3 misparked and asked to get forward.
4 Please come forward. I know that we've
5 kind of held you up.

6 MR. MACKEY: No, you didn't.
7 Thank you. I'm a bit late. How is
8 everyone? Thank you.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
10 you very much.

11 MR. MACKEY: Thanks,
12 Councilwoman Blackwell and Councilman
13 Goode. My name is William Mackey and I'm
14 the Director of the Citywide Youth
15 Leadership Agency, and for years, we've
16 been organizing to motivate young people
17 for empowerment. We think one of the
18 answers we recommend is youth
19 empowerment.

20 We hear about a lot of programs
21 in our communities. They're really doing
22 good work. I don't think no one can be
23 doubted of the effort that they put
24 forward, but right now it's a youth
25 issue. And I ask a question. If you had

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2 a quarter million young people today, if
3 we targeted a quarter million young
4 people, how many of them do you think
5 getting high? And we've been asking this
6 question for the last six months, and we
7 keep hearing "one out of four." So we
8 asked people, out of a quarter million
9 young people, a target population, if one
10 out of four of them is potentially
11 getting high -- then we ask out of a
12 quarter million young people, how many
13 have access to guns? People say about 50
14 percent. I mean, we need to look at this
15 real.

16 So if we're saying we got a
17 potential 60,000 kids at 4 o'clock today,
18 at 3 o'clock today when school let out,
19 60,000 kids is going to start indulging
20 with some form of drugs, that's a
21 dangerous community we live in. This is
22 really dangerous and serious. And if
23 we're saying out of a quarter million
24 kids 50 percent of them know somebody to
25 get a gun or know how to go get a gun, we

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2 are really in a dangerous situation. And
3 until we empower about 10,000 young
4 people -- we need to empower, I'll say it
5 again, 10,000 young people throughout the
6 City of Philadelphia, and they need to be
7 broke down into the regions, like what we
8 proposed. We proposed that they be
9 broken out in the regions.

10 And out of the 10,000 young
11 people, some of them is college students,
12 some of them is ex-offenders that's being
13 trained to be social developers, youth
14 developers. We have some of them get
15 into Community College and the local
16 universities and let them organize
17 themselves.

18 We know there's a bill pending
19 and there's going to be a resolution and
20 a referendum next election, not this one,
21 next primary that Councilwoman Brown has
22 out to establish this Youth Council
23 whatever. We proposed this stuff to this
24 Administration eight years ago. We said
25 there needs to be a Youth Council, but

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2 guess what? That's old now. Even what
3 we proposed is old now. It needs to be a
4 Youth Crime Commission, an independent
5 body that organizes young people to
6 motivate and demonstrate leadership
7 through each community. That's what
8 needs to take place.

9 I end with this, and I'm real
10 short: Everybody has a driving license,
11 right? Well, you know what? In schools
12 they have school ID's. We proposed
13 before this Council and this
14 Administration six years ago to create a
15 Youth Smart Card. Watch. That school ID
16 card should allow those kids to ride
17 SEPTA. That's school ID card should be a
18 healthcare card. That school ID card
19 should be a library card. That school ID
20 card should be a DHS card. That school
21 ID card should be a curfew prevention
22 card. One Smart Card.

23 All those computer experts and
24 all those divisions I just talked to
25 should be online together, not big

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2 brother, but big smartness. These young
3 people are smart. And the resources that
4 we paying for now, if this Administration
5 is spending \$100 million for after-school
6 programs, I'm the first one to tell you
7 it's not being spent smart, because all
8 the resources is not getting to those
9 kids. If 60,000 target potential
10 students had this card -- I'm going to go
11 back to tell you one more thing.

12 Tim Spencer told me, God bless
13 him, that if all the resources was
14 brought together for young people, this
15 crime thing would go down immediately.
16 But the departments is not talking to
17 departments. We organized it. We had
18 Temple University Center for Social
19 Policy to write a comprehensive proposal,
20 and we've given it to the School
21 District. We had all the computer
22 people. We had the cards linked up, and
23 you know what? Because it was Mackey
24 that proposed it, it was thrown in the
25 trash.

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2 is happening with the Administration that
3 it is dropping the ball for these young
4 people. I see a lot of money pumped in
5 there, and if you're not -- I don't know
6 what it is. If you ain't on the team or
7 whatever, your stuff go in the trash, and
8 it shouldn't be that way. I'm personally
9 hurt because it's starting to affect my
10 community more, because I'm seeing
11 students that I know getting in trouble
12 that would not get in trouble. Why, I
13 ask? Why should any kid not have a
14 summer job this summer? Why? A waiting
15 list. There shouldn't be no waiting
16 list. Why are kids telling me they got
17 to wait three weeks to see a counselor at
18 school? Why? I don't understand that.
19 I just can't understand it.

20 So I recommend that the bill
21 that Councilwoman Brown has be amended to
22 incorporate a Youth Crime Commission.
23 That's what we think. We even think that
24 it should be a Commissioner level. This
25 thing is so serious that it should be a

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2 Commissioner level that deal -- the
3 Charter change, a Commissioner level that
4 deals with the youth violence in the City
5 of Philadelphia. That's what we think,
6 and coordinate all of the youth services
7 and target the young people.

8 Thank you. Have a good day.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
10 you very much. Thank you very much,
11 Mr. Mackey. Thank you for your
12 commitment to youth.

13 MR. MACKEY: Thank you.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
15 you for coming forward.

16 MR. MACKEY: Yes.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
18 you.

19 MR. MACKEY: Thank you,
20 Councilwoman.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:
22 Certainly.

23 Mr. Randy Berlin, LISC.

24 (No response.)

25 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Do we

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2 have Mr. Kevin Peter, Metropolitan Career
3 Center? Thank you.

4 Do we have Mr. Hamilton Rouse,
5 Jr.?

6 MR. ROUSE: Yes.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
8 you.

9 Thank you so much. Thank you
10 for your patience. Thank you for being
11 here.

12 MR. PETER: Good morning.
13 Thank you, Councilwoman Blackwell and
14 also Councilman Goode. Thank you for the
15 opportunity to speak this morning on the
16 job training programs and helping reduce
17 violence in Philadelphia. My name is
18 Kevin Peter, Vice-President for Community
19 Relations at Metropolitan Career Center,
20 a non-profit community-based organization
21 founded in Germantown in 1974.

22 With facilities in Germantown
23 and Center City, Metropolitan Career
24 Center serves an average of 700
25 unemployed and underemployed adult

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2 Philadelphians from throughout the City
3 annually. In total, we provided job
4 training and career assistance to more
5 than 13,000 people in the past 32 years.

6 In Germantown, we provide basic
7 job training and skills to more than 500
8 people each year. The three training
9 programs we currently offer in Germantown
10 range from four to 16 weeks in length and
11 prepare people for entry-level jobs in
12 businesses as diverse as the major banks,
13 small businesses, non-profits and
14 retailers. One program, STRIVE, is a
15 four-week rapid attachment program to
16 help unemployed people, including those
17 reentering the community after
18 incarceration, learn appropriate
19 behaviors and skills to be able to get
20 and keep good jobs.

21 Here in Center City, our
22 Computer Technology Institute offers an
23 Associate in Specialized Technology
24 degree to people with a high school
25 diploma or a GED. The 15 to 36-month

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2 Associate degree prepares people to enter
3 the region's growing technology workforce
4 and puts them on a path to earn upwards
5 of \$50,000 a year within three years of
6 graduating.

7 That's not a hypothetical
8 number. That's some of the graduates
9 that I speak with on a daily basis.

10 At least 60 of our Associate
11 degree graduates have gone even further
12 in higher education and are working on
13 Bachelor's degrees now at DeVry,
14 University of Phoenix, Philadelphia
15 University and Drexel. These are
16 students who, for the most part, didn't
17 really look at themselves as college
18 material or higher education material
19 before they came to Metropolitan Career
20 Center.

21 We work with ex-offenders on a
22 daily basis. In our most recent program
23 year, 15 percent of the people in our
24 Germantown programs were ex-offenders, as
25 were 11 percent of the people in our

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2 Associate degree program. Our goal with
3 ex-offenders, as with all participants,
4 is to get into a job that leads to a
5 sustainable wage and benefits.

6 Last year, the people who
7 completed our Germantown programs earned
8 starting wages averaging 8.97 an hour.
9 Our Associate degree graduates averaged
10 11.50 per hour to start. These wages are
11 certainly not enough to support a family
12 without additional help, but clearly put
13 the new wage earner on a path to higher
14 earnings and financial stability.

15 Nearly as important as the
16 wages is the fact that more than half of
17 our Germantown graduates and
18 three-quarters of our Center City
19 graduates started jobs that offered
20 health benefits.

21 For someone who has cycled
22 through a series of short-term,
23 low-paying, dead-end jobs, the likelihood
24 of suddenly finding stability without an
25 upgrade in skills or a shift in behaviors

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2 and attitudes is remote.

3 The picture is clearly brighter
4 for a Philadelphian who completes job
5 training than for a Philadelphian trying
6 to find and keep a job on his or her own.
7 We have seen people complete Metropolitan
8 Career Center's STRIVE program, for
9 example, land a job and then move into
10 our Associate degree program on a
11 part-time basis where their earning
12 potential increases dramatically. We've
13 seen ex-offenders improve skills and
14 learn new behaviors and find a realistic
15 way to stay employed, and the good news
16 doesn't end there.

17 Often adults who complete job
18 training and maintain stable employment
19 become role models for their families,
20 making it more likely that their children
21 will stay in school. We have seen cases
22 where an adult is the first person in
23 their extended family to complete any
24 educational program. That's the trigger
25 that keeps the children in school and the

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2 neighbors and their children in school or
3 in training. In one case, one of our
4 graduates triggered her mother's reentry
5 into education, with the mother then
6 earning a GED and an Associate degree at
7 Community College.

8 I wish I could share more good
9 news, but right now there's a major
10 barrier to many people who want to get
11 training in Philadelphia. Job training
12 programs throughout the City are dealing
13 with major cuts in contracted training
14 slots as a result of cuts at the State
15 level. At Metropolitan Career Center,
16 cuts in State funding mean we will train
17 around 200 fewer people than planned this
18 year. Citywide, nearly 1,000 training
19 slots have been cut compared to last
20 year. That's a thousand people in our
21 City who need training but will not get
22 it. The question is, what will they do,
23 where will they go?

24 We're happy that the Finance
25 Committee is exploring the value of

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2 training programs and helping to reduce
3 violence in our City. We urge you to do
4 anything in your power to find funding
5 for job training programs. When we can
6 train people, we can give them hope for a
7 brighter future.

8 Now I will be happy to answer
9 any questions you have or provide
10 additional details to help in your
11 research, and, of course, we'll be happy
12 to host the Committee or any
13 Councilmembers at Metropolitan Career
14 Center so you can see our programs in
15 action and how we're helping people find
16 a good path towards a sustainable job.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
18 you. You have a Center City location; do
19 you not?

20 MR. PETER: Yeah, right down at
21 Broad and Sansom.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I'm
23 sure that I have toured the program. You
24 do do a great job. We thank you for what
25 you do. It is our goal to really show in

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2 a written organized form the programs we
3 do have that can be funded and to be
4 expanded, and certainly we agree with
5 you, we don't need these programs cut.

6 Thank you very much --

7 MR. PETER: Thank you.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: -- for
9 all that the Metropolitan Career Center
10 does.

11 Mr. Hamilton Rouse, Jr.

12 Do we have Greg Bucceroni?

13 You'll speak for him and CB Kimmons.

14 We'll call on you next. Thank you.

15 Mr. Maleek Allah, are you okay
16 today?

17 Sir, are you here to testify?

18 UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: No. I'm
19 just here finding out as much information
20 as I can.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
22 you for being here. Thank you very much
23 for being here.

24 Mr. Rouse.

25 MR. ROUSE: Yes. Thank you,

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2 Councilwoman Blackwell and Councilman
3 Goode, for this opportunity to speak. I
4 represent my sister, Queena Bass, who is
5 running for Mayor of Philadelphia, or
6 trying to run, in 2007.

7 In the Philadelphia Daily News
8 back in September 1st, it said the "city
9 of blood." That really hurt real bad
10 just to see something that awful in this
11 City. And I think what society has done
12 and what the City has done is make
13 something that's very simple complicated.

14 I want to try to speak about
15 this City. The answer for this problem
16 with violence, and always has been the
17 answer, is love. We are known throughout
18 America as the City of Brotherly Love.
19 We have a beautiful statue that
20 constantly reminds us of the word right
21 across from City Hall. We have hundreds
22 of churches and religious organizations
23 in Philadelphia that teach love at one
24 level or another.

25 It is love that helps us grow

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2 up from a child to adult, some form of
3 kindness, concern, people care about us,
4 a mother, a father, a grandmother and a
5 grandfather or anyone who is our
6 guardian.

7 If you look at any problem in
8 this City, the greatest solution in
9 solving that problem is going to be love.
10 We had a lot of suggestions today,
11 beautiful suggestions, but the power
12 behind that has got to be love.

13 The greatest power on this
14 earth is still love and will always be
15 love, and the best thing this world has
16 that makes life worth living is going to
17 be love.

18 The Bible, which they have in
19 all these courtrooms and the polling
20 places when you go there, in the book of
21 First John, Chapter 14:16, it says that
22 God is love. Our problem is that we have
23 not let love be the most important part
24 of our existence. We have let
25 bureaucracy, economic power and control,

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2 hatred, racism, petty arguments and just
3 downright neglect lead us into a
4 direction that makes life more of a
5 burden than a blessing.

6 It doesn't have to be winter
7 for us to feel coldness in this City. We
8 leave a lot of homeless on the street and
9 talk about a ten-year plan. That is
10 cold. We let children grow up in filthy
11 ghettos, and that is cold. Abandoned
12 building, lots full of weeds, disgusting
13 areas, goes on being this for years and
14 years. Just look at love.

15 The last 20 years, just look at
16 Broad and Cumberland, Clearfield, Lehigh,
17 York, just Broad Street, a mess for
18 years, 20 to 30 years. Where is the
19 love? It's cold. It's awful. And you
20 want our children to be better? We want
21 them to have high standards and we show
22 low standards.

23 If we want to change things in
24 this City to slow down the violent
25 behavior, enough talk, enough marches,

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2 enough trying to figure out these things,
3 do what we know we should be doing, from
4 the Governor on down, don't just talk a
5 pretty picture, let's make a pretty
6 picture.

7 The State has found, what, \$700
8 million for a new Convention Center and
9 it looks like we can't even handle the
10 traffic when we have a big convention
11 now. We have \$700 million for a new
12 Convention Center. I can't imagine
13 another convention bigger in this City.
14 It's going to be deadlocked.

15 But they have \$700 million for
16 their Convention Center. We can take
17 that \$700 million and get real good jobs
18 with real good trades to beautify this
19 City that's been messed up for years in
20 many places. North Philly, West Philly,
21 it's disgusting.

22 It's time for a new
23 Philadelphia, as my sister Queena Bass
24 said. Philadelphia should be the example
25 to the rest of the nation, and with our

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2 motto being the City of Brotherly Love,
3 what city but Philadelphia should lead
4 the way? Our leaders, our politicians
5 should remember to love their neighbor as
6 themselves.

7 What would you like to be done
8 for you if you were living in these awful
9 conditions? God knows we can do a whole
10 lot better and we must, and that's the
11 power that's going to change things. All
12 this bureaucracy, all this paperwork, no.
13 No. God knows we're doing wrong. These
14 kids know we're doing wrong. That's why
15 they're killing each other. It's because
16 of a lot of the racism. We know that.
17 And Queena Bass wants to try to change
18 things. She's not here today. But we
19 forget about what we really should be
20 doing.

21 We can talk for hours here in
22 Council. It doesn't change my
23 neighborhood. Nicetown has become the
24 worst town that I've ever seen, and my
25 grandmother, my grandfather, they would

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2 be ashamed of how this neighborhood looks
3 today. And what gets done? Year after
4 year after year after year, Mayor after
5 Mayor after Mayor. It's a shame.

6 Thank you for letting me speak.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
8 you very much. We appreciate your
9 testimony, Mr. Rouse.

10 Mantua Against Drugs and then
11 we will go to our last few guests.

12 Thank you very much. Feel free
13 to identify yourself for the record and
14 make your comments.

15 MR. BUCCERONI: Good afternoon,
16 Councilwoman Blackwell. Good afternoon,
17 Councilman Goode. My name is Greg
18 Bucceroni. I'm with Men United for a
19 Better Philadelphia in partnership with
20 Mantua Against Drugs. Unfortunately, CB
21 Kimmons was unavailable to attend today
22 due to a medical response for his family,
23 but I'm here to testify on his behalf and
24 a little bit of what Men United for a
25 Better Philadelphia is doing on our

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2 Citywide effort to improve the quality of
3 life in the City of Philadelphia.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
5 you.

6 MR. BUCCERONI: Here we are.
7 Being no strangers in activists, starting
8 in New York City and 20-some murders and
9 bouncing back and forth between the
10 Guardian Angels, Town Watch and now Men
11 United for a Better Philadelphia, I've
12 seen a lot of municipalities up and down
13 the East Coast and some of the quality of
14 life that goes on and particularly today
15 with youth-related things.

16 We've been out there every day,
17 as you could see, Councilwoman. We've
18 been out there several times. During the
19 course of a day, we go out there in East
20 Division, whether it's West Philadelphia,
21 or even now in the Northeast dealing with
22 adolescent-related crime and quality of
23 life concerns.

24 Every program, everyone who has
25 testified gives a little bit of a piece

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2 of that pie that comes up to the
3 solution. If CB was here today, he would
4 testify that we're working collectively
5 together, although we could be doing
6 better.

7 Councilman Goode, when your dad
8 was Mayor, we did a lot of work with him
9 back in the early '80s to improve the
10 quality of life, and we still have an
11 uphill battle, but the battle can be won.
12 It takes everyone's effort, whether it's
13 our elected officials who have been
14 there, police officials and no doubt the
15 community residents. I think they're the
16 key figure.

17 The success that Mayor Giuliani
18 had in New York City, the key success,
19 even though he increased the NYPD
20 presence on the street, was community
21 participation. When we have these
22 parents getting involved and we have
23 community councils getting involved and
24 we have, of course, citizens like myself
25 and those who have testified before me

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2 get involved, it becomes a win-win
3 situation.

4 So we're here just to testify
5 on what we've done and what we need to be
6 doing more. And I'm willing to work with
7 any elected official -- CB is. If he was
8 here, he would testify to that -- and any
9 citizen or community organization to do
10 that.

11 We have, of course, the Mayor
12 instilled recently a new program,
13 Adolescents Violence Reduction
14 Partnership, and even though that is a
15 work in progress, it is something going
16 in the right direction, as is PAL, the
17 Boys and Girls Club and many of the
18 community-based organizations to provide
19 after-school activities for our youth in
20 the City.

21 So what I'd like to say is that
22 we're going in the right direction, but
23 it's not going to happen overnight. A
24 lot of people believe that these things,
25 the AVRP, for instance, that is a recent

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2 program, you're not going to be able to
3 analyze that program until, my guess is,
4 about -- it's going to take about a year
5 or two to analyze the effects of it,
6 because we won't know the immediate
7 effects. We know that we're going out
8 there and counseling these young
9 adolescent individuals and we're giving
10 them the proper guidance as well as the
11 other people had testified. And we'd
12 like to move forward in these things and
13 work in conjunction with City Council and
14 our elected officials to finally improve
15 the quality of life and move forward.

16 I really don't have much to
17 say, because CB was here and he was going
18 to testify. He told me to do the medical
19 concerns. He couldn't. So I came here
20 just to say what we're doing and what
21 we'd like to do and how we'd like to
22 network with the other organizations that
23 we haven't thus far to obviously improve
24 the quality of life for the adolescents'
25 experience in the City of Brotherly Love.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
3 you. You've done quite well, and we
4 thank you for your commitment. Give CB
5 our best. Thank you very much.

6 MR. BUCCERONI: Thank you,
7 Councilwoman.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
9 you. We certainly want to acknowledge
10 the presence of Governor Schweiker and
11 the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of
12 Commerce, all who are here.

13 Next we will call on a
14 colleague and a member of this Committee,
15 Councilman W. Wilson Goode, and then
16 we'll hear from the Governor. Thank you
17 very much.

18 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Good
19 afternoon. Although I'm a Councilmember
20 of the Committee, Councilwoman Blackwell
21 asked me to actually offer testimony, and
22 because of the context of my testimony, I
23 also thought it would be appropriate to
24 testify actually from the table.

25 She asked me to talk about the

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2 issue of employment and employer tax
3 credits as it relates to crime and
4 violence and the murder rate in the City.

5 I'd like to start by just
6 reading a short passage from actually one
7 of my favorite books. It reads, "At the
8 trial, momma said Charlie Painter asked
9 to speak to the judge in his chambers
10 before the sentence was handed down.
11 Daddy was convicted of assault and
12 sentenced to a year in prison. Momma has
13 always said she believed Daddy was
14 convicted because he slapped Charlie
15 Painter, not because of what he did to
16 her.

17 "We were heartbroken. It
18 seemed like our family was being broken
19 apart beyond repair.

20 "Daddy left the local jail for
21 prison that August. His prison job was
22 walking the hot, dusty roads serving
23 water to prisoners on the chain gangs.

24 "In the months following the
25 trial, my sister in Philadelphia

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2 convinced momma to leave North Carolina
3 before daddy got out of prison. Momma
4 and my brothers prepared to leave that
5 January. I was doing well in school and
6 they said I should stay behind with Aunt
7 Lonnie and Uncle Frank Brown to finish
8 out the school term.

9 "On January 3, 1954, momma and
10 my brothers left for Philadelphia. I
11 tried to be happy as the moving van and
12 car carrying my family headed north, but
13 my heart was sinking. This was the first
14 time I had ever been separated from my
15 family.

16 "Practically speaking, I knew
17 it was only right for me to finish the
18 school term, but I couldn't help thinking
19 I needed to be with my family. With my
20 father in prison, I thought the days of
21 violence and fear were behind me."

22 The young boy later came to
23 Philadelphia, and the next chapter within
24 the book is entitled "So This is Heaven,"
25 with a question mark. This is not a book

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2 of fiction. The young boy went on to
3 become the first African-American Mayor
4 of Philadelphia. This is actually a
5 story from my father's autobiography.
6 Needless to say why people are very much
7 aware of his work with children of prison
8 inmates. They're not aware that the
9 reason for that work is because he was a
10 child of a prison inmate.

11 Interesting about this story,
12 this is a story that I did not find out
13 until 1992 with the release of this
14 autobiography. My grandfather actually
15 died five years before this release.

16 I remember my grandfather
17 purely as a hard-working family man.
18 Because when he was released from prison,
19 he did reconcile with his family, did
20 come to Philadelphia and provide for his
21 family and ended up creating the type of
22 family leadership that led to his son
23 becoming who he became and his grandson
24 becoming who he became.

25 But in the South, my

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2 grandfather was a very broken man because
3 of issues of economic frustration and
4 humiliation and the system of
5 sharecropping. As a man, as a grown man,
6 he was not able to provide for his
7 family, not because he didn't work from
8 sun up to sun down, but because he was
9 not paid fairly and because people
10 cheated him out of his money and people
11 didn't give him the type of chance
12 economically to support his family.

13 As I said, the book goes on to
14 talk about Philadelphia in the 1950's
15 when my father came here with his family.
16 There are many who would say that we are
17 still economic sharecropping in
18 Philadelphia over 50 years later. There
19 are many that say that the economic
20 system within Philadelphia still treats
21 people with as much racial
22 discrimination.

23 I was taught about the
24 discrimination that exists down South. I
25 was also taught about the need to

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2 continue to fight for economic fairness
3 and equity in Philadelphia now. So a lot
4 of the work that I've done on City
5 Council has been about creating economic
6 opportunity, and it's because of my
7 family history.

8 So the work that my father does
9 with the children, finding mentors for
10 the children of prison inmates, is
11 because up to 70 percent of them, if we
12 don't engage them in some positive
13 constructive manner, will go down that
14 same path. And since he was saved from
15 it, with a strong family and community,
16 he wants to see others saved from it.

17 The work I do to create
18 economic opportunity is because we see it
19 as saving lives and saving people for
20 what could have been our family
21 experience. But if I were to simply say
22 that all of that is a part of my family
23 history, that would not be true. As my
24 father served as Managing Director and as
25 Mayor of this City and often visited the

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2 prisons as he continues to do, he would
3 often be greeted with greetings from
4 family members who were there, who still
5 needed opportunity and somehow the
6 success did not spread throughout the
7 entire family.

8 More recently as a member of
9 this Council, about 15, 16 months ago, I
10 had a family member, a first cousin, who
11 on a crack binge assaulted someone with a
12 hammer. A lot of people wanted to know
13 how I was going to deal with that issue.
14 I dealt with it not politically but
15 personally and within the family, and my
16 response to it immediately was to think
17 of where we're at in this modern-day
18 Philadelphia that those type of things
19 are happening and can happen and how can
20 two different cousins live very different
21 lives.

22 And I don't mind sharing. This
23 is the first time I've shared this, so
24 it's interesting that I'm sharing it
25 publicly. I secluded myself probably for

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2 about a week or so just reflecting upon
3 those type of things and where the family
4 had come and how far the family had come,
5 but how many problems still existed that
6 exists throughout this City. That's
7 actually when I crafted a living wage
8 bill, because I realized that a living
9 wage bill had to be part of the solution,
10 that if we can't focus on economic
11 opportunity and economic opportunity that
12 provides living wages, that that is a
13 core issue that dates back for, yes, many
14 people of color, but dates back for any
15 number of people who have faced economic
16 discrimination, who were born into an
17 economic disadvantage. And, more
18 importantly, as we deal with the issue of
19 ex-offenders and the rate of recidivism,
20 we know that ex-offenders who do not find
21 employment are three times more likely to
22 recidivate into a pattern of crime and
23 violence and jail and, yes, murder.
24 So we don't know all the
25 solutions here, but we do know what part

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2 of the solution is. It is providing
3 jobs, it is providing jobs with wages
4 that are livable as possible, and it's
5 creating new economic opportunity where
6 there is none.

7 And so I offer this testimony
8 as a prelude to challenging the private
9 sector to work on employment options and
10 working with us in terms of not just
11 creating new tools in terms of
12 ex-offender tax credits, but making sure
13 those tools will be used. And so I'm
14 just pleased to offer that testimony
15 today.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
17 you very much. That was invaluable
18 testimony that gets to the heart of why
19 we're here and, as you said, why we do
20 need the private sector to partner with
21 us to change things. Thank you,
22 Councilman. Thank you. It was
23 wonderful.

24 Governor Schweiker, we invite
25 you.

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2 Thank you all for coming. We
3 say welcome.

4 GOVERNOR SCHWEIKER: Thank you.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Please
6 identify yourself for the record and then
7 make your testimony

8 GOVERNOR SCHWEIKER: I'm Mark
9 Schweiker, the President and CEO of the
10 Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce.
11 I come before you today to offer
12 testimony on Resolution 060708, as you
13 know, a Call to Action to confront and
14 stop the violence in our City.

15 Thank you. And before I
16 proceed, Madam Chair, let me acknowledge
17 the observations and the experience
18 Councilman Goode just shared. It
19 certainly explains -- and I know his dad,
20 and I say this in respectful, positive
21 ways. I know about his dad's
22 determination and perspective and
23 certainly I know he has endowed the
24 Councilman with the same sensitivity and
25 perspective. So I think we all learned a

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2 little bit there. So thank you for
3 sharing that.

4 Madam Chair, should I proceed?

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:

6 Please.

7 GOVERNOR SCHWEIKER: Thank you.

8 At the outset, let me acknowledge and
9 commend -- and I only have brief
10 comments. I think you know I'm
11 comfortable with the free flow, but I do
12 think we've got some brief detailed
13 testimony attending to this issue of
14 trying to stop the violence and effective
15 ways on which we can rely over the long
16 haul. And let me also mention that
17 Denise Early is with me, who represents
18 the Chamber here in City Hall.

19 Let me acknowledge and commend
20 you on your effort to address the recent
21 surge of violence plaguing our City. I
22 know, Chairwoman Blackwell, that you
23 attended our Annual Meeting of October
24 10th and heard firsthand from our new
25 Chairman, Joe Frick, who is the President

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2 and CEO of Independence Blue Cross, that
3 this issue was a matter of great concern
4 for the business community.

5 Chairman Frick that morning
6 offered the business community a
7 challenge, and we will take it on with
8 great passion. And to a great extent,
9 our presence here today, with my full
10 crew involved in public policy and issue
11 advancement, is meant to confirm that we
12 are prepared to pursue it in tandem with
13 influential individuals like yourself.

14 We believe that jobs for youth
15 will help stem the violence. Let me tell
16 you why.

17 The GPCC has made a serious
18 commitment to address violence through
19 youth workforce development. In
20 Philadelphia and across the Commonwealth,
21 thousands of young people seek
22 internships and related workplace
23 experiences which can provide
24 life-changing benefits, but are turned
25 away because funded opportunities are

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2 simply not available.

3 Good research demonstrates that
4 workplace experiences and related
5 skills-building efforts during the high
6 school years yield a number of positive
7 benefits for participating youth,
8 including higher wages and lower
9 unemployment rates later in life, reduced
10 incidence of youth violence and the
11 potential for improved school performance
12 and increased post secondary
13 participation. Unfortunately, due to the
14 record-high unemployment rates for teens
15 so far this century, particularly those
16 in the nation's urban center, far too few
17 youth have access to these opportunities
18 and related benefits.

19 Now, while many high-quality
20 and effective youth workforce development
21 programs operate in Pennsylvania, they
22 reach a small fraction of eligible young
23 people. For example, specifically,
24 WorkReady Philadelphia, a comprehensive
25 effort to coordinate and expand youth

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2 work and work-related opportunities,
3 serves nearly 10,000 youth each year.
4 However, despite these accomplishments,
5 the annual waiting list of youth seeking
6 enrollment in WorkReady programs
7 consistently exceeds the number of 3,000.

8 To address this critical need,
9 the GPCC has made a serious commitment to
10 work in partnership with local youth
11 workforce development agencies and is
12 mounting an aggressive campaign to
13 promote youth employment and mentoring
14 opportunities in businesses throughout
15 the region.

16 In an effort to build employer
17 backing and participation for this
18 initiative, the Chamber is currently
19 seeking passage in Harrisburg of House
20 Bill 3031, state legislation to provide
21 incentive tax credits for businesses that
22 employ underprivileged youth in
23 Pennsylvania. House Bill 3031, I'm proud
24 to know, is sponsored by Representative
25 John Taylor of Philadelphia and

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2 Representative Josh Shapiro of Montgomery
3 County and a growing bipartisan list of
4 lawmakers from this region and across
5 Pennsylvania.

6 I think you and I know the
7 importance of presenting that picture in
8 the State Capital when it comes to what
9 is clearly a major issue for we here in
10 the City, but in order to succeed
11 politically in Harrisburg, we've got to
12 have the attention and the backing of a
13 bipartisan nature from across the
14 Commonwealth.

15 Through this measure, if a
16 business hires a young adult -- and we
17 define that as 14 to 21 years old -- who
18 comes from a household with income less
19 than 150 percent of the federal poverty
20 level, that business would be eligible
21 for tax credits equal to 70 percent of
22 the wages paid to the young adult.

23 Put simply, Madam Chair, we're
24 talking about good jobs with a real
25 paycheck, real jobs with a real paycheck.

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2 In addition to the sponsors of
3 House Bill 3031, the Chamber has been
4 working closely with Congressman Bob
5 Brady and State Representative Dwight
6 Evans on this issue. This is so
7 important to the business community that
8 Congressman Brady and State
9 Representative Josh Shapiro were guest
10 speakers at our last Board of Directors
11 meeting just days ago to discuss the
12 epidemic of youth violence.

13 We recognize that many of the
14 issues outlined in your letter of
15 invitation fall within the jurisdiction
16 of government, items such as job training
17 programs and TANF activities, as well as
18 extension of school hours. I commend you
19 for examining the feasibility of each and
20 every option, and hopefully with a unique
21 blend, they too dynamically will serve to
22 meet the interests of young
23 Philadelphians.

24 For our part, we believe that
25 the best thing the business community can

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2 do is to create mentorship opportunities
3 and summer jobs. We will be working with
4 our members to expand the number of
5 opportunities available to at-risk youth.

6 It is incumbent upon each of us
7 as stakeholders in the future of this
8 City and region to identify new -- and
9 perhaps I should add there, new and
10 effective ways to prevent violence,
11 especially among our youth, and that is
12 why the Chamber will continue to garner
13 bipartisan support for and passage of
14 House Bill 3031.

15 I might add, our sense is that
16 they won't take this up until after the
17 turn of the year. So we're not hearing
18 anything as far as it being accelerated
19 in the months of October, November or
20 December, but we're monitoring that.
21 We're ready to go to apply the
22 appropriate political pressure in order
23 to put this in place.

24 In closing, let me reiterate
25 that a job is the best social tool in the

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2 proverbial box. We thank you for your
3 interest and I thank you for the
4 opportunity to bring my colleagues with
5 me here today to provide comment, and I
6 do believe that working in alliance with
7 our region's companies and employers and
8 City Council, we will provide meaningful
9 jobs for youth and make a positive
10 difference.

11 Thank you.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
13 you.

14 Councilman Goode.

15 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you,
16 Madam Chair.

17 Good afternoon, Governor.

18 First let me applaud you for your
19 testimony and for your work on this
20 initiative, which I am in strong support
21 of House Bill 3031.

22 GOVERNOR SCHWEIKER: Thank you.

23 COUNCILMAN GOODE: I think it
24 is a great bill. I was glad to have a
25 chance to review it even before it was

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2 introduced. And I also applaud you and
3 your Chairman for the fact that not only
4 is he taking a lead on this, but that he
5 made that part of his opening remarks of
6 his tenure.

7 I do want to just pose some
8 issues that I've posed even in another
9 context as it relates to education, but I
10 want to pose these issues related to
11 employment today.

12 Yesterday there was a
13 discussion about the dropout rate and
14 what correlation it has to crime and
15 violence and murder, and I believe that
16 we are not examining that data. I
17 believe that we have not had access to
18 that data fully to see that full
19 connection. But clearly, even as reports
20 on the dropout rate were released within
21 the last couple of weeks, we clearly see
22 that up to 50 percent or so of people who
23 were entering ninth grade are dropping
24 out.

25 And even as we talk about

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2 improved test scores, one of the points I
3 made yesterday was the fact that test
4 scores are improving for those people who
5 stay. To a certain extent, we are
6 actually creaming in terms of the test
7 scores will go up for those people who
8 don't feel that they can keep up, choose
9 to leave if we don't get them to drop
10 back in, and actually getting them to
11 drop back in would actually force the
12 test scores down.

13 As we went through a discussion
14 and the Mayor came here to testify, he
15 talked about how to deal with dropout
16 prevention and he talked about truancy
17 and he talked about curfews, but more and
18 more I pressed on the issue of post
19 school-age dropouts and what are we going
20 to do about them. If they don't have to
21 go back to school and in some cases when
22 it's not age appropriate for them to go
23 back to school, how do we go out and
24 reach them and get them involved in GED
25 education, get them involved in job

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2 training? How do we reach them and how
3 do we help prepare them for employment
4 opportunity?

5 GOVERNOR SCHWEIKER: I think
6 you're dead on.

7 COUNCILMAN GOODE: But as we
8 move forward in this discussion, I'll
9 pose the question. House Bill 3031 is
10 great. It's a great tool. I know
11 there's other things that will be done on
12 the State level and on the local level to
13 create opportunities for ex-offenders.
14 I'm wondering what sort of energy and
15 resources is the Chamber going to commit
16 to those who are above 21, those who are
17 not necessarily identified within House
18 Bill 3031. But is there going to be a
19 push for those post school-age dropouts
20 of finding a way to create GED and job
21 training opportunities and finding ways
22 to help overcome that obstacle of being
23 stigmatized as an ex-offender?

24 Because prevention is great,
25 but the reason a lot of this has come up

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2 is because of the focus on the murder
3 rate, and in terms of the focus on the
4 murder rate, if that's what we're really
5 trying to get to and address as the
6 impetus, if we're going to address crime
7 and violence in extreme and to that
8 extreme, we literally have to deal with
9 people who don't necessarily have the
10 educational capacity, don't have the
11 employment opportunity and feel
12 completely shut out with no opportunity.

13 GOVERNOR SCHWEIKER: Yes. And
14 I mean, however you and I discuss it or
15 define it, it amounts to a significant
16 form of deprivation that young, full of
17 determination and may have screwed up
18 earlier in life still can help in
19 workplaces.

20 Well, first, we are addressing
21 ourselves to that -- who knows how this
22 is going to come out in Harrisburg -- at
23 age roughly 14 to 20, 21 to be specific.
24 We would encourage our members to be
25 attentive and to support this effort to

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2 hire offenders, former offenders, I
3 should say.

4 Ultimately -- and this is what
5 we hear from our companies and businesses
6 and member companies -- it ultimately
7 amounts to an individual decision for
8 them. I mean, no one is surprised to
9 hear that. So aside from that, I
10 couldn't speak for the business community
11 at this table at this point about their
12 propensity to do so, but I believe, by
13 and large, our members are civic and
14 social-minded enough that they would want
15 to work in tandem with you as we accent
16 the need for looking beyond the youth,
17 the young adult.

18 So with that -- let me also add
19 too that one of the, I think, virtues of
20 having Joe Frick ready to serve as Chair
21 over the next two years -- and I think
22 you know this biographically -- he's been
23 involved in workforce development, not as
24 a second job, has given it some serious
25 time over the years. It's a matter of

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2 passion and heart for Joe. It explains
3 why he offered the commentary and
4 perspective he did just days ago at our
5 annual meeting for close to 1,200 people,
6 saying not just look at it, we got to be
7 urgent in our actions.

8 But having said that, generally
9 on workforce development the Chamber is
10 supportive, and I do think indirectly,
11 Councilman, therein lies the fruits of
12 your labor, that the more we say that
13 this is important, the more that we
14 exhort not just our member companies, all
15 the business to look at these folks as
16 full of promise, then it will lead to
17 jobs, it will lead to paychecks and
18 ultimately lower unemployment or higher
19 employment rate.

20 So the other two that I think I
21 would mention as a third element of a
22 response is, we're serious to the point
23 that -- and I think this is where you
24 could be heard, sir -- is, we're going to
25 be working with the Daily News. You

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2 probably know from time to time, under
3 the guise of Rethinking Philadelphia, the
4 pretty impressive journalistic effort to
5 examine what we're doing well in the City
6 and areas that certainly need attention
7 and what may ail us. And we all know
8 whether it's violence by kids or violence
9 by older adults, we've got to work to
10 eliminate it.

11 And so the next Rethinking
12 Philadelphia gathering will be dedicated
13 to not just the improper decision by
14 young Philadelphians to use weapons to be
15 violent, we can take a look at that as
16 well. So I would extend a public
17 invitation to you to think about
18 participating. We'd like to hear your
19 point of view.

20 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Absolutely,
21 because my concern is not just a matter
22 of age consideration and whether the
23 people we need to target are between the
24 ages of 14 and 21, but my concern is if
25 they are ex-offenders, the extent to

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2 which they still face bias within the job
3 market and how we begin to mitigate that.
4 My concern is, if we are targeting people
5 that we think are most likely to murder
6 or be murdered, they cannot be captured
7 by House Bill 3031. House Bill 3031 will
8 do a lot to prevent, and that's why I'm
9 in strong support of it, but there's a
10 lot that needs to be done in terms of
11 intervention if we are serious.

12 GOVERNOR SCHWEIKER: We need to
13 stay up with you on this. As you well
14 know -- you both are accomplished
15 officeholders -- in Harrisburg, we've had
16 to seek Council about how you really
17 improve the chances for passage of a
18 3031. And so a lot of the definitional
19 elements are a direct consequence of
20 people on both side of the fence, I might
21 add, republic, democrat, urban, suburban
22 and how we can make this acceptable from
23 a constitutional standpoint as well.
24 That's why we want to work with -- and I
25 think it comes back to your instincts and

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2 viewpoint as well, whether it's WorkReady
3 Philadelphia or the Philadelphia Youth
4 Network with whom we'll work when it
5 comes to helping out these kids. We've
6 got to work with the people who do the
7 front-line work, because they can give
8 you the most dependable insights in order
9 to be effective here.

10 Can I just say one other thing,
11 Councilman Goode? I appreciate the fact
12 that you talk about the Mayor's
13 testimony. As you know, the Mayor and I
14 created a pretty significant partnership,
15 and he mentioned test scores. I don't
16 know about you. I'll take improving test
17 scores compared to what we've endured in
18 years gone by, and I think we're making
19 real progress there, but I do believe
20 that the most important form indirectly
21 so of economic development is what goes
22 on in our public school classrooms and
23 making sure ample resources are there and
24 having tremendous backing by all of us
25 who can influence thinking on the part of

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2 residents and business people, is that
3 the public school system is
4 quintessential to our economic and social
5 success here. And, yeah, we lose too
6 many of the kids, and it doesn't wait
7 until the junior year of high school. As
8 you know, kids start -- when they see
9 kids making more money through illicit
10 means than what they would do by sitting
11 in a classroom, they opt out, and it
12 happens as early as the eighth grade to
13 seventh grade when they're carrying guns
14 more than they're carrying books. That
15 should pain us all.

16 So that's why I think the Mayor
17 attends and talks about his take on
18 truancy, what the school system ought to
19 be doing better, certainly encouraging
20 families, keeping families together,
21 having caregivers or parents involved in
22 the school.

23 Parenthetically, I think a lot
24 of public schools do a much better job of
25 being accommodating to parents. When

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2 you're working two jobs, it's not like
3 you can show up at 9 o'clock in the
4 morning for a conference. If you're
5 working two jobs, it's not like you can
6 show up at 5 after 3:00 in the afternoon.
7 If you've been busting your butt and
8 you're tired, you may have to look for a
9 different time to have that interaction
10 between the teacher and the parent. Some
11 are not good in accommodating that.

12 So I think the Mayor is tuned
13 in on that pretty well, and we want to
14 stay attuned to that, because whether
15 it's fighting truancy or keeping kids in
16 school, I think our job of creating a
17 sense of promise in them that this is a
18 rewarding city or place is damaged if we
19 don't keep them in school.

20 So we're fervent believers that
21 the business community, where possible,
22 has to back the efforts of the public
23 school system. That's why we have
24 that -- maybe you could participate, too.
25 I think you'd love it. I know you're in

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2 schools plenty, but our Read to Me
3 program is where we do -- there are about
4 900 pre-K and kindergarten classrooms in
5 this City, and some day I'd like to
6 see -- and just for a couple of hours
7 each day, coming along with books that
8 are left behind in the libraries, so it's
9 a permanent contribution. Top-level
10 executives get into the schools and they
11 read to the kids, and the kids love it,
12 the adults love it, they want to come
13 back, but the point is, our drive is all
14 about getting them to understand that
15 they can help even if it's just for three
16 hours. Maybe it could be three days or
17 three weeks or maybe a permanent backing
18 of a school, but our preoccupation is
19 exposing folks who otherwise would not
20 get into public school classrooms to see
21 that they can help, and the kids
22 absolutely love it. I mean, any child
23 likes attention. They come in and they
24 literally read and they leave books
25 behind.

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2 always getting that high school diploma
3 at age 17, 18 or 19. Got you.

4 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Because even
5 for those employers that we can reach
6 that are open to the idea of hiring
7 ex-offenders within that age group, they,
8 with the successful passage of all these
9 bills, can receive a work opportunity tax
10 credit from the federal level, can
11 receive a youth employment incentive tax
12 credit at the state level and can receive
13 an ex-offender employment tax credit at
14 the local level. And so the issue is, we
15 want to go out and find jobs. And my
16 comments are not lent toward which tool
17 we use, but lent toward using all of
18 them.

19 GOVERNOR SCHWEIKER: We're on
20 it.

21 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
23 you very much. Certainly Councilman
24 Goode said it better than any of us can
25 when he read from the autobiography.

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2 We've been talking for months and we
3 talked this summer about the whole issue
4 of ex-offenders and hiring people. We
5 have people who come to us every day who
6 represent ex-offenders, some who are out
7 of prison, some who are in who want to
8 make a positive contribution and who
9 realize that we're all part of the same
10 community.

11 And certainly Councilman Goode
12 talked about a tax credit. We're happy
13 to work with you and the business
14 community that you represent in any way
15 we can for credits. We support any of
16 that, as he's likewise said, that would
17 help to make it more attractive for
18 certainly the private industry to hire
19 this population, because otherwise we'll
20 only be here next year with the same
21 issues because people are untrained and
22 unemployed.

23 So, again, we thank you very
24 much.

25 GOVERNOR SCHWEIKER: Thank you.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: We
3 have a gentleman who is sitting just
4 behind you who represents years of being
5 incarcerated who sat here both days
6 trying to get information that he can use
7 to empower his community that he can send
8 back to those who are in prison.

9 GOVERNOR SCHWEIKER: We look
10 forward to continued efforts and what I
11 think is a good working relationship, and
12 I would say that as Councilman Goode's
13 dad would assert, working together I
14 think Philadelphians have a shot at the
15 whole farm, in the proverbial sense, not
16 just the sharecroppers piece.

17 Point made. Thank you.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
19 you very much. Thank you. Thank you.

20 Mr. William Nesheiwat
21 representing Councilwoman Donna Miller.

22 Thank you very much and we
23 thank the Councilwoman for having you
24 represent her. Thank you very much.
25 Identify yourself again for the record.

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2 Thank you.

3 MR. NESHEIWAT: Good afternoon,
4 Madam Chair and Councilman Goode. My
5 name is William Nesheiwat,
6 N-E-S-H-E-I-W-A-T. Unfortunately,
7 Councilwoman Donna Reed Miller was unable
8 to attend. She's the Councilwoman for
9 the 8th Councilmanic District and the
10 Chair of City Council's Committee on
11 Public Safety.

12 We want to begin by thanking
13 you, Councilwoman Blackwell, for holding
14 these hearings, and today I will be
15 testifying about a problem that affects
16 the entire City of Philadelphia and even
17 the neighboring suburbs. I will be
18 testifying today specifically on gun
19 legislation. This is an attempt to
20 provide a solution to the overwhelming
21 problem.

22 I would like to begin by
23 thanking those who have taken an interest
24 in Philadelphia and its problem with the
25 violence. All of you here today

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2 recognize that there is a problem, and I
3 want to thank you personally for showing
4 your interest and support.

5 Together, Councilman Clarke and
6 Councilwoman Miller have introduced seven
7 pieces of legislation aimed at addressing
8 the problems with violence, specifically
9 with guns.

10 Our legislation is not intended
11 to impede anyone's Second Amendment
12 rights. The intent of this legislation
13 is simply to establish rules that govern
14 responsible gun ownership.

15 Unfortunately, the State has the power to
16 make these laws and will not let us,
17 Philadelphia, control or legislate our
18 own gun laws.

19 The gun laws that I'm referring
20 to, the legislation before City Council,
21 I'll begin with Bill No. 040117,
22 addresses straw purchasing. Straw
23 purchasing is when someone makes a
24 business of legally buying guns and then
25 illegally selling them on the streets,

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2 and many of our murders are a result of
3 guns obtained in this fashion. This is
4 legislation that will only limit the
5 purchasing of guns to one gun a month.

6 Bill 040118 addresses
7 ammunition by requiring the reporting of
8 ammunition sales to the Police
9 Department.

10 Bill No. 040132 prohibits
11 possession, sale and transfer of firearms
12 by persons subject to protection from
13 abuse orders. Fortunately, the State
14 passed House Bill 1717, which went into
15 effect on May of this year, and House
16 Bill 1717 addresses this issue.

17 Bill No. 040136 regulates the
18 acquiring or transferring of any firearm
19 within the City of Philadelphia.

20 Bill No. 040137 requires the
21 reporting of an application for or
22 renewal of a license to carry a firearm.

23 Bill No. 040312 requires the
24 temporary removal of firearms of persons
25 possessing a risk of imminent personal

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2 injury to self or others.

3 Finally, Bill No. 040315
4 provides for the prohibition and
5 registration of certain assault weapons.

6 Again, the purpose of these
7 bills are not to take away people's
8 Second Amendment rights, but rather to
9 implement responsible gun ownership laws.

10 Last month, we rallied in the
11 State Capital trying to tell the
12 lawmakers that we are fed up and it is
13 time for the State to give us,
14 Philadelphia, the power to stop the
15 violence in our streets. We had over
16 3,000 Philadelphian demonstrators at the
17 Capital steps.

18 Do you know that we have
19 reached 329 murders as of today? We have
20 completed 298 days this year. That means
21 that more than one person is getting
22 killed every day in the streets of
23 Philadelphia. Since we only have 67 days
24 left this year, how many more will be
25 killed? At least 74 more, according to

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2 our current track record. We are losing
3 people here in Philadelphia just like in
4 Iraq, and they are at war. What is the
5 problem?

6 We have definitely passed last
7 year's murder rate and it is only
8 increasing. We need to do something now
9 to stop the violence. I am aware that
10 there is only so much that elected
11 officials can do, but together the
12 community, side by side, with elected
13 officials, we can make a difference. And
14 I know you care. That is why you are
15 here today.

16 As you all know, we cannot
17 legislate attitude change, but it is a
18 start. It is important to start with why
19 we are holding our hearings. The current
20 violence we are seeing every day on the
21 news did not start overnight, and the
22 solution will not happen overnight
23 either.

24 In separate Committee hearings
25 we have been discussing the Blueprint for

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2 a Safer Philadelphia and its ten-year
3 plan. We chose ten years because we felt
4 that this process would take about ten
5 years to make a real difference.

6 Philadelphia's murder rate is
7 an issue that has been ongoing for some
8 time now, and in an effort to address
9 this problem, Councilwoman Miller has
10 joined forces with Councilwoman Tasco and
11 State Representative Dwight Evans to hold
12 public hearings at local high schools in
13 the evenings. We understand that it is
14 difficult for most people to attend our
15 public hearings during the day, so we
16 held four Committee hearings last Council
17 session in high schools all around the
18 City and we are holding four Committee
19 hearings this session. We were over in
20 Overbrook High School, West Philadelphia
21 High School and Strawberry Mansion High
22 School last month and this month.
23 Tonight at 7:00 p.m. we will be in
24 Bartram Main High School for our final
25 joint Committee of Public Safety and

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2 Committee of Public Health and Human
3 Services.

4 Gun violence is only a part of
5 what we are here for today. We are here
6 to show our young people that they are
7 not destined to a violent end. We want
8 to offer them alternatives to taking
9 lives as a way of resolving disputes. We
10 want to give them other options for their
11 futures. We want to let them know that
12 there is a bright future ahead of them
13 and not one of doom and gloom.

14 Our goal in holding these
15 hearings is to make Philadelphia a safer
16 place, a safer place to live in, a safer
17 place to visit, a place where our drives
18 to work are safe and ultimately a place
19 where children can safely play in front
20 of their houses or go to school without
21 the fear of being senselessly gunned
22 down.

23 Thank you for giving me the
24 opportunity to testify before this
25 Committee, Madam Chair.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
3 you so much, Mr. Nesheiwat, and we
4 appreciate the job you do and we
5 appreciate your testimony and certainly
6 cataloguing and listing the various bills
7 that this Council has been dealing with
8 with regard to guns and possession, et
9 cetera. Thank you very much.

10 Any questions?

11 (No response.)

12 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
13 you very much.

14 MR. NESHEIWAT: Thank you,
15 Madam Chair.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Is
17 there anyone else here who would like to
18 testify?

19 (No response.)

20 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: At
21 this time, we will again, as we said
22 yesterday, we will show the clips from a
23 DVD we showed yesterday dealing with
24 violence, after which we will recess
25 subject to the call of the Chair.

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2 We thank you all for your
3 testimony, all who have listened, all who
4 have been here and participated. Very,
5 very, very important testimony has taken
6 place these last two days. This DVD is a
7 very important document to deal with the
8 issue as well, and we will be putting
9 together other documents, a report, and
10 we will be getting back to everyone about
11 this issue what this Committee thinks.

12 We especially thank Councilman
13 Goode, who gave a heart-rendering
14 testimony. You know, some things are
15 said in special ways, and we thank him
16 for that and his father, former Mayor W.
17 Wilson Goode as well. Thank you all.

18 (Tape begins.)

19 * * *

20 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: By way
21 of just a correction, we will make
22 certainly this DVD from Sharon Baptist
23 part of the record. We will also make,
24 instead of compiling a report -- I thank
25 my colleague for suggesting it. We will

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2 make a whole electronic compilation of
3 these hearings available for those who
4 may want to use various parts of it,
5 along with this DVD.

6 After this is played, this
7 hearing will be adjourned subject to the
8 call of the Chair. Thank you. Thank
9 you.

10 (Tape continued to play.)

11 * * *

12 (Committee on Finance adjourned
13 at 1:30 p.m.)

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foregoing matter on October 25, 2006, and that

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