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COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
PUBLIC HEARING
COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND CIVIL SERVICE

- - - -

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Thursday, March 3, 2005
1:15 p.m.

- - - -

RESOLUTION 040171 - Resolution authorizing
the Committee on Labor and Civil Service to
hold public hearings to examine and
investigate the high number of unemployed
people in Philadelphia...

PRESENT:

COUNCILMAN JUAN RAMOS, Chair
COUNCILMAN W. WILSON GOODE, JR.
COUNCILMAN DAVID COHEN

- - - -

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2 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Good afternoon,
3 everyone. This is a hearing of the Committee
4 on Labor and Civil Service. I am Juan Ramos,
5 Chairman of the Committee. With me today is
6 my colleague Councilman W. Wilson Goode, Jr.
7 Thank you, Councilman, for joining me on this
8 continuation of a hearing that was started on
9 March 15th of 2004 on the reality of
10 unemployment in the City of Philadelphia.

11 Will the Clerk please read the title
12 of the resolution?

13 THE CLERK: Resolution 040171, a
14 Resolution authorizing the Committee on Labor
15 and Civil Service to hold public hearings to
16 examine and investigate the high number of
17 unemployed people in Philadelphia and the
18 effects this has on their families, the
19 viability of business, commerce and the City's
20 declining population base and to recommend
21 policies, programs and practices that are
22 intended to help reverse this trend.

23 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Thank you for
24 reminding us of what we're here for. It is a
25 continuation of a hearing that was started

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2 March 15th, as you heard from the Clerk.

3 I have been also asked in the last
4 couple months by the leader of District
5 Council 47, Mr. Tom Cronin, he wanted to
6 specifically talk about the impact of the
7 budget cuts and the impact of the reduction of
8 services by the decision of the Administration
9 where there were going to be a certain amount
10 of layoffs that would affect members of
11 District Council 47.

12 I received a letter from the
13 Managing Director. I had inquired about how
14 many layoffs would affect the members of
15 District Council 47.

16 At this time, I will ask the Clerk
17 to read the letter, please.

18 THE CLERK: "Dear Councilman Ramos,
19 I am writing the provide the requested
20 information for your public hearing to discuss
21 staffing reductions.

22 "Employees who were laid off and not
23 working, 98; employees who were demoted in
24 lieu of layoff, 34; employees who retired in
25 lieu of layoff, 20; employees who were

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2 transferred to other positions before or after
3 layoff, 48; employees who will be laid off
4 upon the return from Reg 32 Disability Leave,
5 2; total, 202.

6 "The staffing reduction process,
7 which began in January, continues. As
8 employees who are eligible to be demote in
9 lieu of layoff elect this option, additional
10 employees may receive layoff notices.

11 "Sincerely, Philip R. Goldsmith,
12 Managing Director."

13 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Thank you for
14 reading the letter from Mr. Philip Goldsmith.
15 That will be part of the record of this
16 hearing today.

17 Will the Clerk make sure that those
18 here who are interested in a copy of that
19 letter, we can provide it to them, please.

20 THE CLERK: It's on the table.

21 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Good.

22 How about we call forward our first
23 witness. I promised Tom Cronin that he'd be
24 first. I don't know if I promised, I just
25 thought that Tom brought this us, we were

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2 going to do a continuance let Tom Cronin be
3 first.

4 Please state your name and position
5 for the record, please.

6 MR. CRONIN: My name is Thomas Paine
7 Cronin. I'm President of AFSCME District
8 Council 47.

9 Mr. Chairman, before we start, let
10 me just -- I want to personally thank you for
11 honoring my request to have these hearings
12 because I think it's very important for not
13 only the union officers to be able to testify
14 on this, but to be able to hear from some of
15 our members firsthand the impact of these
16 layoffs. So I really appreciate your courtesy
17 in honoring my request and meeting with me and
18 pushing these hearings. So I just want to let
19 you know that.

20 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Well, thank you
21 so much. I see it as my duty, my obligation,
22 to make sure that labor is heard all the time.

23 MR. CRONIN: Thank you, sir.

24 Good afternoon. This afternoon you
25 are going to hear a great deal of testimony as

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2 to the impact that the Administration's
3 proposed layoffs are going to have services
4 provided to the people of Philadelphia. You
5 are also likely to hear that these layoffs are
6 necessary and are planned so as not to be
7 noticed by the public.

8 Let me remind you of two important
9 facts. One, while the number of layoffs may
10 seem small, some 200 people out of a current
11 city workforce of over 23,000, these are
12 really just the tip of the iceberg. Further,
13 since the year 2000, the City workforce has
14 been reduced by almost 2,000 people. In each
15 year of the Five-year Plan, there is a figure
16 that knows the number of positions
17 appropriated to each department. This number
18 is what should be. What you need to know is
19 what is the real number of workers. As both
20 workers and management appear before you, you
21 should ask them as to the number of unfilled
22 positions in each department or agency. I am
23 sure that you will find across the board that
24 every city department has fewer workers than
25 what is called for in the plan. This means

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2 that men and women who are working there are
3 forced to do the work of more than one person
4 to make up for the failure to fill those
5 vacancies.

6 Further, while some may say that the
7 vacancies are a normal occurrence, I will
8 suggest to you that they are, in many cases, a
9 deliberate strategy to reduce the personnel
10 costs to the City. A vacancy is one less
11 person to be paid, one more dollar saved. But
12 at what cost?

13 One less person means that people
14 who use City services will wait longer for
15 those services. It means that senior citizens
16 who use the City health centers to get their
17 prescriptions filled may now have to wait
18 three weeks rather than two for their
19 medications because there are fewer
20 pharmacists. It means that kids at recreation
21 centers no longer have after school or summer
22 programs which keep them constructively
23 engaged rather than just hanging around and
24 getting into trouble. It means that libraries
25 are open fewer hours; and when they are open,

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2 can no longer offer the programs that benefit
3 all the members of a neighborhood.

4 For the City employees who remain,
5 it means greater stress as they try to do the
6 work which was planned for others. Stress and
7 tension become the overwhelming characteristic
8 of their jobs. Their lives and lives of their
9 families are changed as these men and women
10 attempt to fulfill all of the demands of the
11 people that they are trying to serve. It is a
12 bad situation.

13 This brings us to the second fact
14 that you must understand. These layoffs and
15 vacancies are the inexorable result of what I
16 must call, quote, a frenzy of tax-cutting by
17 City Council and the Mayor. In the last few
18 years, there has developed an often
19 self-serving drum beat for the reduction and
20 elimination of just about every tax imposed by
21 the City. The mantra of "if you cut taxes,
22 they will come" has a strong allure for many
23 elected officials, especially when the
24 proponents are so effectively organized and
25 supported by the media.

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2 I will not sit here and say that I
3 like paying taxes; I don't believe anyone
4 does. Yet I will say that I recognize that my
5 taxes are used to support services and
6 programs that are important to the people and
7 which contribute to the betterment of this
8 City. Taxes provide services for those less
9 fortunate; for the very young and the very
10 old. They also provide for the services that
11 are the very essence of what makes a City.
12 They pay for what we want our government to do
13 for us. Yet we are at a moment of time when
14 government at all levels seemed to have
15 forgotten that fact. The Bush Administration
16 wants to make permanent tax cuts which have
17 produced the largest deficit in our nation's
18 history. These deficits present a serious
19 political problem which the President plans to
20 address by reducing federal domestic aid.
21 That means that cities and states will have
22 less money to supplement their budgets.

23 The same situation exists at the
24 state level. Though Governor Rendell has had
25 the political courage to face the situation

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2 and propose alternatives to cutting services,
3 in our City we need to show the same resolve
4 and support those measures which keep service
5 levels steady so that the quality of life of
6 our citizens does not undergo further erosion.

7 So today I ask you to dig deep into
8 the testimony presented here and acknowledge
9 that the people of Philadelphia deserve more
10 and better City services. Understand that the
11 people who provide those services need the
12 support and staffing to meet those needs,
13 because those are the services which define
14 what makes our City great. Thank you.

15 Mr. Chairman, we also have panels of
16 individuals from both of the locals that
17 provide those specific services which I'm sure
18 can also get into some of the nitty-gritty
19 questions you may have about staffing levels
20 and work specifically performed. So
21 hopefully, those questions can be addressed to
22 the local officers or the folks that are here
23 on those panels. Thank you.

24 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Thank you, Mr.
25 Cronin.

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2 Any questions for Mr. Cronin?

3 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Just a few. Good
4 afternoon, Mr. Cronin. Thank you for your
5 testimony.

6 MR. CRONIN: Good afternoon,
7 Councilman.

8 COUNCILMAN GOODE: I don't take
9 issue with much of what you said about the
10 future as we consider this year's budget and
11 tax bills before us.

12 I definitely take issue with the
13 fact you suggest in your testimony that the
14 current layoffs are a result of tax-cutting as
15 opposed to bad pension system investment,
16 money spent on special initiatives by the
17 Administration, and any series of other
18 things.

19 And so I ask you to please be
20 specific about what tax-cutting frenzy you're
21 referring to in your testimony.

22 MR. CRONIN: Well, I attended a --
23 let me just say this. I think there's an
24 organization called Philadelphia Forward which
25 has a web site which is a pretty good web

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2 site. Obviously, it's well financed by -- I'm
3 not quite sure whom. I could take a guess,
4 but it's clear that it's well financed. It's
5 clear that it's organized. It's also clear to
6 me that there's been a stampede, from what
7 I've seen in the newspapers and on the
8 electronic media, of tax-cutting, tax-cutting,
9 tax-cutting, and various proposals by
10 different Councilpeople that have said, "I
11 have a particular tax plan," and another
12 Councilperson said, "Well, I have another
13 one," and so forth and so on.

14 To me, when you look at all these
15 various tax plans, if you took them all and
16 you supported them all, almost no one would be
17 paying any taxes, whether its business, middle
18 class, or the poor, et cetera. What I'm
19 saying to you is that the most recent example
20 was the business privilege tax which we
21 came -- meaning, District Council 47 and its
22 locals -- the other day and we sat and we
23 listened to business person after business
24 person, the Chamber of Commerce folks, the Bar
25 Association. In fact, I think we sat here

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2 almost until 6 o'clock at night listening to
3 their testimony before we were called. Person
4 after person that testified before us was
5 asking, in this case I think it was Councilman
6 Nutter's bill, to completely eliminate the
7 business privilege tax which would mean, as I
8 understand the bill, approximately 300 million
9 other a number of different years.

10 COUNCILMAN GOODE: It's 300 million
11 a year.

12 MR. CRONIN: That's even worse to
13 me. What I see, when we go to the bargaining
14 table, what I see every time that we go with
15 not only our city locals but some of our other
16 locals, we are faced with minuscule wages. In
17 fact, in many cases not even wage increases
18 but bonuses --

19 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Mr. Cronin, I
20 don't want to interrupt you and I don't
21 disagree with anything you've said so far, so
22 I'm not interrupting you for that purpose.
23 That really doesn't address my question,
24 though.

25 MR. CRONIN: I'm trying to get to a

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2 complete answer.

3 COUNCILMAN GOODE: I want to clarify
4 my question.

5 If what you meant was the Tax Reform
6 Commission proposals are tax-cutting frenzy or
7 what Philadelphia Forward is supporting is a
8 tax-cutting frenzy, or what the editorial
9 boards have supported is a tax-cutting frenzy,
10 that's one thing and that is probably a true
11 statement and I would be in much agreement
12 with that about now and the future. My
13 question was, what tax-cutting frenzy led to
14 layoffs this year? I just don't believe that
15 to be factual.

16 MR. CRONIN: What I'm saying to you
17 is I think a climate has been created in the
18 City of Philadelphia for the last couple of
19 years which says, cut taxes, cut taxes, cut
20 taxes. And what I see in healthcare, in
21 particular, double digit inflation where we
22 have to keep lowering our plan, not having
23 enough benefits, constantly cutting those
24 benefits in order to try to service our
25 members, seeing fewer and fewer people in all

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2 the City departments. So I think that there's
3 been various tax cut proposals, most of which,
4 whether it's been Councilman Nutter or whether
5 it's been Councilman Cohen, I don't support
6 those tax cuts, because I think that it leads,
7 when you look at the federal government and
8 the state government, a situation where nobody
9 wants to pay but everybody wants the services.

10 COUNCILMAN GOODE: More specifically
11 I'm asking the question, which particular tax
12 cuts led to layoffs?

13 And I will dispute that fact because
14 there are no particular tax cuts that we have
15 actually enacted that led to layoffs.

16 MR. CRONIN: Well, I would say that
17 you and the Administration have a particular
18 difference of opinion on that because they
19 certainly believe that the tax cuts have.

20 COUNCILMAN GOODE: I'll just make a
21 statement rather than pose a question. The
22 statement simply is that what we did a few
23 years ago when the Mayor wanted to shift the
24 tax burden and essentially halt wage tax cuts
25 and accelerate the gross receipts portion of

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2 the business privilege tax in terms of cuts,
3 and all he was doing was shifting, he wanted
4 to essentially stop the wage tax cuts and
5 increase gross receipts portion of the
6 business privilege tax. Council made a
7 decision at that point not to follow that plan
8 per se but to keep the wage tax cuts that were
9 already scheduled and already part of the
10 Five-Year Plan. So that was not an actual
11 change and those were not necessarily
12 additional cuts. The only thing that happened
13 at that time that would have caused additional
14 cuts was a provision in the Nutter bill at
15 that point that said that if the economy
16 improves, we will accelerate those cuts. And
17 a provision in the Mariano bill said as we
18 increase property tax revenue we will take
19 that additional revenue and put it into
20 additional business privilege tax cuts. What
21 has happened since then in reality is we
22 killed both of those provisions. So you do
23 not have the accelerated business tax cuts as
24 a condition of the Nutter provision because we
25 took it out. And you do not have additional

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2 property tax revenue put into additional
3 business tax cuts because we pulled it out.
4 And then when we actually passed a wage tax
5 cut bill this past spring, early summer, we
6 actually saved \$15 million in the Five-Year
7 Plan, the same Five-Year Plan that had no
8 money in it for labor contracts. What we
9 actually did was save \$15 million.

10 MR. CRONIN: Councilman, let me just
11 say this. I'm not here to get into a specific
12 debate or be the monkey in the middle between
13 the Council and the Administration. What I'm
14 saying and what I've made clear both to the
15 Administration and to various people in City
16 Council is whether it's the Mayor's proposed
17 tax cuts or City Council's proposed tax cuts I
18 don't agree. I don't agree that's our
19 position because we're the rubber meets the
20 road. What I see from my perspective -- each
21 of us have a different reality here -- is that
22 I see when we're talking about less and less
23 taxes, again, I don't care what level it is,
24 the people who get hurt are, first of all, my
25 people, meaning City workers, and the services

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2 that they provide. That's what I see. And we
3 go to the bargaining table with the City
4 Administration and we say to them, "Listen, we
5 want a modest wage increase, a modest one."
6 Nobody expects to get rich working for the
7 City of Philadelphia. When we can't get a
8 modest wage increase and we can't get a decent
9 benefit package when our healthcare is under
10 attack and now we're beginning to see our
11 pensions are under attack, I'm not for tax
12 cuts. If they want services, they've got to
13 agree to pay for them no matter whether it's
14 city, state, or the federal level.

15 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Mr. Cronin, I
16 don't disagree, again, with what you just
17 said. My only disagreement, and for clarity
18 of the record, is even for business tax cuts,
19 essentially those tax cuts, none of which has
20 been passed, so they couldn't have caused
21 layoffs because they haven't been passed, one.
22 And two, particularly none of the Council
23 bills, particularly the Nutter bill and/or my
24 bill will take effect until the year after
25 next, so they couldn't have caused layoffs.

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2 MR. CRONIN: Well, let me just say
3 this. We're just going to have to just
4 disagree on that. But again, even if it's in
5 the future, Councilman, again, whether it's
6 your bill or Councilman Nutter's bill, I'm not
7 for -- and I want to make it clear --
8 additional tax cuts because all it's going to
9 do is hurt services in the City of
10 Philadelphia.

11 COUNCILMAN GOODE: That can be clear
12 and we might agree upon it, but the issue is
13 whether it caused the layoffs that existed
14 this year. And that's not a true statement
15 and that's not a statement you can prove.
16 Philosophically you can be against
17 tax-cutting, you cannot prove that any tax
18 cuts that were enacted by this Council and
19 signed by the Mayor caused the layoff of any
20 one person --

21 MR. CRONIN: We're beginning to get
22 into, for whatever reason you're doing this, a
23 little gymnastics about an Administration has
24 the right to say what programs are going to
25 support, what programs are not going to

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2 support, begin to shift the money around,
3 begin to talk about different taxes. They've
4 done that. But what we know --

5 COUNCILMAN GOODE: And they --

6 MR. CRONIN: Councilman, let me
7 finish. You asked a question. You obviously
8 want to debate me on this, and that's fine, we
9 can do that. What I'm saying to you is
10 there's less and less money available. Now,
11 whether it's the tax cuts that have been
12 enacted, whether it's Administration's -- and
13 again, I want to make it clear. I don't
14 support those, and I've told that to the
15 Mayor. But nor do I support yours or
16 Councilman Nutter's or Councilman Cohen's or
17 anybody else's because what I see is it's
18 having a deleterious effect of services to the
19 people of Philadelphia and it's clearly
20 causing our people untold amount of pain,
21 whether they're actives or retirees. And now
22 what's happening is people are going after our
23 pensions. We talk about taxes, but it's
24 interesting on so many of these levels,
25 whether it's in City Council or the state or

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2 federal government, the people that get the
3 tax breaks, if you will, are big business; are
4 big business. And don't tell me that that
5 doesn't have a trickle-down effect or an
6 impact on what is going in the City of
7 Philadelphia.

8 COUNCILMAN GOODE: I'd vote against
9 probably all of them, if not almost all of
10 them. My point is -- and you still have not
11 proven your point that any of the tax cuts
12 that are actually enacted have caused one
13 layoff. The layoffs are a decision by the
14 Administration to balance the budget in the
15 way they want to balance the budget and is not
16 from the absence of revenue because revenue
17 has not decreased.

18 MR. CRONIN: Revenue has not
19 decreased?

20 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Revenue has not
21 decreased.

22 MR. CRONIN: Well where has it gone
23 then?

24 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Tax revenue has
25 increased.

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2 MR. CRONIN: Tax revenue has
3 increased? And it's increased because we've
4 given breaks to big business?

5 COUNCILMAN GOODE: I haven't given
6 breaks to big business, but do your homework,
7 tax revenue has increased.

8 MR. CRONIN: I think you need to do
9 your homework, Councilman. What I'm saying to
10 you is you need to talk to these people about
11 where the money has gone. I'm saying to you
12 that we don't have the money here to get
13 decent contracts and provide services to the
14 people of Philadelphia. And whether we're
15 talking about 2005 with whatever the Mayor has
16 done or we're talking about in the future your
17 proposals for tax cuts or Councilman Nutter's
18 proposals for tax cuts, that's not going to
19 improve the situation. And we're just going
20 to have to disagree on that. But what I think
21 people need to know is rather than the mantra
22 that we've heard from big business proponents
23 or other proponents that have come before here
24 is tax cuts, tax cuts, tax cuts, is the
25 question of how it's going to impact on the

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2 people of Philadelphia. We have always have
3 all kinds of money for stadiums; we don't have
4 the money for playgrounds. We have all kinds
5 of money for other things, but we don't have
6 the money for libraries. I've seen it myself
7 when I go to a district health center and I
8 say to the nurses, "There's been layoffs here.
9 Has that hurt you?" You know what they say to
10 me, "Well, it's not so much that the layoffs
11 have hurt us, but what's happened is this
12 steady attrition because we don't have enough
13 people to serve the people of Philadelphia."
14 That's what they say.

15 When you talk about additional tax
16 cuts, I don't see that helping the situation
17 because we're not getting any relief from the
18 state and we're not getting any relief from
19 the federal government.

20 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Mr. Cronin, I
21 have not advocated for additional tax cuts
22 today. All I said was the tax cuts did not
23 cause the layoffs. It's very hard for you to
24 defend even the Administration's position, if
25 you call it that --

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2 MR. CRONIN: I'm not defending the
3 Administration's position. I'm not defending
4 your position.

5 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Let me finish.

6 That tax cuts already took place
7 caused layoffs when later this afternoon it's
8 my guess that the Commerce Director will come
9 here and testify that the Administration still
10 plans on pursuing a half billion dollar
11 investment fund.

12 MR. CRONIN: Councilman Goode, I
13 don't know how much more clear I can make it
14 to you. I don't support what they're doing
15 and I don't support what you're doing. But
16 you know what, I think the people of
17 Philadelphia should know is in this City some
18 people get the tax breaks and some people
19 don't get the tax breaks. But what the people
20 need to know clearly is when you do give the
21 tax breaks what that means. And what it means
22 is what you're going to hear here, is cutting
23 back on libraries, cutting back on hours in
24 healthcare centers, crisis situations at the
25 prisons, and so forth and so on. And whether

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2 it's tax cuts or tax breaks -- because we're
3 playing a little semantic game here -- it's
4 still going to hurt the people of
5 Philadelphia.

6 COUNCILMAN GOODE: No, you're
7 playing a semantic game because I'm not
8 talking about tax cuts or tax breaks. What
9 I'm actually talking about is what tax policy
10 led to layoffs, and no tax policy led to
11 layoffs.

12 MR. CRONIN: I disagree with that.

13 COUNCILMAN GOODE: And you're wrong.

14 MR. CRONIN: We're just going to
15 have to disagree. That's going to be clear.

16 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Okay. I believe
17 that these public hearings serve a very
18 important purpose. One of the purposes is to
19 have an exchange. And Councilman Goode is
20 very good at exchanges and so is my dear
21 friend Tom Cronin in a very respectful way,
22 but we're here to see what are the real
23 numbers of workers being laid off.

24 Mr. Cronin makes it very clear, and
25 this is a trend that we have seen since the

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2 year 2000 where over 2,000 members from this
3 District Council have been terminated --

4 MR. CRONIN: No, I'm not talking
5 about 2,000 from this District Council. I'm
6 talking about 2,000 totally. I think what
7 we've seen in every -- again, what we've seen,
8 whether it's District Council 47, which I'm
9 speaking for, I'm not speaking for 33, but
10 it's clear that they've had a loss as well.

11 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: The 2,000 are a
12 combined number?

13 MR. CRONIN: Right. But you can
14 also say the same for -- when they closed
15 firehouses all around the City, that's a
16 problem. But I think the Fire Department, the
17 head of the fire union, you know, they can
18 come and they can speak for themselves. But I
19 see a deteriorating situation.

20 COUNCILMAN GOODE: But even in that
21 case, Mr. Cronin -- and once again, I'm not
22 arguing particularly this point. We put the
23 money back in the Fire Department to keep them
24 open. The Administration made a decision to
25 close them anyway.

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2 MR. CRONIN: Councilman, let me just
3 say this. We're getting ridiculous here.
4 Your problem with me isn't even this problem.
5 What's going on, City Councilpeople will stand
6 beside other representatives -- let's say it's
7 the Fire Department local. And they'll say,
8 "You know what, we don't want to see
9 firehouses close." But they really don't care
10 about libraries and health centers and some of
11 the others. It's a twofold thing. They will
12 say, "We don't want to see all these City
13 services closed but we want more and more tax
14 cuts and tax breaks." You can't have it both
15 ways. That's my point of view.

16 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Can I at this
17 time call on the panel that will accompany Mr.
18 Cronin from Local 2186, Michael Walsh. Is
19 Michael Walsh here?

20 Suzin Rigsby. Suzin, are you here?

21 Pat Hoberg. Pat, come forward.

22 And Audrey Roll.

23 MR. CRONIN: Thank you, Councilman.

24 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: You're welcome.

25 Mr. Cronin, if you care to join

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2 them, you're welcome to stay. We're here to
3 hear from you today.

4 MR. CRONIN: I'll be available, sir.

5 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Whoever wants to
6 be first can proceed, please. Identify
7 yourself and if you have a title with you that
8 you want to introduce into the record, please
9 do so.

10 MR. WALSH: Councilman Juan Ramos,
11 Councilman Wilson Goode, Jr., thank you for
12 the opportunity to testify here today. My
13 name is Michael Walsh. I'm the president of
14 AFSCME Local 2186, which represents first line
15 supervisors of administrative professional and
16 technical employees in every board,
17 department, and agency in the City of
18 Philadelphia.

19 Layoffs are an important issue for
20 the union and its members. Layoffs will cause
21 service cuts. Our families, our children, and
22 our members are residents of the City. We
23 take a double hit, jobs and services lost.

24 For this local, five departments
25 were hit: License and Inspections, MOIS,

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2 prisons, Philadelphia Commission on Human
3 Relations, and the Free Library or your
4 part-time book warehouse, no services
5 available.

6 For us, the largest cuts occurred in
7 the Free Library. Don't believe me, read the
8 City's own report. The latest quarterly city
9 managers report, dated February 15, 2005, for
10 the period ending December 31, 2004, listed
11 service hours as its No. 1 service indicator.
12 What does it say? At the branches in the
13 neighborhoods, hours of service have decreased
14 97,711 to 88,288. This is a reduction of 9423
15 units of service. It is a 9.6 reduction in
16 one reporting year.

17 How does this affect our communities
18 and children? As per the City's report, it
19 means 775,500 less visits to neighborhood
20 libraries; 406,608 less borrowed items, which
21 means our children are reading less; 49.3
22 decrease in electronic information access
23 category. How does this affect computer
24 skills?

25 Today, literacy and Internet access

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2 are major government initiatives. Someone
3 needs to inform the Free Library. Elliot
4 Shelkrot, the Free Library's director, has
5 informed the Philadelphia Inquirer that less
6 library hours are better. He should be asked,
7 how does less service promote children's
8 literacy? His own report, the one I cited,
9 challenges that view. Criticism without a
10 solution is a waste of everybody's time.

11 What budget category is
12 significantly increased? The category of
13 professional service contracts has increased
14 over \$31 million in just one year. This
15 increase would fund the Free Library system
16 for nine months of service. What we should do
17 is reduce personal service contracts before a
18 library is expressed, a media spin for
19 closing. Maybe children's literacy should
20 become a personal service contract.

21 On today's panel are three
22 professionally trained librarians. They will
23 discuss briefly the specifics of community and
24 children affected by the Free Library's
25 reorganization.

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2 On behalf of AFSCME Local 2186,
3 whose members, their spouses and dependents
4 are City residents, thank you for this
5 opportunity to testify.

6 Councilman, I'd like to turn it
7 over.

8 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Next person,
9 please proceed with your testimony. Please
10 give your name and title if you want to
11 include that into the record.

12 MS. RIGSBY: Good afternoon,
13 Councilman Ramos and Members of City Council.
14 My name is Suzin Rigsby. I am the branch
15 manager and children's librarian at the
16 Wyoming Avenue branch of the Free Library. My
17 branch is located in the Feltonville section
18 and is one of the branches designated to
19 become express in the near future.

20 Wyoming Branch is currently fully
21 staffed, one librarian who is the branch
22 manager and children's librarian, an adult
23 teen librarian, three full-time library
24 assistants, and a full-time municipal guard.
25 I have had three Master's degrees credits

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2 toward a doctorate. Our adult teen librarian
3 has two Master's degrees. When Wyoming Branch
4 becomes an express library, we will be
5 replaced by one library assistant with a high
6 school diploma. And, of course, none of the
7 current full-time staff will remain at the
8 branch.

9 Wyoming Branch serves one of th most
10 ethnically diverse populations in the City.
11 It is also one of the largest immigrant
12 populations in the City. Our patrons are
13 natives of Puerto Rico, Argentina, Venezuela,
14 Mexico, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Haiti,
15 Nigeria, Kenya, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos,
16 Korea, Pakistan, Jordan, Iraq, Palestine,
17 Morocco, and Yemen. Our branch has
18 collections of books, magazines and movies in
19 Spanish, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Chinese,
20 Haitian and Arabic. Nearly 60 percent of our
21 patrons speak a language other than English in
22 the home and over 40 percent have not
23 completed high school. Over 7 percent have
24 less than a fifth grade education.

25 To meet the needs of our patrons,

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2 Wyoming Branch offers two English as a Second
3 Language classes, a GED class, and English
4 tutoring. We also have a large collection of
5 books and tapes for English self-study. We
6 partner with Indo-Chinese Council, Nueva
7 Esperanza, Asociacion de Puertorriquenos En
8 Marcha, Episcopal Community Services, Tabor
9 Lutheran Church, Aspira, and other
10 community-based agencies to identify community
11 needs, select library resources to meet those
12 needs, and then direct residents to the
13 library to utilize our resources. Because of
14 our outreach, Wyoming Branch has had the fifth
15 highest program attendance in the Free Library
16 for the last two years, 13,100 in 2003, and
17 12,200 in 2004.

18 There are 14 schools that you use
19 Wyoming Branch, particularly Central East
20 Middle School, Clara Barton Elementary, Olney
21 High School, Feltonville Elementary, CEP
22 Hunting Park, and St. Ambrose Parochial.
23 Central East Middle and Clara Barton
24 Elementary are located directly across the
25 street from the library. There are nearly

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2 1900 students between these two schools. By
3 the end of this year, the School District will
4 open a new K through 8th grade mega-campus
5 directly across the street from Wyoming
6 Branch. Its anticipated enrollment will be
7 2500-plus students.

8 Just a few months ago in October
9 2004, I received a phone call from a member of
10 the library administration who was retiring.
11 She said that she had spoken with Elliot
12 Shelkrot, the library director, about the new
13 school being built across the street from
14 Wyoming, and Mr. Shelkrot, quote, nearly fell
15 off his Chair. She then told me that he was
16 concerned that we would be needing more staff
17 and maybe even an addition to our building in
18 order to accommodate all those students.
19 Then, six weeks ago, we found out that we were
20 instead going to become an express branch with
21 no librarians, less staff, and drastically
22 reduced hours.

23 As for our neighborhood schools,
24 Clara Barton has a very small library and no
25 librarian. Feltonville School has neither a

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2 library nor a librarian. And Central East
3 Middle has a librarian but a rather small
4 library. None of these schools have the
5 resources to meet the homework and research
6 demands of their students. Many of the
7 students are in the extended day program and
8 are not dismissed until 430 p.m.

9 If Wyoming Branch becomes an express
10 library, it will affect our patrons in the
11 follow ways:

12 We will lose our evening ESL class
13 for speakers of Vietnamese and Cambodian.
14 This is one of the few ESL classes in the city
15 that is geared solely to speakers of these
16 languages.

17 We will lose our morning English
18 tutoring.

19 We will loss our community
20 partnerships, because most of the outreach in
21 cultivating a partnerships that I do takes
22 place in the mornings.

23 Unemployed adults will lose access
24 to our resources for preparing their resumes
25 and searching for jobs. Because the schools

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2 are right across the street, adults must come
3 to the library in the morning before the
4 facility becomes overwhelmed with students.

5 Because this a poor neighborhood,
6 many families do not own cars. To visit
7 another library will require the use of SEPTA
8 and this will be both costly and time
9 consuming.

10 No other library in our vicinity has
11 the extent of language resources that Wyoming
12 Branch has. Our patrons will be deprived, and
13 it will place an undue burden on other library
14 branches which cannot accommodate heavy
15 demands in Haitian, Arabic, Vietnamese, and
16 Spanish.

17 Wyoming is one of only two branches
18 in the City with a Haitian language
19 collection. West Oak Lane is the other.

20 Wyoming Branch is five blocks from
21 Roosevelt Boulevard. Our nearest library
22 neighbor is Greater Olney, which right now
23 isn't even open. If it were open, it's across
24 12 lanes of Roosevelt Boulevard which
25 constitutes a real danger for children to

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2 cross and most parents don't allow their
3 children to ride SEPTA alone.

4 Wyoming Branch has been paired with
5 Bushrod Branch, which means that our patrons
6 are supposed to go there for full library
7 service. Bushrod is 3.55 miles of away;
8 again, across 12 lanes of Roosevelt Boulevard.

9 Neighborhood teens will not have a
10 safe place to gather in the evenings to study
11 and spend time with friends.

12 Preschool groups cannot cross
13 Roosevelt Boulevard to get to another library.

14 Students in extended day programs
15 that do not dismiss until 4:30 p.m. will not
16 be able to use Wyoming Branch's resources at
17 all, as they will just be arriving at the
18 Library when it is time to close. The public
19 computers will shut down at 4:45 p.m.

20 Classes will not be able to visit
21 Wyoming Branch as part of the school day and
22 do research under the assistance of
23 professional librarians.

24 On a final note, when Wyoming Branch
25 was closed for renovations in 1998 and '99, I

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2 received a phone call from a kindergarten
3 teacher at Feltonville Elementary. She was
4 very upset that the branch had been closed
5 during that entire school year and she said it
6 was first time that her kindergarten class was
7 not adequately prepared to go on to first
8 grade. She directly blamed the closure of the
9 library for her students' incomplete
10 preparation.

11 If Wyoming Branch becomes express
12 and loses its librarians, how many more
13 students will be inadequately prepared because
14 they've lost access to resources vital to
15 their education? Changing Wyoming from full
16 service to anything less will leave more than
17 one child behind. It will leave the community
18 of Feltonville drastically behind. And
19 considering that so many of our patrons came
20 to America to seek out better lives for their
21 children, we owe them the best, not a mere
22 shadow of what American education is supposed
23 to be all about.

24 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Thank you so much
25 for your testimony. I can relate to the

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2 library because I know the library; I've used
3 it before. And my father still lives in the
4 Feltonville section not too far away from the
5 library. And I have seen how the neighborhood
6 has changed, how it's become a United Nations
7 type of community where people from all over
8 the world have settled in this community. And
9 I've been very much aware of all of the
10 programs that are available in so many
11 different languages to the people of that
12 area. That library and its hours should not
13 be curtailed. And the other libraries' hours
14 should not be curtailed as well. But I know
15 that this library, with I having a personal
16 relationship with it, I feel very, very
17 strongly that the people of that community
18 would definitely lose out if we curtailed the
19 hours or close down this branch. I don't
20 believe we're talking about or the
21 Administration's talking about closing --
22 they're talking about closing and curtailing
23 hours, but there are many members of this
24 Council that are not for it. So I thank you
25 so much for reminding me of my old library and

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2 all the services that it provides to the
3 people of that community.

4 MS. RIGSBY: My pleasure. Thank
5 you.

6 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Is there anyone
7 else here from the panel that wants to speak?

8 Please proceed.

9 MS. HOBERG: Good afternoon,
10 Councilman Ramos and the Members of the
11 Committee. My name is Patricia Hoberg. I'm
12 the library supervisor and the adult librarian
13 at the Frankford Branch of the Free Library,
14 and I have been in that position since 1983.
15 For me, the present layoffs represent the
16 final blow to 14 years of chipping away at the
17 library staff and thereby seriously eroding
18 the service that we can deliver to our
19 community.

20 In 1991, Frankford had a staff of
21 nine full-time employees and one part-time
22 employee. That staff consisted of one library
23 supervisor, two librarians, one library
24 assistant 2, four library assistant 1s, one
25 part-time page, and a municipal guard. We

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2 were open for a total 37 hours per week,
3 Monday through Wednesday, Friday and Saturday,
4 and we were closed on Thursday. Other
5 branches contributed staff to our Saturday
6 schedule.

7 In 1992, we lost one librarian
8 position and one librarian assistant position,
9 reducing the staff to seven full-time
10 employees and one part-time employee. We
11 continued with the same schedule of hours open
12 to the public.

13 In 1995 we lost the part-time
14 employee, reducing the staff to seven. We
15 also added afternoon hours on Thursday for a
16 total of 41 hours open. Fewer employees, more
17 hours open, but we were still receiving help
18 with our Saturday schedule from other
19 libraries.

20 In 1996, all branches opened on
21 Saturday, so Frankford lost the help it had
22 been getting from other branches on the
23 Saturday schedule. Frankford shifted to a
24 half-day service on Saturday with full day
25 service on Thursday. Keeping the same number

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2 of hours, but covering those hours with less
3 staff. The staff of seven full-timers
4 continued for seven more years.

5 Then in 2003, we replaced a
6 full-time library assistant with a part-timer
7 for a total of six and a half employees but
8 continued to maintain 41 hours open, full days
9 on Monday through Friday, 1:00 to 5:00 on
10 Saturday. In true library die-hard fashion,
11 we coped.

12 In 2004, one of our library
13 assistants transferred to another city
14 department. That position remained vacant,
15 and as a result of the layoffs has been lost.
16 This leaves us with a total of five full-time
17 employees and one part-timer, one library
18 supervisor, one librarian, one library
19 assistant 2, one full-time assistant 1, one
20 half-time library assistant, and one municipal
21 guard. At this point, we have had to reduce
22 hours by closing on Saturday, taking us back
23 to our 1991 schedule of 37 hours but now
24 operating with four less employees a reduction
25 in staff of 43 percent.

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2 Even with the reduction in hours,
3 this schedule has been impossible to maintain
4 consistently. When one full-time library
5 assistant uses a week's vacation, we must
6 either get help from another library or close
7 our branch for a part of the day on two days
8 out of five. At those times, staff is
9 stretched so thin that there is barely enough
10 staff to handle the customers that come
11 through the front doors, let alone complete
12 the behind-the-scenes work that must be done
13 to keep the building functioning as a library.

14 With each employee lost, we have
15 analyzed the work flow and looked for ways to
16 cut, streamline or reorganize until we can cut
17 no more. We have sacrificed quality in order
18 to maintain quantity, but in the last year
19 quantity has suffered as well. Work piling up
20 behind the scenes, that is, books videos,
21 periodicals, et cetera, that must be entered
22 into the computer in addition to other steps
23 before they can be made available means that
24 these materials are not ready for the public
25 when they need them. Shelves that are not

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2 read and straightened result in materials that
3 are not where they ought to be and, therefore,
4 as good as lost. Replacement of popular
5 materials that have worn out is not happening
6 quickly enough so the public cannot borrow the
7 items they most want. All of these things
8 affect the count of items that have circulated
9 to the public and that count has been dropping
10 steadily.

11 We measure the number of people who
12 come to the library via an exit turnstile. In
13 1991, we counted 98,765 people. In 2004, we
14 counted 96,173. A 43 percent decrease in
15 staff corresponded with only a 3 percent
16 decrease in the numbers of people looking for
17 help. In Frankford, 20.83 percent of the
18 population is below the poverty level, and 36
19 percent do not have a high school diploma. We
20 serve a public that often needs a lot of help
21 in vital areas of their lives, whether it is
22 applying for employment or unemployment
23 compensation, obtaining an e-mail account
24 because that's essential if you're applying
25 for jobs via the Internet, developing a

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2 resume, obtaining income tax forms, applying
3 for financial aid, obtaining materials for
4 their GED or identifying classes that they can
5 attend.

6 Nowadays, much of those vital areas
7 are being handled over the Internet and often
8 people are coming into the library because
9 they have little or no computer skills and no
10 where else to turn for help. Assisting them
11 with their applications and their resumes can
12 be a very time-consuming proposition.
13 Unfortunately, sometimes we are spread so thin
14 that we are unable to give everyone all the
15 help they require. And then because we care
16 about people and about doing a good job, we
17 worry that they have left with a resume that
18 is not all that it could be or an application
19 that is incomplete.

20 I would term the library layoffs
21 penny wise and pound foolish. For the small
22 percentage of the total budget that they
23 represent, the City is sacrificing tremendous
24 value.

25 Thank you for the opportunity to

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2 address the Committee.

3 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Thank you, Pat,
4 for your testimony. Another story of another
5 neighborhood library. In Pat's case,
6 Frankford Library

7 Can we proceed with Audrey Roll?

8 Please state your name and your
9 title, if you wish, for the record, please.

10 MS. ROLL: Good afternoon,
11 Councilman Ramos and City Councilmembers Goode
12 and Kenney. My name is Audrey Roll, and I am
13 the library supervisor and children's
14 librarian for the Cecil B. Moore Branch of the
15 Free Library of Philadelphia, which is located
16 at 2320 West Cecil B. Moore Avenue.

17 I'm not going to take a lot of time,
18 but I ask for your permission and your
19 attention to further present information
20 regarding the issue that will affect the
21 constituents that you represent. The issues
22 simply are the minimization of library hours
23 and services and the elimination of branch
24 supervisors and professional librarians in the
25 20 branches of the Free Library of

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2 Philadelphia.

3 If Cecil B. Moore Branch Library is
4 closed mornings and only open for four hours
5 daily, it will be impossible to provide
6 important services for the children in the
7 community. My branch provides library
8 services to children from 14 public, private,
9 and parochial schools, just as the other
10 libraries do. In the absence of school
11 libraries, which is a reality for Philadelphia
12 schools system-wide, I am called upon during
13 the early hours of the day to provide library
14 orientations, library talks and tours, book
15 talks, book selection for reading and
16 assignments, as well as a myriad of
17 school-curriculum-supporting and
18 reading-promoting activities. Like all the
19 branch libraries in the City, I do this daily.
20 What this all means specifically is that I
21 service six to nine groups of 25 to 40
22 school-age children per week. I can see 360
23 school-age children per week who come with
24 their teachers from nearby schools. These
25 children, for the most part, seldom come

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2 accompanied by parents or by themselves. They
3 most certainly will not have the experience
4 which enriches their academics and encourages
5 their achievement in school if the library is
6 closed in the morning.

7 I also service the Head Start,
8 preschools, and child care providers in the
9 community. There are eight institutions whose
10 teachers routinely bring the preschool
11 children to my library for story hours and
12 book selection during the morning hours. In
13 these times when early learning programs are
14 taking financial cuts that minimize their
15 ability to provide quality experiences for
16 these youngest children, the conscientious,
17 care providers are actively turning to the
18 libraries city wide as a valuable resource. I
19 can see four to six groups of 35 to 40
20 preschoolers, ages 2 to 5 years old each week.
21 This is about 180 or more of our youngest
22 children. When the children visit, they
23 borrow books. Children not borrowing books
24 means that the foundation, which is
25 circulation and is the measurements of a

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2 location's value, will be questionable. My
3 greatest fear would be to see the closing of
4 the branch. The community of Cecil B. Moore
5 is 97.6 percent African-American, who at the
6 percentage rate of 46.5 percent do not have
7 high school diplomas. They have a per capita
8 income of \$9,799, which puts 40.5 percent of
9 the community below the poverty level. A
10 needed service is being minimized,
11 compromised, in a community where it is needed
12 the most.

13 The 20 branches will be staffed by
14 non-professional library assistants. This
15 means that there will not be a professional
16 library supervisor, which I am, or a
17 librarian, which I also am, in the branches to
18 conduct the programs that I've described.
19 Educated, experienced professionals -- I've
20 been 26 years in my profession -- liaison with
21 the schools to promote and conduct programs
22 that promote reading. They not only conduct
23 programs, but they interact with the community
24 to make the library a part of the
25 infrastructure that sustains that community.

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2 I've achieved partnerships with institutions
3 and community agencies, just as Ms. Rigsby
4 described.

5 Philadelphia Health Federation, I've
6 partnered with for the last three years now to
7 provide parent talks, story times, and to
8 maintain a play group of teen mothers who come
9 every single Tuesday for the last three years.

10 I've partnered with the Rosenbach
11 Museum to bring programs to school groups for
12 the second year.

13 The YMCA had collaborated with me to
14 bring a series of family literacy programs to
15 parents and children for the past two years.
16 Simple problem being, if parents aren't good
17 readers, the children won't be.

18 I support Temple University Senior
19 Corp by doing trainings for the 100
20 participants twice a year for the third year.

21 And since the public schools
22 reorganized to have private concerns manage
23 locations, I've partnered with Reynolds
24 Elementary, Gideon, and Morris Elementary
25 Schools to orient their new teachers to the

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2 community before placement in their school.

3 In 2002, I hosted a quarter of a
4 million dollar exhibit of African sculpture
5 for the enjoyment of children and adults alike
6 in our community.

7 Libraries are vital to communities
8 in ways that they have never have been before.
9 If there are no professional librarians in the
10 branches, then the community loses a major
11 artery, and we as a city of children bleed.
12 Thank you.

13 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Thank you so
14 much, Audrey, for your testimony, representing
15 a historical part of this City, the area
16 around Cecil B. Moore and the library that has
17 been there serving our children particularly
18 for many, many years, and we're very proud of
19 your commitment and your tireless work on
20 behalf of that community, the Cecil B. Moore
21 Library.

22 Councilman Cohen has joined us.
23 He's a member of this Committee. Thank you,
24 Councilman, for coming down to join us in this
25 discussion on the reality of unemployment in

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2 the City of Philadelphia and how it is
3 affecting our municipal workforce.

4 At this time, do any of the members
5 of the Committee have any questions for this
6 panel?

7 We have a second panel coming up.

8 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Are we speaking
9 of the next budget? Are these the cuts we're
10 talking about, what's to come? Or are these
11 cuts that already have been made?

12 Is there anybody at the witness
13 table that can answer?

14 MS. ROLL: Excuse me. Before you go
15 on, I want to apologize. Is this Councilman
16 Cohen.

17 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Councilman Cohen.

18 MS. ROLL: I apologize, I think I
19 called you Kenney. It's not that I'm here
20 every day.

21 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: We're going to
22 answer your question in one minute, Councilman
23 Cohen, but I've been asked my colleague
24 Councilman Wilson Goode that would like to
25 make an announcement.

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2 COUNCILMAN GOODE: The hearing
3 scheduled for 2 o'clock in the Committee of
4 Commerce and Economic Development will begin
5 as soon as this hearing is finished.

6 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Thank you,
7 Councilman Goode.

8 Councilman Cohen, the presentation
9 today by AFSCME District Council 47 -- we have
10 already heard from its president, Mr. Tom
11 Cronin -- this panel was talking about the
12 closing of libraries or the reduction in
13 services and the layoffs in our libraries.

14 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Well, are they
15 talking about cuts that have taken place or
16 that would take place from if the present
17 Mayor's budget recommendations are carried
18 out?

19 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: I've heard that
20 of the cuts that will take place, if the cuts
21 that are being proposed by the Administration
22 go forward. And in their testimony they have
23 also talked about the continuous cut over the
24 period of time of services in our libraries.

25 MR. WALSH: Councilman, some have

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2 taken place and some are in the process of
3 taking place with the libraries. There are 20
4 branches cut to have reduced hours, and I
5 believe 10 of them have now been assigned
6 reduced hours, and there's 10 more to go. We
7 don't know what the date is when that
8 implementation will be. We believe it's in
9 the near future.

10 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Does anybody have
11 an estimate of the amount of money that's
12 involved to restore the former status quo,
13 poor as that may have been?

14 MR. WALSH: Councilman, IT'S
15 approximately 17 people will be laid off from
16 the library that's resulting in this loss. We
17 believe that it's less than \$1 million or
18 approximately \$1 million.

19 COUNCILMAN COHEN: That's a very
20 heavy price to be paying the layoff in library
21 service when one considers the amount of money
22 that's being spent on attorneys' fees in the
23 Federal Grand Jury probe, which I understand
24 is now committed at the level of at least
25 \$2 million. And I hardly think that the City

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2 is the proper balance.

3 I saw a headline in the Inquirer
4 this morning that said, "No Change Needed
5 Assert Mayor's Aid."

6 It certainly seems to me that this
7 is one area where change is desperately
8 needed, where we can't afford to have our
9 students pay for the cost of attorneys and the
10 probe or permit the people of Philadelphia to
11 suffer a deterioration of living standards
12 when there are other options open.

13 I hope the Mayor is listening
14 because I just think it's terrible that at a
15 time when education is so under attack by
16 people that we're joining in that drive to
17 reduce standards for our people in
18 Philadelphia.

19 I have not heard of -- perhaps
20 Councilman Goode who's more familiar than I am
21 perhaps with economic development. Has there
22 been similar cuts in the economic development
23 field proposed? Or is it just a quality of
24 standards for human beings for life generally
25 for the people of Philadelphia that cuts are

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2 being proposed? Do you know?

3 COUNCILMAN GOODE: As I mentioned
4 earlier, Councilman Cohen -- I don't mind
5 repeating. There's hearing after this hearing
6 in the Committee on Commerce and Economic
7 Development where I will ask the Commerce
8 Director who is here about economic
9 development funding, but we expect that there
10 will probably be economic development funding
11 in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

12 COUNCILMAN COHEN: I don't know
13 whether people involved realize really what's
14 going on. It seems to me that President Bush
15 is well underway in his effort to eliminate
16 every vestige of what we once called "The New
17 Deal" in Philadelphia where government in the
18 United States for the first time began
19 considering human beings as important enough
20 to develop programs for, whether they were in
21 libraries, education, social security, workers
22 protection, right to organize and so forth.
23 But apparently, we're well under our way of
24 the President's campaign to eliminate
25 everything decent that's occurred over the

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2 last 30 years. And I think people have to
3 become aware of that in the City. And I think
4 the Department of Libraries ought to be
5 carrying out its own campaign, because you
6 know better than anybody else -- we can tell
7 that by the testimony given by this panel --
8 of what's being lost by people in Philadelphia
9 to this reduction that's occurred, plus the
10 one that's pending. I just think it's
11 terrible what's going on in this country at a
12 time in 2000 to believe that a huge tax cut
13 for rich people who have more money than they
14 know what to do with. So when a tax cut
15 emerges for them while at the same time
16 education and library standards are being cut,
17 I think it's an awful thing and I think people
18 ought to begin to act sharply against it. I
19 think it's unbelievable that the City
20 Administration seems instead of fighting these
21 cuts to be accepting them and accommodating
22 itself to it.

23 If anybody's here from the City, I'd
24 like to know what it is the City is doing to
25 fight against these cuts. I ask the Chair to

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2 see if there's anybody here from the City
3 Administration that's ready to answer why
4 these cuts have been chosen.

5 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Councilman Cohen,
6 what I'd like to do is just remind you, this
7 is a continuation of a hearing that started
8 last March on the reality of unemployment in
9 the City of our Philadelphia citizens. Today,
10 we have a particular focus on the impact of
11 some of the layoffs that have already taken
12 place with our municipal employees. And also
13 we have other testimonies today, distinguished
14 retired Professor from Drexel University, Dr.
15 Arthur Shostak. We also have Mr. Curtis Jones
16 of the Philadelphia Commercial Development
17 Corporation who is going to testify at this
18 hearing.

19 What I'd like to do at this time, if
20 there are no further questions for this panel,
21 I would like to call the second panel forward.

22 Thank you so much for taking time
23 out to testify about a very, very important
24 discussion going on about our libraries.

25 Thank you.

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2 MR. WALSH: Thank you Councilman
3 Ramos, Councilman Goode, and Councilman Cohen
4 for allowing us to testify today.

5 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: The second panel
6 is from AFSCME Local 2187, Kathy Scott, Ann
7 Hornbach, Juanita Vega-DeJoseph, T. Kim
8 Robinson, and Paulette Copeland-Bolten.

9 I hope I got everyone's name right.
10 If not, please forgive me.

11 MS. SCOTT: And we have two other
12 people who may be able to answer a couple of
13 questions who are being laid off, one from the
14 Commission on Human Relations and an
15 additional recreation leader.

16 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: That's perfectly
17 fine.

18 Kathy Scott, you want to start?

19 MS. SCOTT: Yes.

20 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Please give your
21 name and your title for the sake of our
22 record, and you then can proceed with your
23 testimony.

24 MS. SCOTT: Good afternoon
25 Councilman Ramos and Councilman Goode and

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2 Cohen. My name is Katherine Scott. I am
3 president of AFSCME Local 2187 which
4 represents administrative professional and
5 technical employees of the City of
6 Philadelphia. I would like to thank you for
7 the opportunity to discuss the layoffs which
8 are occurring presently in the City.

9 There are more than 2900 members in
10 my Local, of which more than 2400 members work
11 for the City of Philadelphia. To date, 34
12 members have received layoff notices with more
13 to come as higher level managers bump down to
14 positions represented in my Local. Those
15 receiving layoff notices to date are follows:
16 Two network support specialists in Public
17 Property, one criminal justice program
18 analysis in the Criminal Justice Coordinating
19 Office, one administrative technician in the
20 Atwater Kent Museum, one environmental
21 education planner in Fairmount Park, one
22 information management analyst in Human
23 Services, one economic development program
24 specialist in Commerce, one accountant in the
25 Office of Emergency Shelter and Services, two

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2 systems program project specialist in the
3 Mayor's Office of Information Services, one
4 programmer analyst in the Mayor's Office of
5 Information Services, one recreation leader in
6 Fairmount Park, one public information officer
7 in the Philadelphia Commission on Human
8 Relations, one network support specialist in
9 Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations,
10 one human relations representative 2 in that
11 Commission, one psychologist in the
12 Philadelphia Prisons, a computer based
13 education instructor in the Philadelphia
14 Prisons, the dietician in the Philadelphia
15 Prisons, two recreation leaders in the
16 Philadelphia Prisons, one physician assistant
17 in Health, one public health program analyst
18 in Health, and 12 librarians in the Free
19 Library of Philadelphia.

20 As you can see from the list of job
21 titles, these layoffs strike at the heart of
22 basic services to the communities of
23 Philadelphia as well as its infrastructure.

24 At a time when the chief information
25 officer of the City of Philadelphia is being

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2 interviewed about Internet access for all
3 Philadelphians who have a computer, the City
4 has laid off seven information technology
5 staff members in various city departments just
6 in Local 2187.

7 While the City is attempting to
8 encourage economic development, specialists in
9 the Commerce Department are being let go.

10 While two of the members of this
11 Committee are proposing legislation to
12 stimulate immigrants coming to live in
13 Philadelphia, the Commission on Human
14 Relations specialist, whose job it is to
15 resolve community disputes usually caused by
16 clashes in culture, are being laid off. And
17 the public relations activity in that
18 department has been eliminated.

19 Environmental education programs in
20 Fairmount Park slashed.

21 Continued erosion of the Atwater
22 Kent Museum funding which is the death nail
23 essentially for that fine museum.

24 The program services at the
25 Philadelphia Prisons have been hard hit. At a

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2 time when the City just built a new prison,
3 vital services are being eliminated. A
4 psychologist whose experience in appropriate
5 medication for mental health patients will be
6 sorely missed.

7 What's the point of having computers
8 for educational purposes if there are no
9 instructors in some prisons to help the
10 inmates with the courses?

11 The loan dietician who, among other
12 things, made sure that inmates are receiving
13 special diets, such as diabetic diets, will no
14 longer be there.

15 What is the City's exposure when
16 those incarcerated are not protected in mental
17 health and dietary areas?

18 With the recreation leader layoffs
19 three will be one recreation leader left for
20 five prisons.

21 Physicians assistants not needed in
22 the Health Department? But perhaps the most
23 draconian and far-reaching organization is the
24 concept of libraries without librarians.

25 You will hear more testimony today

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2 about the action by the Free Library of
3 Philadelphia. We are the only city in the
4 country to take such a wrong-headed action.
5 In austere budget times, the needs for
6 community service are greater. With fewer
7 personal resources, more people rely on public
8 services such as libraries and recreation
9 centers to fulfill basic needs.

10 I would like to bring to the
11 Committee's attention the erosion of services
12 that goes beyond this round of layoffs. As
13 people leave the City employment through
14 retirement or resignation, their positions are
15 not replaced. For example, in the library
16 between now and June 30th, 26 additional
17 positions are to be eliminated in the library
18 through attrition. This will result in more
19 service cuts, but this will not be as public
20 as the layoffs being addressed today.

21 The ongoing decrease in community
22 services, services to children, teens, young
23 adults, senior citizens, the most vulnerable
24 in our society, is reaching catastrophic
25 levels. The service elimination is not

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2 planned, but dependent on who retires or
3 resigns. This is no way to manage city
4 services which is the life blood of economic
5 development attracting and retaining citizens
6 and providing a quality of life for those who
7 live and/or work in the City.

8 I want to thank you for the
9 opportunity to address you.

10 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Thank you, Kathy
11 Scott for your testimony at this Committee
12 hearing.

13 Can we proceed with Ann Hornbach?

14 MS. SCOTT: I thought we would have
15 Juanita testify first.

16 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Okay.

17 Juanita, please state your name and
18 your title, if you wish.

19 MS. VEGA-DEJOSEPH: Good afternoon,
20 Councilman Ramos.

21 Can you still hear me if I stand? I
22 feel more comfortable if I stand.

23 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Go ahead.

24 MS. VEGA-DEJOSEPH: Is that okay?

25 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: As long as the

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2 stenograph can hear you.

3 MS. VEGA-DEJOSEPH: (Speaks in
4 Spanish.)

5 Don't worry, I won't leave the rest
6 of you out. My name is Juanita Vega-DeJoseph.
7 I'm a children's librarian, recently demoted,
8 demoralized children's librarian at the
9 Kensington Branch of the Free Library of
10 Philadelphia, located at 104 West Dauphin
11 Street.

12 As a Spanish-speaking children's
13 librarian, I perform bilingual story hour to
14 preschoolers and school-age children, conduct
15 library tours, and present introductions on
16 how to use our online catalog. No longer is
17 the card catalog in existence where you flip
18 through the cards. It's now on the computer,
19 and it requires that you instruct each and
20 every individual that walks into the library
21 on how to use the system. I perform these
22 tasks to a multitude of cultures. Kensington
23 has an unusually cautious base of Latino,
24 African-American, and Asian population. Due
25 to this fact, aggressive outreach is

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2 essential. I would take the hour before the
3 branch opened to the public to deliver flyers
4 on future programs, such as story telling, to
5 our neighboring businesses, schools, and
6 agencies such as the Norris Square
7 Neighborhood Project, Cardinal Bevilaqua
8 Recreational Center, as well as the local
9 element schools, ranging from public to
10 parochial establishments.

11 Personally, if I could read stories
12 to children and adults all day, I would. I
13 believe in the power of a store and the
14 telling of them. Children and adults alike
15 can become inspired to become compassionate
16 human beings through stories. But if this
17 current plan comes to fruition, reducing hours
18 in the select branches such as the Kensington
19 Branch, it will mean the loss of the following
20 activities in these mostly Latino, Asian, and
21 African-American schools and centers.

22 We would loss preschool story hours
23 to the Norris Square Day Care Center, McKinley
24 Headstart, Allegheny Childcare. That's just
25 to name a few.

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2 We would loss school visits to the
3 Branch from the following schools that are
4 within walking distance to the Kensington
5 Branch: St. Boniface School, Hunter
6 Elementary, H.A. Brown School, McKinley School
7 Moffat.

8 We would lose school visits to the
9 classroom held by myself and the other
10 librarian, Marcella Franco.

11 We would lose promoting reading and
12 library services workshops in schools and
13 organizations, such as AmeriCorp.

14 Statistics show that early
15 introduction to literacy increases vocabulary
16 and an awareness of the world around our
17 children. Our preschoolers are our future
18 patrons of our libraries. The earlier they
19 come to us, the higher the guarantee they will
20 support libraries as they grow into adulthood.

21 If a preschool group would like to
22 visit a branch, they would need van
23 transportation or walk to the nearest
24 full-time branch, which is a mile and away.
25 And for preschoolers, that's a hike.

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2 With the conversion to an express
3 branch of only four hours a day, the community
4 will loss contact with the bilingual
5 librarians who will assist them with their
6 needs. The actions being taken to lay off
7 librarians like myself -- I was given the
8 layoff notice on February 18th -- undermines
9 your own efforts, Mr. Ramos, to add an
10 amendment to the Philadelphia Charter, and I
11 quote, to create the office of the Director of
12 Immigrant Affairs to actively recruit new
13 residents to Philadelphia and to assist these
14 new arrivals with assimilating into City life
15 with the goal of reversing Philadelphia's
16 population loss.

17 Historically, every immigrant group
18 has assimilated into our culture through the
19 public libraries. Public libraries were then
20 and still are the gateways to our culture,
21 rich and poor, English speaking and not, race
22 and creed, young and old. What better way to
23 assist new arrivals to our City but through
24 our Free Library card and the access it
25 provides to language tapes, citizen

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2 information, and rich literature, just to name
3 a few.

4 Life is filled with obstacles, too
5 many to discuss here and now. But when we
6 talk about our children, we are talking about
7 our future library patrons, educated citizens
8 and taxpayers. As adults, we have a
9 responsibility to guide them on how to make
10 good choices. Cutting library services that
11 will deny our youngest, most impressionable
12 children is the wrong choice. Taking our
13 children as young as 4 and 5 years old to the
14 treasure of a public library is tantamount to
15 giving a priceless gift of knowledge and
16 discoveries that can grow with them until they
17 die.

18 By limiting the hours of the
19 Kensington Branch Library to a paltry four
20 hours a day is crossing the Rubicon into
21 irrelevance. Our children, our future, do not
22 deserve this kind of thoughtless treatment.

23 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Muchas gracias.

24 I know this library as well.

25 MS. VEGA-DEJOSEPH: How well?

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2 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: I lived around
3 the corner.

4 MS. VEGA-DEJOSEPH: Where?

5 COUNCILMAN RAMOS Howard and Dauphin.

6 MS. VEGA-DEJOSEPH: Howard and
7 Dauphin, so you're familiar with the Norris
8 Square?

9 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Are you familiar
10 with the pink house at 2246 Howard Street?
11 It's still painted pink.

12 MS. VEGA-DEJOSEPH: Pink house on
13 Howard Street?

14 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: You haven't been
15 around the corner, huh?

16 MS. VEGA-DEJOSEPH: Is that around
17 the new development?

18 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: That's PHA home.
19 My parents -- our family in my years in high
20 school went to a PHA home. And it was when
21 that neighborhood started to be integrated
22 many, many years ago. And I made good use of
23 that library.

24 MS. VEGA-DEJOSEPH: And it has
25 changed over the years.

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2 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: I know. I've
3 been there not too long ago.

4 I definitely understand, my
5 colleagues understand that libraries need to
6 be kept open, they need to be fully staffed,
7 they need to operate as we go through a
8 changing, as you well alluded.

9 There will be hearings on that other
10 matter, on the immigration at sometime in the
11 future.

12 We have a City that is changing and
13 its population growth, people coming from all
14 over the place, from all over the world. And
15 these services and the many languages as we
16 heard EARLIER from Wyoming Branch, this also
17 is happening in the Kensington community. And
18 I know you've done a very good job there.

19 There were books in Spanish when I
20 was a kid. That was a very long time. And
21 even back then there was a bilingual
22 librarian. I ain't gonna tell you how far
23 back, but it goes to show how important it is
24 for our government services to be provided in
25 a way that it will attract and bring people

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2 into our services, and in this case, into our
3 libraries. So I appreciate your testimony
4 this afternoon.

5 Kathy, who do you want to call up
6 next?

7 MS. SCOTT: Ann.

8 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Please state your
9 name and your position if you'd like to add
10 that to the record.

11 MS. HORNBACH: Good afternoon
12 Councilman Ramos, Councilman Cohen and
13 Councilman Goode, Jr. First of all, I would
14 like to thank all of you for giving us the
15 opportunity to express our concerns regarding
16 the radical reorganization of the Free Library
17 of Philadelphia. My name is Ann Hornbach. I
18 am the Children's librarian at the Welsh Road
19 Branch Library in Northeast Philadelphia.

20 Welsh Road, at the present time, is
21 the second highest circulating branch in the
22 City. In Fiscal Year 2004, the branch
23 circulated almost 202,000 library materials,
24 about 70,000 of which were juvenile items.
25 Our turnstile count was just a little under

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2 103,000. Program attendance at the branch,
3 especially that for preschool programs,
4 sharply increased from the prior Fiscal Year.

5 Now, Welsh Road, at the present
6 time, is not slated to become one of the Free
7 Library express branches. However, I believe
8 the designation of other libraries as
9 part-time facilities will not only have a
10 devastating effect on their respective
11 communities but will also detrimental to Welsh
12 Road and its ability to provide quality
13 service.

14 Now, my morning schedule is typical
15 of any children's librarian in the Free
16 Library. The majority of programing to
17 younger children and their parents takes place
18 at this time. School classes frequently visit
19 in the morning. This past year, special
20 education classes from JH Brown and Loesche
21 Elementary School have been coming to Welsh
22 Road on a monthly basis. These children with
23 autism are a delight to watch as they
24 enthusiastically participate in the story
25 times and the arts and craft sessions. We

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2 also have a special education class of
3 teenagers with autism from Lincoln High School
4 that visits us once a week in the early
5 afternoon. I have with me today letters of
6 support from this class and also from their
7 fine teacher, Mrs. Marjorie Gaines. These
8 teenagers have come a long way in the three
9 years that they have been visiting us to the
10 point where they now assist us in performing
11 certain clerical tasks. To see them make
12 their way around the library, finding what
13 they want with little or no assistance from
14 library staff is due in no small part to the
15 frequency of their visits. Teachers and
16 parents of all the aforementioned groups tell
17 my staff and me time and time again how much
18 the children and teens look forward to their
19 library visits.

20 The change of hours at express
21 branches will have a drastic impact on all
22 library users. First, school classes that
23 were accustomed to visit the now afternoon
24 branches will need to go to a nearby full-time
25 agency. Welsh Road would be one possible

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2 designation, especially for those who used to
3 visit the now-express Holmesburg and
4 soon-to-be express Torresdale branches.
5 Torresdale and Holmesburg are 2.08 and 4.42
6 miles, respectively, from my branch. As it is
7 now, my mornings are full to the point where I
8 can hardly accommodate any more groups. Also,
9 because of our location, school classes need
10 to travel via bus to Welsh Road. As I have
11 learned from many teachers, obtaining a bus
12 for transportation is not always doable.

13 Second, mothers of preschoolers who
14 in the past visited the express branches for
15 preschool programming will seek another venue.
16 Again, they may want to want to come to Welsh
17 Road. Now, I can have up to 25 children right
18 now in any preschool program that I give. I
19 cannot possibly take on any more children if I
20 want to offer a story time that is enjoyable
21 and beneficial to both the children and their
22 caregivers.

23 Third, is anyone considering the
24 effect this debacle will have on senior
25 citizens patronage? Seniors typically used

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2 medical reference books, newspapers, and
3 magazines. Many depend on the Free Library
4 for their leisure reading needs. Many, if not
5 most, prefer visiting the library in the
6 morning before the after school crowd arrives.
7 I fear that a majority of seniors who used to
8 frequent express branches will not be able to
9 get to another full-time branch library.
10 Should SEPTA eventually cut the bus schedules,
11 this problem will be further compounded.
12 Finally, Welsh Road has only seven
13 Internet available patron computers. These
14 computers are used all day long as it is.
15 Increased patronage will mean more demand for
16 this limited resource. Problems are already
17 beginning to surface. For example, on
18 Wednesday, February 23rd, the computers were
19 completely booked by 5:30 p.m. for the rest of
20 the evening. For the record, Welsh Road
21 closes at 9:00 p.m. on Monday and Wednesday.
22 A patron of ours whose daughter made a
23 computer reservation at 5:00 p.m. but couldn't
24 get on the computer until 8:00 p.m. complained
25 that the cuts to the library amount to

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2 economic discrimination. And frankly, I
3 couldn't agree more.

4 I cannot possibly overemphasize the
5 over all damage this reorganization will have
6 on expressed library users. No more class
7 visits. No more mothers bringing children in
8 strollers to the library for morning story
9 time. No more programming to children and
10 teens with special needs. No more morning
11 hours for seniors. No more evening hours for
12 families or working people. Likewise, the
13 increase in patronage to full-time branches
14 means less time to provide quality reference
15 and other services, especially at the already
16 very busy branches such as Welsh Road.

17 If I can make one more point, the
18 absence of professional librarians at the
19 express branches will have a devastating
20 affect on the user communities. And who will
21 suffer? Children with homework assignments.
22 People who have limited skills in finding
23 information independently, which is a
24 significant number of the City's population.
25 Patrons with questions concerning computer

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2 use, to name just a few. These patrons will
3 need to go to or call a full-time library to
4 meet their information needs. Consider, if
5 you will, how inconvenient and aggravating
6 this will be for patrons and for staff alike.

7 At this time when we lament the
8 reading skills or lack thereof so many
9 children and teens, the City of Philadelphia
10 needs its libraries more than ever. Please,
11 don't let this reorganization of the Free
12 Library of Philadelphia in its current form
13 take place.

14 And again, I would like to thank you
15 for your time and your attention to this
16 matter.

17 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Thank you, Ann,
18 for your testimony.

19 Kathy, who is up next?

20 MS. SCOTT: Kim.

21 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Kim, please state
22 your name and if there's a title you go into
23 the record, please do so at this time.

24 MS. ROBINSON: Yes, sir. My name is
25 T. Kim Robinson. I'm the children's librarian

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2 at the Paschalville Library, located at the
3 corner of 70th and Woodland.

4 I want to thank you for this
5 opportunity to share some of the concerns that
6 I have regarding the reduction of hours and
7 services t the Free Library of Philadelphia in
8 many of our community libraries.

9 As I have served the children of
10 Paschalville, which is challenged neighborhood
11 for almost five years, I feel that I can come
12 here today and speak to you about what
13 services our citizens need. Just in the
14 reduction of hours in West Philly, that is to
15 say, five libraries converted to express
16 branches, and the loss of five librarians
17 means 110 day cares with over 1300 children
18 will be unable to use the library; 255 classes
19 from local schools with over 5,000 children
20 will be unable to visit their neighborhood
21 library; 23,000 people will be unable to use
22 the public computers; and 50 programs for 800
23 adults, including GED classes, will not be
24 held.

25 The impact on day cares is not just

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2 a child misses out on story time. A child
3 misses out on the building blocks for early
4 literacy. Researchers say that early literacy
5 and reading experiences, such as preschool
6 story hours, contribute significantly to
7 children's reading achievement. The child who
8 does not have a picture book reading
9 experience or the handling of books enters
10 kindergarten unprepared. There is a strong
11 correlation between reading skills and future
12 academic achievement. Eliminating morning
13 hours and most of services to young children
14 put their future successes in education and
15 careers at risk. These services are not going
16 to be reproduced by someone showing up at a
17 day care center once in a blue moon and
18 reading a book to the kids. Is Council
19 willing to turn its back on our neediest
20 children?

21 The impact on 255 classes that will
22 not be able to come to the library is not to
23 be minimized. Most of the charter schools and
24 several of the public schools in this City do
25 not have school libraries in the first place.

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2 In the schools that do have libraries, the
3 average age of a book is 22 years old. Is
4 that the type of information we want our
5 children having? Do you want to produce even
6 more poorly educated children than we already
7 have?

8 For the 23,000 people in West
9 Philadelphia who will not be able to get on
10 the computer, what is lost? We are talking
11 about adults who are doing job searches.
12 Libraries provide the equipment for resume
13 preparation and for career searches on the
14 Internet. For those of you who have not been
15 in the job market for a while, most employers
16 now require and on-line application. The Free
17 Library has provided free Internet access for
18 showing a library card. To use a commercial
19 service, people would have to pay \$15 an hour
20 just to sit at a computer. Most unemployed
21 folks cannot afford these prices. The library
22 computers are gateways to jobs, to
23 citizenship, to special data banks that
24 transcend the walls of the library. Are you
25 prepared to eliminate these services?

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2 For the adults who won't be able to
3 complete their GED training, how do we justify
4 this shameful cut in services?

5 The Free Library service cuts have
6 eliminated librarians in 20 neighborhoods.
7 Public librarians are technology experts,
8 information detectives, literacy promoters,
9 children story-tellers, community programming
10 coordinators, readers advisors, and collection
11 builders. Librarians have at least one
12 Master's degree. Someone with a high school
13 diploma cannot replace them.

14 As information professionals, we
15 know that today there is more information
16 available to people than in the history of the
17 world. Locating quality information requires
18 skilled searching. None of those 20 express
19 libraries will be able to offer that service.

20 The Free Library of Philadelphia's
21 mission statement states that the library
22 provides services to all segments of
23 Philadelphia's population, employing a
24 highly-qualified staff who provide the link
25 between library materials and users. How can

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2 the Free Library make that claim? How can the
3 Free Library claim that these services are
4 being offered to neighborhoods that are being
5 subject to innovative restructuring? It is
6 like telling the captain of the Titanic
7 telling the passengers that rather than panic,
8 they should be glad to be getting a midnight
9 swim.

10 I'm asking Council for your help.
11 Are you willing for the citizens of
12 Philadelphia to be told sink or swim? Please
13 save our libraries. Our children need them.
14 Thank you.

15 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Thank you, Kim,
16 for your testimony.

17 Our next witness, Kathy, is
18 Paulette?

19 MS. SCOTT: Paulette.

20 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Mr. Chairman, may
21 I ask, is there anybody from the library
22 system of the City of Philadelphia present in
23 the audience?

24 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: I will grant that
25 interruption by my dear colleague, Councilman

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2 Cohen.

3 Is there someone here from our
4 library system from the Administration?

5 (No response.)

6 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Are they
7 disinterested in finding out the effect of
8 their proposed cuts? Is that why they're not
9 here? Has there any effort by anybody in the
10 library system to find out the effects that
11 the cuts would have on the system that you're
12 explaining to us today?

13 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Point of order

14 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Point of order.

15 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you, Mr.
16 Chairman. I do believe this is important
17 testimony. I think when we look at the issue
18 of unemployment, we have to look at the public
19 sector as well as the private sector. But
20 this is a hearing on unemployment. It is not
21 a budget hearing, so I don't think we were
22 expecting the Administration to respond to it
23 at this time. We will question them
24 throughout the budget process on these issues,
25 as well as there is a separate hearing on a

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2 separate resolution dealing specifically with
3 the Free Library, I believe introduced by
4 Councilman Nutter. But it is appropriate as
5 we talk about unemployment we talk about
6 public sector unemployment as well.

7 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Thank you,
8 Councilman Goode.

9 Paulette Copeland Bolton, please
10 proceed.

11 MS. BOLTON: Good afternoon,
12 Councilman Ramos, Wilson Good, Jr., and
13 Councilman Cohen. My name is Paulette
14 Copeland Bolton. I've been employed as a
15 recreation leader at the Philadelphia Prison
16 System since August 14, 1995. I was informed
17 on February 18, 2005, that I would be laid off
18 effective March 4, 2005.

19 During my employment as a recreation
20 leader at the Philadelphia Prison System, the
21 growth of the inmate population has required
22 the building of a women's site, Riverside
23 Correctional Facility that opened in July
24 2004. There are currently six county prisons:
25 Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility,

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2 Philadelphia Industrial Correctional Center,
3 Detention Center, House of Correction,
4 Alternative and Special Detention which has
5 four satellites, and Riverside Correctional
6 Facility.

7 From the summer of 1995 through
8 1998, the Philadelphia Prison System was staff
9 with a full complement of recreation leaders
10 and one supervisor. There was one recreation
11 leader assigned to each facility, providing a
12 full organized program for each institution.
13 Intermural athletic competitions were held in
14 volleyball, basketball, flag football, tennis
15 and table tennis throughout the year.
16 Tournaments with different board games were
17 held six times a year at each facility during
18 holidays. Various community organizations
19 such as Weekend of Champions, a prison
20 ministry; the New Jersey Saints, also a prison
21 ministry basketball and softball; Philadelphia
22 College of Bible, volleyball and basketball;
23 Calvary Church basketball; Wuz Kids softball;
24 and Feltonville, Olney and Lawncrest
25 Recreation center volleyball came to the

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2 institutions and provided the inmates with
3 exposure to people in the community in an
4 organized atmosphere. It gave the inmates a
5 chance to develop team spirit, respect for
6 others, the importance of rules and
7 regulations, experience the joy of
8 accomplishment, whether it was a win or loss.
9 Various arts and crafts activities for all
10 populations, male or female juveniles and male
11 or female adults, were conducted. Special
12 card projects for holidays where the inmates
13 were allowed to make cards for their children
14 and family members. Art contests using
15 different mediums were held throughout the
16 various institutions. It gave some of the
17 inmates a chance to utilize talents without
18 negative distractions. Participating in these
19 activities enabled the inmates to have a sense
20 of accomplishment, provided them with respect
21 for others, team spirit, knowledge of quality
22 activities that could be done with their
23 children upon their your return to society.
24 These activities are just a sampling of the
25 many constructive things that were available

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2 for the inmate population to help provide an
3 avenue for release of stress.

4 The erosion of the recreation staff
5 for each institution began in approximately
6 1999. As vacancies occurred, they were not
7 replaced and the PAD was eliminated and the
8 institutions were not staffed with recreation
9 leaders. Correctional officers filled the
10 vacancies with no organized program available
11 for the inmate population. As these vacancies
12 occurred, the need for remaining recreation
13 leaders to cover more than one facility was
14 required.

15 Approximate population of the six
16 institutions are as follows: CFCF, 2500; DC,
17 1200; House of Correction, 1,283; PICC, 1,205;
18 ASD, 580; Riverside Correctional Facility,
19 725; for a total of 7,483 inmates.

20 The importance of an organized
21 recreation program is one that provides the
22 inmate population with an opportunity to
23 release stress in a constructive manner. If
24 the inmate population does not have an outlet
25 to release stress, this could have a number of

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2 consequences. Built-up frustration can be
3 released at any given time and could make the
4 work environment unsafe for all employees and
5 volunteers who provide services or programs.
6 A constant level of stress with no means of
7 release will make the environment on the
8 housing units one that is a breeding ground
9 for chaos and explosive tempers, fights with
10 other inmates and possible assaults on
11 correctional staff. When these inmates
12 encounter other staff off the housing unit,
13 for example, social workers, medical staff,
14 school teachers and various programs and jobs,
15 these employees are also subject to explosive
16 episodes that could result in verbal abuse or
17 physical assaults.

18 Placing correctional officers in the
19 job of recreation leaders will cause a larger
20 problem. A correctional officer throwing out
21 a ball with no organizational rules can lead
22 to more frequent arguments and altercations
23 which can be taken back to the housing units
24 and get more inmates involved in negative
25 behavior and attitudes.

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2 In laying off two of the three
3 recreation staff at the Philadelphia Prison
4 System, the big picture was not considered.
5 Now one person is responsible for providing
6 recreation programs to all six of the
7 facilities. This will create an environment
8 that is unhealthy and unsafe for all involved,
9 staff and inmates. Since 1995, with an
10 organized recreation program, there has no
11 major incidents at any of the institutions.
12 The presence of an organized recreation
13 program, in essence, keeps the lid on the
14 jails; one that is about to blow with
15 continued build up of frustration and stress
16 and no constructive means of release. A
17 shortage of correctional staff in all
18 institutions created by the opening of the new
19 facility, Riverside Correctional Facility,
20 only compounds the situation in all of the
21 institutions.

22 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Thank you,
23 Paulette Copeland Bolton, for your testimony
24 this afternoon.

25 Do Members of this Committee have

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2 any questions for the panel that we just heard
3 from?

4 MS. BOLTON: Councilman Ramos, I
5 also have with me Brian Andrews. He's the
6 other recreation leader that was also laid
7 off.

8 MR. ANDREWS: Good afternoon,
9 Councilman Ramos, Goode, and Cohen. I don't
10 want to repeat verbatim --

11 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Can you please
12 repeat your name?

13 MR. ANDREWS: Brian Andrews,
14 recreation leader Curran-Fromhold Correction
15 Facility.

16 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Please proceed
17 with your testimony.

18 MR. ANDREWS: I don't want to repeat
19 verbatim what Ms. Bolton just addressed with
20 her testimony. The one thing I want to
21 emphasis is the public safety danger in
22 eliminating the recreation program would have
23 at the prison system.

24 We had a staff at one time of five
25 individuals. We were able to run a

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2 comprehensive program, and we've been doing
3 more with less for approximately six years.
4 Now, Ms. Bolton and myself are being laid off,
5 which leaves one person to run the entire
6 system. We did more with less. Now, my
7 question is, what's going to happen now?

8 I'm afraid for staff members there
9 that I've worked with for close to 10 years.
10 The prison administration wants to allow the
11 correctional officer to handle our duties in
12 our job class. It's not fair to put these
13 responsibilities on the officers since they
14 are working shorthanded also in a correctional
15 manner. Also, it's not fair to replace
16 qualified professionals, such as ourselves,
17 with them. The lack of structure will
18 ultimately cause confusion and potential
19 dangers for staff and inmates alike.

20 That's my main concerns today.

21 Thank you.

22 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Thank you so
23 much.

24 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Did anybody
25 discuss with you your feelings about this

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2 before you got notice?

3 MS. BOLTON: No, sir.

4 MR. ANDREWS: No.

5 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Do you know of
6 anybody in your department that was asked
7 questions like the ones you're raising today.

8 MS. BOLTON: No, sir. There's only
9 three of us, our supervisor and the two of us.
10 He received a layoff notice first. And then
11 in order to keep his job, he demoted down 2
12 places. He was a rec leader 3. He demoted
13 down to the rec leader 1 to take my job.

14 MR. ANDREWS: And I also received a
15 notice on the same day as Ms. Bolton.

16 MS. SCOTT: Councilman Cohen, if I
17 could respond also. I have asked the Prison
18 Commissioners specifically this question, what
19 is going to happen in recreation and how is he
20 going to handle this loss, especially from a
21 security perspective. He has not really
22 responded with an answer. I have gotten labor
23 relations involved in it, but there is a
24 really serious problem with the cuts that have
25 happened in the prison because they seriously

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2 affect the exposure of the institution to
3 both, as Paulette and Brian testified to,
4 heightened tension and possible riots there.
5 But also, we believe that there is a serious
6 exposure to the City with lawsuits, for
7 example, if inmates are not getting proper
8 diets and services like that.

9 COUNCILMAN COHEN: I was just
10 looking over to see who at the press was here,
11 because it seems that in today's environment
12 when people's problems are being discussed
13 like the kind you're raising, not even the
14 press is interested. What are we going to do
15 to get people to understand what's going on?

16 MS. BOLTON: Probably have to have
17 another riot like they had at Holmesburg
18 Prison in order for them to be interested.

19 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: We sure pray that
20 doesn't happen and take all preventive
21 measures for anything as catastrophic as a
22 riot to happen anywhere in our City.
23 Definitely nothing like that should ever
24 happen in our prison system as well.

25 These are painful type of hearings.

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2 So I think that's probably, at least from my
3 point of view, Councilman Cohen, why we
4 probably don't have media. We had a lot of
5 media attention earlier today when City
6 Council was in session about other issues.

7 I want to assure you, the two panels
8 and President Tom Cronin that I will use the
9 information that you have provided in this
10 testimony to help me make my questions as
11 focused and in defense of working people that
12 I have always had in my life during our budget
13 process. And you've talked here a lot about
14 the libraries and recreation now over at the
15 prison system. Both the Library Director and
16 the Prison Commissioner will come before us.
17 So you have given me a lot of information that
18 I will definitely include in my questioning of
19 those people in charge and probably making the
20 decisions that are not favorable to workers,
21 and particularly members of District Council
22 47 and 33.

23 Are there any other questions from
24 the Committee?

25 COUNCILMAN COHEN: No, but may I

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2 make a comment?

3 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Sure.

4 COUNCILMAN COHEN: During budget
5 sessions there will be hearings officially on
6 the library system and on recreation and all
7 the other departments. I think it's important
8 that people who work for the government find
9 out when those hearings are taking place. And
10 when the main subject matter is called up for
11 discussion, I think there ought to be
12 good-sized delegations here ready to raise the
13 questions right at the hearings themselves.
14 Now, that will probably get me in trouble with
15 the President of City Council who has her own
16 method of order, and she's probably right on
17 the questions of order. But I don't think
18 questions of order are going to solve this
19 problem. I think what will help to solve it
20 the way it ought to be solved, not through
21 riots, but through further advances in
22 education and better conditions for prisoners
23 so they'll be better ready able to resume
24 normal life once they get out. It will occur
25 from showing your determination that these

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2 things must not be tolerated.

3 And I just think it's awful that the
4 government at this point in time is acting
5 like the government 50 years ago when they
6 gave no consideration human rights at all.

7 The testimony you gave really
8 outrages one to hear that we're not doing for
9 the children what ought to be done after we've
10 learned how important education is,
11 particularly for preschool children. And when
12 we learn that libraries could be useful to
13 adults and so many ways and we're not taking
14 advantage of that but tossing people out into
15 the cold when they really need us and then to
16 carry out this threat in the prisons is a
17 terrible thing.

18 So I think you've convinced the
19 Members of this Committee that something's got
20 to be done, but we need more than that. We've
21 got to convince all the Members of the Council
22 and you've got to get to the government people
23 in charge.

24 It's unthinkable that a current City
25 Administration should be considering these

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2 problems. We've all got to work together to
3 solve it and prevent and find another road to
4 answers other than job cuts.

5 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Thank you, Mr.
7 Cohen for your words of wisdom.

8 Thank you so much, all, for coming
9 here.

10 We have a couple of very
11 distinguished individuals from the citizenry
12 of Philadelphia who are going to testify.
13 You're all welcome to stay.

14 And also, following our last two
15 witnesses, we'll go right into the Committee
16 of Commerce and Economic Development.

17 Our next witness will be Professor
18 Arthur Shostak .

19 Professor Arthur Shostak, will you
20 please state your name for the record and
21 whatever identification you want to include in
22 the record.

23 MR. SHOSTAK: Thank you, Councilman.
24 My name is Arthur B. Shostak. I'm an emeritus
25 professor of sociology at Drexel University

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2 here in Philadelphia.

3 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Before we proceed
4 with your testimony, I want to say a little
5 bit about Professor Shostak. Professor
6 Shostak is a retired professor of industrial
7 sociology, formerly of Drexel University. And
8 he submitted testimony before the Committee
9 Labor and Civil Service back in March of last
10 year that made various suggestions regarding
11 steps the City could take to improve its
12 ability to make forecasts regarding the
13 changing economy in the labor market of the
14 future. Professor Shostak specifically
15 recommended that Council convene a task force
16 made up of experts from the area's colleges
17 and universities to provide Council with
18 expert forecasts regarding the future state of
19 the City's labor force and job market.

20 A couple of things, among probably
21 other things that I don't recall at this time,
22 out of those Committee hearings in March,
23 Councilman Goode took the initiative and had
24 introduced and it was passed by this body to
25 provide tax credit for companies hiring

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2 ex-offenders. We had during that hearing a
3 number of representatives not just from the
4 administration of or penal system, but also of
5 advocates for services of inmates.

6 And out of that Committee, just
7 recently in February, for all of you here and
8 those watching and for the purposes of Arthur
9 Shostak, the City Council approved unanimously
10 authorizing this Committee to invite the
11 area's college and university presidents and
12 leading corporate executives to appoint
13 experts to a Council-convened labor forecast
14 task force to provide Council with expert
15 forecasts regarding the future state of the
16 City's labor force and job market. And that
17 would include also other members of this
18 community, particularly the labor community.

19 So Professor Shostak, although we
20 have not met you in person, we took your
21 testimony, put it into the record. And out of
22 this, we have a resolution that is calling for
23 a labor forecast task force. And this is a
24 task force that will probably be around for a
25 little bit, but we want to be able to take a

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2 look at what the job market is going to be
3 like, how do we fill the demands of the
4 future, how do we maintain our workforce, our
5 municipal workforce, for example, as you've
6 heard today at levels that are satisfactory to
7 the services that the people of Philadelphia
8 want and demand.

9 I wanted to bring you personally.
10 I'm here this afternoon, so you can talk to us
11 about the recommendations you have made to
12 this Committee in writing.

13 MR. SHOSTAK: Councilman, I
14 appreciate the opportunity. The librarians,
15 the remarkable, wonderful people that we've
16 shared some time with this afternoon --

17 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Can I just
18 interrupt you. I'm sorry to be rude, but my
19 colleague Councilman DiCicco has joined us.
20 He's not a member of this committee, but he's
21 welcome to stay here.

22 Proceed, please.

23 MR. SHOSTAK: Of course. I suspect
24 were we able to ask our librarian friends if
25 the books that they have at the moment,

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2 particularly the books for children, would
3 explain to children the need we have today in
4 2005 for technicians who can handle the new
5 hybrid car engine, for technicians who can
6 handle the wind power installations going up
7 throughout the midwest of this country that
8 are being debated in the Cape, up in the
9 Boston area. If they had books that could
10 help children think about solar power,
11 photovoltaic cell installations which are
12 common in the middle east and which are
13 getting more common in parts of this country.
14 In short, if the librarians had books that
15 could have helped children a few decades ago
16 better understand new jobs, cutting-edge jobs
17 such that children in those neighborhood
18 libraries in the 1970s and '80s would have
19 read a leapfrog fashion about
20 esoteric-sounding jobs that in 2005 are, in
21 fact, growing in volume and importance, that
22 are well-paying and that are available for
23 graduates of high school, graduates of
24 community college, that do not require
25 doctorates and master's degrees, but are

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2 well-paying, sound jobs. If the librarians
3 could have boasted to us that they have such
4 books, this would be a perfect world than it
5 is. I suspect that if the librarians were to
6 talk to us about it, they would talk with
7 regret. They would talk about out-of-date
8 books about this kind of job title.

9 So what I'm urging is that this
10 labor forecast task force do an assessment of
11 job horizons, focus on job horizons. You have
12 excellent testimony over on that table from
13 the Philadelphia Workforce Investment Board
14 and the Director Sally Glickman in testimony
15 over on the table indicates that they're using
16 the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and
17 Industry for their 2010 job forecasts. I
18 would suggest to you that those forecasts are
19 what some of us consider to be sound and
20 conventional. They're forecasts which look at
21 information tech, allied health, engineering,
22 and pharmacy. Those are the four big areas
23 recommended for fervor job attention in
24 Philadelphia.

25 Now, what's not included in that

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2 kind of research is more risk-taking
3 forecasting. And that's why I think the City
4 and the Council needs a futures focussed task
5 force. More risk-taking job titles are things
6 like the need we expect for nanotechnology
7 technicians. Not just a brilliant scientist
8 and venture capitalist, but the men and women
9 how understand how to work the lab processes.
10 We need expectations for eugenics counselors.
11 That's probably community college, maybe
12 bachelor degree level. We need expectation of
13 pre-retirement counselor.

14 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Can you back up
15 just a little bit. Can you tell us what a
16 eugenic counselor is?

17 MR. SHOSTAK: I appreciate the
18 question, because it's an example of the kind
19 of job which hasn't had substance, hasn't
20 existed in volume and which we anticipate that
21 as those of us who are forecasters anticipate
22 will be more common, especially out beyond to
23 you 2010, 2015, but which the City schools
24 could begin preparing youngsters for today.

25 A eugenics counselor would help a

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2 couple look at that what their DNA reveals
3 about the 3,500 inherited diseases, ailments,
4 and propensity to disease. We can now tell
5 from DNA that you have a propensity to develop
6 diabetes after age 40. We can tell that
7 almost at birth. And eugenics counselors then
8 can help couples engage in preventative, in
9 taking action in light of this new kind of
10 knowledge. So eugenics counselor is a
11 positive approach to new knowledge, knowledge
12 that comes from unraveling the DNA code, and
13 that's very recent knowledge.

14 It's an example of a kind of job of
15 tomorrow, knowledge that has to be more
16 current in the Philadelphia scheme of things.
17 We cannot continue to prepare youngsters for
18 today's job market. Today's job market is
19 churning, 15 million jobs disappear every year
20 in the labor force of 110 million jobs. So
21 the creative destruction of jobs is
22 commonplace. We have got to be thinking
23 progressively.

24 And the kind of task force that I'm
25 recommending to you, which would tap a lot of

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2 existing forecasts that are now scattered all
3 over the place, the area colleges and
4 universities, the number is so large that this
5 is called the City of schools, all of them
6 have units in the college and university that
7 privately and confidentially study tomorrow's
8 job market. That's part of the way they
9 recruit. They move around the country and
10 they tell people, "Come to Philadelphia.
11 Study at Villanova, study at St. Joe's, study
12 at Drexel, and your child will graduate ready
13 for the job market of 2010, 2015, 2020." If
14 they talk that way, they are accountable and
15 they have knowledge of the labor force out
16 there beyond us. They ought to be sharing
17 that knowledge for the public good. They
18 ought to pool that knowledge.

19 And Judith Rogadan (ph) heads, in
20 fact, a committee made up of the heads of
21 colleges and universities. That Committee,
22 along with a wide range of Jewish educational
23 vocational services, a black ministers
24 council, Hispanic groups, all do horizon
25 scanning, but they commonly do it like silos.

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2 They do it each of them independent. The
3 Committee that I'm recommending to you would
4 ask all of them, what do you see in the labor
5 market out five years, out 10 years? And then
6 that Committee would assess -- because people
7 will see it differently. It's like the blind
8 men touching different parts of the elephant.
9 The committee will asses. The committee will
10 have expertise, hopefully pro bono volunteered
11 by the college and university faculties that
12 are told by their presidents, this would be a
13 good thing to volunteer to help with. And the
14 committee could then inform the school system,
15 inform the public, and the committee could
16 help the City of Philadelphia pioneer in this
17 kind of forecasting.

18 I did a Goggle search on the subject
19 of cities and labor market forecasting, and it
20 pointed out that there are only two American
21 cities at present that are engaged in what I'm
22 urging here today, only two. And both of them
23 are commonly looking at community preferences
24 in shaping their cities. They're not looking
25 at what I'm urging.

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2 I'm urging the City of Philadelphia
3 to set itself in front of every other
4 municipality in this country by establishing a
5 formal committee to look at tomorrow's labor
6 market.

7 The men and women you heard this
8 afternoon who spoke with genuine in their
9 depth of being anxiety about layoff notices
10 they have, about what will they do next, those
11 men and women ought to be able to look to a
12 branch of city government for a clearer than
13 ever understanding of tomorrow's work world.
14 That's not possible today. It is doable. I'm
15 not talking rocket science. I'm not talking
16 blue sky. I'm talking about pockets of
17 information that are in isolation today that
18 could be put together and the synergy of
19 bringing these pockets together could reward
20 all of us.

21 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Thank you,
22 Professor Shostak, for your testimony.

23 I want to reiterate that the City
24 Council of Philadelphia has authorized this
25 Committee on Labor and Civil Service to invite

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2 the area college and university presidents and
3 leading corporate executives to point experts
4 to a Council-convened labor forecast task
5 force. And, of course, we will expand on the
6 participation of not just those two entities
7 but labor and other entities to be a part of
8 this.

9 In your testimony, you mentioned one
10 of the jobs of the future, but I found out
11 that some of those jobs are available now and
12 you were talking about cyber detectives. Can
13 you talk to us about those cyber detectives?

14 MR. SHOSTAK: Very briefly --

15 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: What I found out
16 is they're out there now. Maybe we should
17 just put it out there, where do you apply for
18 one of these cyber detective jobs?

19 MR. SHOSTAK: You know, the long
20 list of these sometimes cause a smile job
21 titles of the tomorrow, as with eugenics
22 counseling. The long list, in fact, represent
23 the beginning, the beginnings of larger
24 employment categories. And the cyber
25 detective is an example of this. Cyber

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2 detective was not possible before computers
3 were commonplace and before DNA, the code was
4 broken. Now when we put the two together, we
5 have millions of Americans fascinated by the
6 CSI television shows, CSI New York, CSI Miami,
7 whatever, hopefully Philadelphia. You and I
8 know, by the way, that there's blow back. And
9 the below back is the general public now
10 coming into a courtroom fully expects that
11 Hollywood style CSI approach to any and every
12 crime. That's an example of where future and
13 future shaping kind have a cost to it. And we
14 don't want to lose track of that.

15 There is no telling the future,
16 there's only making it. That's what I'm
17 urging. I'm urging that this list of job
18 titles and similar lists be taken seriously by
19 this committee you've established. I was
20 particularly pleased to hear you say a moment
21 ago that the membership will be beyond the
22 mandarin of college and university presidents
23 and will include, I trust, the building
24 trades. Because the building trades know
25 because they walk it, they talk it. The

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2 building trades know that we are preparing too
3 few plumbers, too few electricians, too few
4 carpenters, too few of the what we call the
5 aristocracy of the building crafts. The
6 apprentice ranks are slim. The apprentice
7 ranks don't have the response they urge.
8 Those are also jobs of tomorrow because in
9 everyone of those job titles, the craft has
10 gotten more refined. The craft has gotten
11 more demanding. They belong on the list with
12 nano tech specialist, with fish farm
13 specialist, with wind power technicians. It's
14 a wonderful long list, and we ought to be
15 doing more with it.

16 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Thank you
17 professor Shostak.

18 Are there any questions from the
19 Committee members of the Council?

20 (No response.)

21 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Professor, thank
22 you. And I want for the record also so you
23 want get away from us that the good professor
24 has volunteered to be an advisor and to help
25 us with the forming of this labor forecast

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2 task force of the City Council, and we
3 appreciate so much your input and your
4 commitment to work with us on this project.
5 Thank you so much.

6 MR. SHOSTAK: Council, it's an
7 honor, and I appreciate the opportunity.

8 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: It's been our
9 pleasure to hear from you.

10 Our next witness is Mr. Curtis Jones
11 who is president of the Philadelphia
12 Commercial Development Corporation.

13 Mr. Jones, please state your name
14 and title for the record, please.

15 MR. JONES: My name is Curtis Jones,
16 Jr., I'm the president and CEO of the
17 Philadelphia Commercial Development
18 Corporation. And seated with me is Mr. Aqil
19 Sabur who is my vice president for micro
20 lending and technical assistance.

21 Good afternoon. I want to, before I
22 begin my formal testimony, just say that I was
23 impressed with the testimony from the good
24 doctor there. And when I listened to some of
25 futuristic professions, he is not far off of

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2 the mark. When I remember a number of those
3 kinds of categories actually coming in for
4 technical assistance to PCDC and looking for
5 locations of fish farms, in particular; and
6 under forensic CSI, the digitization of crime
7 scenes was a company that was brought in that
8 wanted to set up a training facility in West
9 Philadelphia to train high school graduates
10 how to actually take those crime scenes. So
11 he's not far off the mark with those
12 predictions.

13 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: I wanted to tell
14 the good professor also that when I retire
15 from City Council or when I'm retired, I hope
16 it's the former versus the latter, that I can
17 be ready to become a cyber detective. It
18 sounds like something that will fit my
19 personality.

20 Proceed with your testimony, please.

21 MR. JONES: My colleague and I are
22 here today to present testimony to the
23 Committee in accordance with Council
24 Resolution 040171. In our opinion,
25 entrepreneurship is one of the keys to

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2 stabilizing and creating employment. My
3 testimony shall focus on the general state of
4 employment and unemployment in Philadelphia
5 and some of the successful efforts of PCDC to
6 increase employment among neighborhood
7 residents through entrepreneurship and some
8 general recommendations.

9 As most of you know, retail and
10 financial services represent close to 25
11 percent of the jobs that exist in
12 Philadelphia. In fact, the gains made in
13 retail are the primary reason that
14 Philadelphia has realized one of the job gains
15 this year. In retail in the '70s, there were
16 400,000 jobs in the region. In 2000, we
17 recorded 634,000 jobs in the retail sector,
18 with an average annual salary of \$18,000 per
19 year.

20 PCDC does not finance sports
21 stadiums, but we do finance some of the
22 concessions housed within them.

23 PCDC does not finance airports, but
24 we do finance some of the small entrepreneurs
25 that make money inside of those airport

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2 concessions.

3 PCDC does not underwrite hotels, but
4 we do finance businesses that service those
5 hotels and also reside within them. We do not
6 take big bites, but we take small bites that
7 represent the bulk of our local economy.

8 There are two stories to tell
9 regarding Philadelphia's employment situation.
10 As noted in the February 3, 2005 Inquirer
11 story, the unemployment rate in the
12 metropolitan area actually declined from 4.8
13 percent in December 2003 to 4.4 percent in
14 December 2004, with 116,000 people out of
15 work, according to the US Department of Labor
16 monthly report.

17 However, in the follow-up to that
18 story February 4th, the Labor Department
19 reported that jobs in the City of Philadelphia
20 had declined in most recent measure from June
21 2003 to June 2004, with a loss of 10 now job,
22 according to these statistics generated by
23 companies covered by unemployment loss.

24 Working with one set of numbers let
25 us review unemployment data in the City of

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2 Philadelphia and the Commonwealth as well the
3 nation in calendar year basis 2003 to 2004.

4 In a glance, what it says is that
5 Philadelphia as a City is doing better than
6 the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the
7 United States general overall labor report,
8 representing in 2003, 4.8 unemployment rate,
9 compared to a statewide 5.2 unemployment rate
10 and a federal unemployment rate of 5.7
11 percent. Sources are the Bureau of Labor
12 Statistics, the Pennsylvania Department of
13 Labor, and Center for Workforce Information
14 Analysis.

15 What are some of the facts that we
16 can derive from some of this data. At a
17 glance, Philadelphia is doing better than its
18 national counterpart. In December, the City
19 registered an unemployment rate that was full
20 1 percent below the national average and 1.2
21 percent lower than the Commonwealth.

22 This statistic camouflages, however,
23 the human story. And the number of
24 African-Americans leading that list among the
25 unemployed, followed by Latinos, Caucasians

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2 and Asians. No matter how we look at this
3 data, it is the stubborn reality that becomes
4 an alarming demographics when we consider that
5 in our urban areas the majority will be
6 minorities in the City.

7 The second story is that
8 Philadelphians are starting a record number of
9 small businesses. PCDC is on the cutting edge
10 of neighborhood economic development and have
11 established a number of urban initiatives to
12 harness Philadelphia's entrepreneurial drive.
13 These initiatives are structured around our
14 four development goals: Access to capital for
15 small business, providing timely and quality
16 technical assistance, empowering businesses
17 through the use of technology, and maintaining
18 our role as a business association advocate.

19 During the past 25 years, PCDC has
20 arranged financing in excess of \$267 million
21 for more than 2500 businesses. The funding
22 has resulted in the creation and retention of
23 more than 12,000 jobs. Of the total PCDC has
24 directly delivered \$90 million in direct loans
25 from our own coffers. The last decade we've

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2 seen record growth in our loan volume. We've
3 provided various types of funding, ranging
4 micro loans to financing for contractors,
5 professional assistance to firms, franchising
6 opportunities, and venture capital and grants
7 to CDC's who are interested in economic
8 development.

9 Thank you, Councilman Goode.

10 Many of these firms --

11 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Me too.

12 MR. JONES: And you as well.

13 Many of the firms who received
14 assistance were small, disadvantaged
15 neighborhood-based businesses that have
16 created or retained jobs for low and moderate
17 income individuals.

18 Our neighborhood commercial
19 revitalization division is responsible for the
20 management of 44 commercial corridors
21 throughout the City of Philadelphia that
22 include, to name a few, Frankford Avenue,
23 Kensington, Allegheny, Germantown and Cheltenham,
24 Lancaster Avenue, Chester Avenue, 52nd Street.
25 The 44 commercial corridors generated an

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2 estimated \$774 million in annual sales, with
3 sales per business averaging \$195,000. That
4 includes your big guys and small family-owned
5 business.

6 Since 1996, PCDC has provided
7 assistance to more than 40,000 entrepreneurs
8 through the Small Business Support Center.
9 These consulting services include but are not
10 limited to accounting matters, business
11 planning, preparation of cash management,
12 marketing, procurement assistance, tax
13 advisory services. We regularly assist
14 companies with business formation issues
15 involving the City and Commonwealth and
16 federal government Procurement opportunities.

17 We have developed a unique project
18 which the assistance of the Small Business
19 Administration and the Department of Community
20 and Economic Development to empower
21 neighborhood CDCs and business organizations
22 through technology. This project has resulted
23 in the creation of 12 Web sites for business
24 associations and has provided teleconferencing
25 capabilities to many CDCs throughout the City.

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2 Just how important are small
3 businesses to job generating power of the
4 local economy? In its most recent analysis
5 between 2001 and 2003, the SBA reports that
6 small firms represent 99.7 percent of all
7 employers in the US. And that's on the not
8 agricultural-based business. They employ half
9 of all private sector employees. They pay
10 44.3 percent of all US payrolls. They have
11 generated 60 to 80 percent of all new jobs in
12 last decade. They have created more than 50
13 percent of non-farm, private groups domestic
14 product in the nation. Supplied over 23
15 percent of the total value of federal prime
16 contracts. Produce 13 to 14 times more
17 patents per employee than large patenting
18 firms. And are 39 percent of the high tech
19 workers in the United States. They are 53
20 percent of the home-based business and 3
21 percent of the franchise businesses. They
22 make up 97 percent of all identified export
23 products, representing 25 percent of the known
24 export value in FY 2001.

25 Just looking at it, we represent --

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2 and you look at this in these statistics that
3 you see here, the number of employees on
4 average that are produced by Philadelphia
5 companies. 55 percent, 1 to 4 employees; 20
6 percent, 5 to 9 employees; 12 percent, 10 to
7 19 employees; 7 percent, 20 to 49 employees;
8 and 2 percent represent 50 to 99 employees.
9 So the vast majority of the employment in the
10 City is made up from small business.

11 The University of Penn has a unique
12 database that tracks the business activity in
13 particular West Philadelphia zip codes. A
14 look at two zip codes in West Philadelphia
15 mirrors the findings in 19151 zip code, almost
16 60 percent of the businesses have between 1
17 and 4 employees, followed by 24 percent of the
18 business having 5 to 9 employees. In other
19 words, 84 percent and 77 percent of the
20 companies in these two respective zip codes
21 have between 1 and 9 employees, a resounding
22 majority of the employment in that area.

23 In closing, I offer the following
24 recommendations on how we can spur additional
25 employment. And the doctor who proceeded me

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2 talked about this. But the use of the German
3 model of apprenticeship which closely links
4 corporate communities with public education
5 systems, this mentorship process prepares
6 students with skill sets that lead to jobs
7 upon graduation. The proposed Microsoft
8 University is an example of that kind of
9 proposal. The Philadelphia Chamber of
10 Commerce can be solicited to poll its
11 membership to assist the design within the
12 public school of curriculum that will
13 matriculate students into real jobs.
14 Philadelphia Workforce Development Corporation
15 already does customized job training programs
16 using this model.

17 The gambling industry should be
18 examined for job potential in the areas of
19 entry level mechanics, security, and blue
20 color opportunities as it enters Philadelphia
21 marketplace.

22 Currently, the Philadelphia region
23 has over 500 international multi-cultural
24 firms represented in areas such as insurance,
25 technology, medicine, pharmaceuticals,

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2 industrial, and retail. International joint
3 ventures like the Chinese Mall Project in my
4 recent trip to China which is going to attract
5 over a hundred manufacturers here can be used
6 to create opportunities for joint venture with
7 existing firms, keeping in mind that based on
8 visa restrictions, only one CEO and a key
9 manager can come over with those companies.
10 So all other employment will be generated
11 locally.

12 We need to creat incentives for
13 mixed-use development in commercial corridors.
14 A good example is the Germantown corridor.
15 The further you go up Germantown Avenue, the
16 higher the number of mixed-use, meaning
17 residential up top and commercial below, real
18 estate is being developed there. There is a
19 direct correlation with the prosperity of that
20 commercial corridor. So we need to create
21 incentives to create more opportunities for
22 mixed-use development within the City of
23 Philadelphia.

24 Developing strip malls strategically
25 located to prevent consumer flight in gateway

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2 areas is important. What I mean by a gateway
3 area, you can look at areas like Baltimore
4 Avenue that abut Delaware County and Ogontz
5 Avenue which abuts Cheltenham Avenue. If we can
6 develop those corridors, we can stop some of
7 the consumer flight to suburbia shopping
8 opportunities in Chestnut Hill malls and other
9 places like that. We can stop some of that if
10 we develop those commercial corridors to
11 satisfy some of the consumer needs there.
12 Areas like 52nd and Lancaster is a perfect
13 example of what should be done.

14 We should work with organizations
15 like the American Cities Foundation which did
16 a study that showed how under public works
17 just using almost the Franklin Del Roosevelt
18 model of Public Works, that we can create jobs
19 here in the City of Philadelphia. He cited a
20 study that showed that in the City of
21 Philadelphia our sewers and waterways on
22 average were over a hundred years old, some of
23 them even having wooden construction dating
24 back to the turn of the previous century.
25 That if we use a low tech approach to

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2 developing and repairing some of this, there
3 was a 23 percent leakage factor in those
4 waterways, that recouping the savings on those
5 alone would pay for that Public Works project.

6 Inner City Economic Development
7 Forum showed that we had a representative up
8 at the Ford Foundation's seminar in New York,
9 and they talked about the fact that -- and
10 they surveyed over 150 fortunate 500
11 companies, that said they would like to have a
12 presence in inner city America but only very
13 few of them were really making plans to do
14 that. We need to create a task force or a
15 group of folk on a ad hoc basis using
16 employees from various departments to go after
17 some of these companies and make their choice
18 Philadelphia. We used to do that under the
19 Rizzo Administration. We had traveling
20 representatives that actually used to target
21 these businesses, would go to different trade
22 shows and actually recruit businesses to
23 Philadelphia. We need to take a hard look at
24 that.

25 We need to look at entrepreneur

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2 opportunities for ex-offenders. We release
3 500 ex-offenders from County weekly. They
4 have to go somewhere and they have to work
5 somewhere. We need to be creative in
6 developing entrepreneur opportunities for
7 them, keeping in mind that a lot of the
8 employment opportunity, because of their
9 felony records, are closed to them.

10 Philadelphia has to create -- I
11 talked about the attraction team. And we have
12 to work better within our own cluster of
13 organizations to go after some of those
14 businesses that would consider Philadelphia.
15 And we look forward to continuing our working
16 relationship with City Council, the City's
17 Commerce Department to increase employment
18 opportunities in the City of Philadelphia.

19 Thank you.

20 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Thank you, Mr.
21 Jones.

22 Are you going to present a testimony
23 as well?

24 MR. JONES: No, this is actually my
25 backup here. He's working with me.

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2 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Any members of
3 Committee have any questions for our witness?

4 (No response.)

5 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: I have a few
6 questions, but there's a Committee hearing
7 that's been waiting very patiently for this
8 Committee of Labor and Civil Service to get
9 done. I definitely want to follow-up with
10 some things with you, Mr. Jones. So I've
11 already someone from my staff to make sure
12 that we get a date as soon as possible.

13 Thank you so many for taking the
14 time to testify this afternoon.

15 Thank you all for participating in
16 this hearing of the Committee of Labor and
17 Civil Service on the issues of reality of
18 unemployment in Philadelphia.

19 This Committee stands in recess to
20 the call of the Chair. Thank you.

21 (Council recessed at 3:35 p.m.)

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

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing
proceedings of the Council of the City of
Philadelphia of Thursday, March 3, 2005, were
reported fully and accurately by me, and that
this is a correct transcript of the same.

RE: COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND CIVIL SERVICE

Lisa C. Bradley, RPR