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COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Remote location using Microsoft® Teams
Tuesday, June 21, 2022
10:00 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILWOMAN HELEN GYM, CHAIR
COUNCILMAN ISAIAH THOMAS, VICE-CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN KENDRA BROOKS
COUNCILWOMAN JAMIE GAUTHIER
COUNCILMAN KENYATTA JOHNSON

BILL: 220239

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1 - - -

2 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Good

3 morning, everyone. This is the public
4 hearing of the Committee on Children
5 and Youth regarding Bill No. 220239.

6 Before we begin, I'd like to recognize
7 Mr. Nick Spiva who will read the
8 required announcements.

9 THE CLERK: Thank you, Chair.

10 I understand that state law currently
11 requires that the following
12 announcement be made at the beginning
13 of every remote public hearing as
14 follows: Due to the current public
15 health emergency, City Council
16 Committees are currently meeting
17 remotely. We're using Microsoft Teams
18 to make these remote hearings
19 possible.

20 Instructions for how the
21 public may view and offer public
22 testimony at public hearings of City
23 Council Committees are included in the
24 public hearing notices that are
25 published in the Daily News, Inquirer

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1 and Legal Intelligencer prior to the
2 hearings and can also be found on
3 PHLCouncil.com.

4 Everyone who has been invited
5 to the meeting to testify should be
6 aware that the public hearing is being
7 recorded. Because the hearing is
8 public, participants and viewers have
9 no reasonable expectation of privacy.
10 By continuing to be in the meeting,
11 you're consenting to being recorded.

12 Additionally, prior to
13 Councilmember Gym recognizing Members
14 for the questions or comments they
15 have for witnesses, I will note that
16 for the record at this time that we
17 will use the chat feature available in
18 Microsoft Teams to allow Members to
19 signify that they wish to be
20 recognized. In order to comply with
21 the Sunshine Act, the chat feature
22 must only be used for this purpose.
23 Thank you.

24 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
25 very much, Mr. Spiva. Mr. Spiva, will

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1 you please call the roll to take
2 attendance. Members who are in
3 attendance, please indicate that you
4 are present when your name is called.
5 Also, please say a few brief words
6 when responding so that your image
7 will be displayed on screen when we
8 speak.

9 THE CLERK: Councilmember
10 Brooks.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: I'm
12 present.

13 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Good
14 morning.

15 THE CLERK: Councilmember
16 Gauthier.

17 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Good
18 morning, Madam Chair and colleagues.

19 THE CLERK: Councilmember
20 Johnson.

21 (No response.)

22 THE CLERK: Vice-Chair
23 Thomas.

24 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Good
25 morning, Madam Chair. Good morning,

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1 colleagues. I'm present.

2 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Good
3 morning, colleague.

4 THE CLERK: And, Chair Gym.

5 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: I am
6 present. So thank you. A quorum of
7 the Committee is present and this
8 hearing is now called to order.

9 Mr. Spiva, will you please
10 read the title of the bill being
11 considered today.

12 THE CLERK: Bill No. 220239,
13 an ordinance amending chapter 21-1800
14 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled
15 "Foster Care," to add new provisions
16 related to the screening and
17 application for benefits for foster
18 youth; limiting the use of Social
19 Security, Supplemental Security
20 Income, Veterans or other benefits;
21 and providing notice to the foster
22 child for certain actions taken with
23 respect to Social Security and other
24 benefits; all under certain terms and
25 conditions.

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1 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
2 so much. So before we call our first
3 panel, I just wanted to welcome
4 everybody to this important hearing.
5 I want to thank the public for
6 watching and I want to especially
7 thank my colleagues for their
8 consideration of this important
9 legislation to transform the way we as
10 a City manage foster youth's Social
11 Security benefits and funds.

12 Today we're here to right
13 something that has been going wrong
14 for a period of time. Each year an
15 estimated 10 to 20 percent of youth in
16 Philadelphia's foster care system are
17 entitled to over \$1.3 million in
18 federal benefits, including Survivor
19 and Social Security Disability
20 benefits.

21 Now, historically the City of
22 Philadelphia has collected these
23 benefits without notifying the youth
24 or their families and placed them into
25 the City's General Fund to cover the

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1 standard cost of care for foster
2 youth. Now, this practice occurs
3 widely all across the country. It is
4 encouraged by the state of
5 Pennsylvania's own practices, but
6 thanks to our advocates and to a
7 diligent media investigation, this
8 practice is now under question and
9 there's no more important time than
10 now to correct things that should have
11 been corrected long ago.

12 These Federal Disability and
13 Survivor benefits are specifically
14 designated to these young people and
15 are critical resources for foster
16 children and their families. They
17 come from loved ones who didn't want
18 their children to have to face the
19 challenges of this world, whether it
20 was dealing with housing or education
21 or mental health care alone.

22 Ensuring that these young
23 people receive the benefits that are
24 due to them is essential for their
25 long-term well-being. This bill, the

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1 Stronger Futures for Foster Youth Act
2 does three primary things:

3 First, it ensures that notice
4 is provided to the child or their
5 attorney or guardian of any decision
6 related to the child's benefits. This
7 includes notifying the child of their
8 eligibility for these benefits or that
9 an application for eligibility was
10 sent on their behalf.

11 Two, it ensures that children
12 are screened to determine if they are
13 eligible for federal benefits, and it
14 will ensure that eligible children can
15 receive these important financial
16 resources. And three, lastly we are
17 working towards seeing that these
18 Social Security benefits are actually
19 set aside into individual accounts so
20 that these benefits can be preserved
21 for foster youth on their transition
22 out of foster care or can be drawn
23 down during care as long as the money
24 is not used for standard costs of
25 care.

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1 Now, this legislation will
2 help foster youth prepare for the
3 transition out of foster care to
4 independence by ensuring that these
5 benefits are safeguarded for the
6 future, and this will mean that youth
7 can potentially save up for college or
8 job training, rent or many other
9 essential expenses that are critical
10 to achieving economic stability and
11 well-being.

12 Several states such as
13 Maryland, Illinois and Nebraska have
14 already established or are in the
15 process of establishing similar
16 programs to preserve benefits for
17 foster youth. And additionally,
18 several cities such as New York and
19 Los Angeles have made commitments to
20 do something similar.

21 Just last week Councilmembers
22 in Washington D.C., for example,
23 introduced similar legislation to
24 preserve benefit funds for foster
25 youth and individual accounts. But

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1 Philadelphia is here today to lead the
2 charge for what is just and right.
3 And I cannot thank our advocates and
4 our loving foster and adoptive
5 families enough, some of whom you will
6 hear from today as well as Steve Volk
7 and Julie Christie of Resolve Philly,
8 whose investigative work last December
9 covering the arduous efforts of
10 Mr. Vaughn Jackson to retrieve the
11 benefits due to his children actually
12 help move us to real action as we're
13 doing today.

14 And I especially want to
15 thank our Administration, Commissioner
16 Kim Ali; First Deputy for Office of
17 Children and Families Jessica Shapiro;
18 and Deputy Mayor Vanessa Garrett
19 Harley for their dedication and
20 commitment to seeing change at the
21 local and state level. This is a lot
22 more complicated than it may appear on
23 the face of it. And for months,
24 they've been hard at work seeking
25 alternatives, engaging with state

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1 agencies and improving our approach to
2 screening and notifying youth and
3 families regarding decisions related
4 to their benefits.

5 And finally, I want to thank
6 my colleagues, especially the
7 cosponsors of this bill, Councilmember
8 Bass, Councilmembers Johnson, Brooks,
9 Gauthier, Thomas and Green. I'm proud
10 to have your support as we consider
11 the legislation before us, and I look
12 forward to the conversation ahead.

13 Before we begin and call the
14 first witness, do any of my colleagues
15 have any additional opening remarks at
16 this time?

17 (No response.)

18 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: I'd also
19 like to note that Councilmember
20 Johnson is present. Thank you so
21 much, Councilmember Johnson. Good
22 morning.

23 Councilmember Gauthier.

24 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
25 you, Madam Chair, and good morning,

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1 everyone. I just wanted to commend
2 you for this bill.

3 I think when government is
4 doing something wrong, and this was a
5 practice that is wrong, people in
6 government have to be brave enough to
7 call it out as wrong and then to go
8 further to rectify the wrong. So I
9 commend you as well as Commissioner
10 Ali, Vanessa Garrett Harley and other
11 folks in the Administration for
12 recognizing this as a practice that
13 was harmful to our foster youth and
14 doing something to change it.

15 And I also wanted just to
16 commend Resolve Philly. This is one
17 of the clearest examples I've seen why
18 it's very important to have an
19 independent and strong media to bring
20 injustice to light. So thank you so
21 much and I look forward to
22 participating in today's hearing.

23 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Agree.
24 Thank you so much, Councilmember
25 Gauthier.

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1 Great. Mr. Spiva, will you
2 please call the first panel we have to
3 testify on Bill No. 220239.

4 THE CLERK: Thank you, Chair.
5 The first panel is Commissioner Kim
6 Ali.

7 COMMISSIONER ALI: Good
8 morning, Chairperson Helen Gym and
9 Vice-Chairperson Isaiah Thomas. I am
10 Kimberly Ali, Commissioner of the City
11 of Philadelphia Department of Human
12 Services. With me today are Nadine
13 Perese, Chief Financial Officer for
14 the Office of Children and Families;
15 Jonathan Houlon, Chief Deputy City
16 Solicitor of the City of Philadelphia
17 Law Department Child Welfare Unit as
18 well as other members of my DHS
19 leadership team. We appreciate this
20 opportunity to provide testimony and
21 respond to Bill No. 220239.

22 Councilmember Gym, thank you
23 for your work on this subject and for
24 your collaboration with DHS to work
25 out a solution that will help children

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1 and families with achieving financial
2 stability. I am pleased to talk about
3 DHS performing work in this area.

4 While we agree in principle with many
5 of the aspects of the bill, some
6 portions pose challenges that we are
7 working to overcome.

8 I can assure you that my team
9 is committed to improving this system
10 and making positive change for the
11 children and families that we serve.

12 I would like to provide you with an
13 overview of the actions we are taking
14 to be more transparent with families,
15 streamline our practices and explore
16 the setting aside of these funds for
17 young people.

18 As you all know, DHS receives
19 a combination of City, state and
20 federal funds. The Pennsylvania
21 funding statute known as Act 148 as
22 well as state fiscal regulations
23 mandate that no state child welfare
24 payments shall be made to counties on
25 behalf of a child until the child has

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1 exhausted his eligibility and receipt
2 of benefits under all other existing
3 or future private, public, local,
4 state or federal programs. Therefore,
5 state law requires all counties,
6 including Philadelphia to attempt to
7 collect federal benefits that a child
8 is receiving at the time they enter
9 DHS custody.

10 The law requires that this
11 federal funding be applied towards the
12 cost of care for a child. It is DHS's
13 practice to only collect Old Age
14 Survivors and Disability Insurance
15 also known as OASDI benefits, also
16 referred to as Survivor benefits.
17 These are benefits that a child
18 receives due to a disabled parent with
19 a work history or a parent who is
20 deceased. DHS does not receive Social
21 Security benefits for children who
22 have disabilities themselves. These
23 funds are suspended during the time
24 that a child is in the custody of DHS.

25 While the Social Security

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1 Administration is responsible for and
2 does notify families when DHS files to
3 collect the OASDI benefits, DHS
4 believes that we should also be
5 informing families of this action.
6 Therefore, we are finalizing a letter
7 to send to parents and the child's
8 attorney to inform them that DHS has
9 pursuant to legal obligation requested
10 to become the representative payee and
11 receive the benefits. The letter also
12 states that the benefits are used for
13 the cost to care for the child when in
14 DHS custody.

15 In addition, the letter
16 provides the parent and child attorney
17 with the Social Security
18 Administration phone number for
19 further information on how to apply to
20 become the payee for the benefits. A
21 parent or other family member may
22 contact the Social Security
23 Administration to request that they
24 become the representative payee. We
25 are also working with Social Security

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1 Administration to ensure that the
2 Social Security Administration is
3 notified in a timely way when children
4 leave care so that parents or new
5 caregivers can then go to Social
6 Security and arrange to receive the
7 benefits again without delay.

8 We recognize that this
9 process needs to be improved and we
10 are working to ensure that a gap does
11 not exist in this area. We recognize
12 that providing notice to families,
13 while very important, does not address
14 the more complex and important
15 proposed provisions about the
16 conservation and use of children's
17 benefits.

18 However, let me describe
19 DHS's work in this area. As I noted
20 above, state law requires Philadelphia
21 and all counties to collect these
22 benefits and to apply the funds to its
23 budget. We have engaged the state to
24 determine if there is a way for the
25 City to replace the federal portion of

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1 the cost with City dollars.

2 We are in active discussions

3 with the state and hope to have a

4 final resolution on this issue soon.

5 Simultaneously, we are working to

6 determine the legal and financial

7 mechanisms to retain the funds

8 individually while the children are in

9 our care so that the funds can be

10 returned when the child is discharged

11 from our care.

12 We understand that the funds

13 can be a lifeline for those aging out

14 of foster care who have increased

15 rates of housing insecurity, poverty

16 and food insecurity. As the

17 Children's Advocacy Institute in

18 San Diego noted, these funds could be

19 the difference between a security

20 deposit and couch surfing.

21 Finally, regarding the

22 portion of the bill that would require

23 DHS to apply for benefits for

24 children, we are examining this issue

25 as well. We are very concerned that

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1 creating an elaborate widespread
2 process of evaluating all children in
3 care for disabilities will exacerbate
4 the existing racial disproportionality
5 that exists for children in the child
6 welfare system.

7 We do not want to create
8 further labeling for children in care
9 that may follow them for the rest of
10 their lives. As such, we are
11 carefully looking at ways that we can
12 address this portion of the bill
13 without having unintended negative
14 consequences and look forward to
15 further discussions in this area.

16 We hope that by taking these
17 steps and examining our past practices
18 DHS can better meet the needs of
19 children and families and support and
20 strengthen families in need. Thank
21 you for your interest in this issue.
22 I welcome your questions.

23 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
24 very much, Commissioner Ali. I just
25 wanted to affirm that the

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1 Administration is in support of many
2 of the elements of this bill and the
3 ones that you have concerns about are
4 ones in which we are still trying to
5 work through state action; is that
6 correct?

7 COMMISSIONER ALI: That is
8 correct, Councilmember Gym.

9 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And I know
10 we had discussed the concerns around
11 screening and what it would mean, but
12 I think our focus is on ensuring that
13 young people are screened for
14 eligibility for what they would be
15 qualified for as opposed to kind of
16 probing for things that may be outside
17 of the agency's normal course of
18 responsibility?

19 COMMISSIONER ALI: Yes,
20 Council --

21 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Okay.
22 Just to be clear.

23 COMMISSIONER ALI: Yeah. And
24 I know we've had discussions in
25 reference to that. And so, I think

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1 that we definitely need further
2 discussions and we're looking
3 internally because we do want to make
4 sure that we distinguish between the
5 trauma that young people suffer as a
6 result of being separated from their
7 families as a result of the exposure
8 that they are exposed to, the trauma
9 that they are exposed to versus a
10 persistent disability. We do not want
11 young people, and I know you agree, to
12 be improperly diagnosed.

13 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Yeah. And
14 I don't think that the Office of
15 Children and Families is necessarily
16 equipped to do that. I think it's for
17 existing eligibility and not for
18 things that would be beyond the
19 agency's scope of work. Would you
20 agree that that would be a good place
21 for us to agree upon?

22 COMMISSIONER ALI: Yes,
23 Councilmember Gym.

24 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And then
25 could you tell us, you know, I know

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1 that one of the things that we decided
2 to do was to give the agency time this
3 summer to work on implementation,
4 particularly in your negotiations with
5 the state. Can you talk a little bit
6 about how things are advancing at the
7 state level and where State DHS has
8 been? Because I know it's not just us
9 in Philadelphia. Obviously, this bill
10 will require us to do a little bit
11 more here than in other states -- in
12 other cities. But can you talk a
13 little bit more about where the state
14 is?

15 COMMISSIONER ALI: Yes. I
16 will actually defer to the CFO Nadine
17 Perese, given that she has had direct
18 conversations with the state. So she
19 can share her discussions with the
20 state and where we are.

21 MS. PERESE: Sure. Thank
22 you. Thank you, Councilmember. Yes,
23 the state's OCYF, the Office of
24 Children Youth and Families has been
25 incredibly supportive, going through

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1 legislation figuring out the best way
2 for us to continue to invoice and be
3 in compliance. And unofficially to
4 this point, they have been very
5 supportive of this with the
6 understanding that we would have to
7 supplant these funds with County funds
8 in order to move forward and be in
9 compliance with invoicing.

10 COUNCILWOMAN GYM:

11 Understood. Thank you.

12 Are there questions or
13 comments from members of the Committee
14 for this panel for Commissioner Ali?

15 (No response.)

16 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Great.

17 Thank you so much, Commissioner, and
18 thank you for your continued work. We
19 look forward to working with you and
20 your team through the summer. Thank
21 you.

22 COMMISSIONER ALI: Thank you.

23 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Mr. Spiva,
24 will you please call the next panel to
25 testify on the bill.

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1 THE CLERK: Yes. For the
2 next panel we have Anahi Figueroa
3 Martinez, Ian Marks and Vaughn
4 Jackson. Anahi and Vaughn are joining
5 by phone, so I just want to confirm
6 with Council Support that they've been
7 contacted.

8 MS. FIGUEROA MARTINEZ:
9 Hello.

10 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Hello.
11 Good morning. Are you connected and
12 ready to testify? Is this Anahi?

13 MS. FIGUEROA MARTINEZ: It
14 is.

15 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Great.
16 Good morning. If you could just state
17 your name, your full name for the
18 record and then you may proceed with
19 your testimony.

20 MS. FIGUEROA MARTINEZ: My
21 name is Anahi Figueroa Martinez.

22 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Good
23 morning. Please proceed with your
24 testimony.

25 MS. FIGUEROA MARTINEZ: I'm

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1 sorry. I'm having like a difficult
2 time with my thing right now.

3 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Anahi,
4 would it help if you went off mute and
5 then --

6 MS. FIGUEROA MARTINEZ: Yes.

7 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Okay.
8 Great.

9 MS. FIGUEROA MARTINEZ: Good
10 morning. My name is Anahi Figueroa
11 Martinez. I'm an alumni from the
12 Juvenile Law Center. I entered care
13 when I was around, I believe I think I
14 was 7 years old. I was adopted at the
15 age of 11 and eventually I ended up
16 entering care at 15 and I aged out at
17 21.

18 My experience in foster care
19 felt really disorganized and often I
20 felt like I had to fight to get a lot
21 of things for myself. My experience
22 aging out of care was very
23 challenging. I worked with my
24 caseworkers to come up with the best
25 plan for me, but now that I have aged

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1 out and I think back on the process, I
2 believe there must be more than one
3 backup.

4 I aged out during COVID and
5 that was an even more difficult
6 process because a lot of things were
7 no longer the norm, especially finding
8 stable housing. As a result, I didn't
9 have stable housing when I aged out.
10 Things went worse for me since I aged
11 out in COVID and there were a lot of
12 restrictions and resources no longer
13 available.

14 The Department of Human
15 Services was not ready or prepared for
16 COVID and did not have a plan for us
17 when it first hit. A lot of places
18 were closed and the agency just
19 couldn't do as much. I know many
20 youth also faced similar issues like
21 me even before COVID ever hit. I have
22 friends and many of my peers in the
23 Juvenile Law Center's Youth Advocacy
24 Program who aged out before COVID,
25 experiencing homelessness and house-

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1 hopping for a while and lost access to
2 a lot of resources when they aged out.
3 This should not be the case. It is
4 already so hard for us. And when we
5 don't have a good plan or savings, it
6 impacts our life when we are left to
7 go off on our own.

8 If people had access to funds
9 like SSI during this time and a better
10 exit plan, maybe this could have
11 changed their life. So when we leave,
12 we face many challenges being on our
13 own like being homeless or house-
14 hopping or losing access to health
15 care and being able to just meet our
16 basic needs.

17 Being in care impacted my
18 education and my peers, and maybe
19 having these benefits or knowing that
20 youth can receive these benefits if
21 you need them could have helped us
22 with things like our educational needs
23 and help us to feel more secure. If I
24 was eligible for benefits and had a
25 savings account set aside for me until

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1 I aged out, it would have helped me
2 and so many other youth.

3 We don't really have much
4 money put aside and saved to help us
5 unless we're working and doing it on
6 our own. I think youth should have
7 their own personal account where their
8 money is being sent every month to
9 ensure they have savings to take care
10 of themselves before they age out and
11 when they finally do.

12 DHS should never take youth
13 money without their permission,
14 knowledge or without using it to help
15 them, especially because they know
16 youth already need so much help.
17 Every benefit that youth are eligible
18 for, it should come directly to them
19 or be used to support them directly.
20 Thank you.

21 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
22 so much, Anahi, for your powerful
23 testimony. Thank you.

24 MS. FIGUEROA MARTINEZ: Thank
25 you.

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1 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Mr. Spiva,
2 can you call the next witness for the
3 panel.

4 THE CLERK: Next we have Ian
5 Marks.

6 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Good
7 morning, Mr. Marks.

8 MR. MARKS: Good morning.

9 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Are you
10 connected? And if you are, you may
11 just state your name for the record
12 and then you may proceed with your
13 testimony.

14 MR. MARKS: Okay. I think
15 I'm connected. So my name is Ian
16 Marks and I am currently a law student
17 at Emory Law in Atlanta, Georgia. I
18 am a former foster youth giving my
19 perspective on this issue in support
20 of this bill. When I was 11 years
21 old, I had lost my mother, and my
22 father was arrested for second degree
23 murder. But no relatives were able to
24 care for me at the time, I was placed
25 in foster care and stayed in the

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1 system until I turned 18 and aged out.

2 Now, as you can imagine, I
3 was deeply traumatized by the
4 circumstances that placed me into
5 foster care. I learned that I was
6 eligible for disability benefits due
7 to PTSD, mental illnesses stipulated
8 by therapists and other things, which
9 could give me the assistance and give
10 me the treatment I desperately needed
11 at that time.

12 I also learned that because
13 of my mother's service in Guantanamo
14 Bay during her time in the Navy, I was
15 eligible for more benefits such as
16 Veterans or Survivor's Benefits. I
17 felt like I had hoped that there were
18 funds I could use to help me heal from
19 my trauma and to put aside to help me
20 once I had aged out of care, but that
21 hope was eventually crushed.

22 My guardian went with a
23 lawyer and especially appointed an
24 associate from the Navy to apply for
25 my Social Security benefits, but there

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1 we were effectively told there was no
2 point in applying because state
3 agencies would take my benefits and
4 effectively use them as a funding
5 stream. This meant that the money I'd
6 get because of my mother's death, her
7 service in the military and the money
8 I basically needed to get me
9 assistance would instead just be taken
10 by the states.

11 The fear of having my
12 benefits taken is not uncommon, as
13 most foster youth currently receiving
14 SSI and OASDI benefits are having
15 their money be taken by state agencies
16 and most of them really don't know it.
17 The Government Accountability Office
18 reported in June of 2021 that of
19 foster children receiving these
20 benefits, the state was a
21 representative payee for nearly 82
22 percent of these children. This is
23 despite law indicating that states are
24 supposed to be the last preferred
25 payee possible, and most foster youth

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1 aren't aware of this because states
2 aren't even notifying the child in the
3 first place.

4 But I think the more
5 problematic part is that foster
6 children like me will never see a dime
7 of this money even if we did get it.
8 This is frustrating because it's --
9 these expenses are really used by the
10 DHS and are basically reusing them to
11 pay for expenses that they're already
12 supposed to be paying for in the first
13 place. And I'm personally upset by
14 this because when I aged out of foster
15 care, I could have used this money for
16 things like housing, school books,
17 college or medical expenses and other
18 basic necessities that foster youth
19 like me will struggle with once we age
20 out of the system. Instead, all this
21 money would have been used for the
22 state to reimburse themselves for
23 costs that they're already supposed to
24 pay for. The other children who don't
25 receive these benefits, they don't

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1 have to pay for it at all.

2 And even I am an exceptional
3 case in this scenario because many
4 foster youth don't have the resources
5 that I had that got me this far. And
6 this overall just makes me upset
7 because I don't think it's morally
8 right for foster children like me who
9 are in the most vulnerable position to
10 give up essential benefits to
11 reimburse a system that we never chose
12 to be in, in the first place.

13 I think it's very clear that
14 this system in particular needs a
15 great change. And for that reason
16 alone, I encourage you to support this
17 bill and I would like to thank the
18 Council for their time.

19 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
20 so much, Mr. Marks, for your
21 incredibly powerful testimony. And we
22 would love to reverse the past, but we
23 are definitely going to fix it. So
24 thank you.

25 Mr. Spiva, can you call the

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1 next witness.

2 THE CLERK: Next we have
3 Vaughn Jackson.

4 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Good
5 morning, Mr. Jackson. Thank you so
6 much for joining us today.

7 (No response.)

8 THE CLERK: Council Support,
9 have we been able to connect
10 Mr. Jackson via phone?

11 (No response.)

12 THE CLERK: Chair Gym, it may
13 make sense at this point to move to
14 the third panel until we get him
15 connected.

16 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Before we
17 continue, again I just want to thank,
18 Anahi and Ian, both for your deeply
19 personal experiences going through the
20 foster care system. I know it's not
21 easy to kind of talk about personal
22 experiences that some of which are
23 extremely painful or very deeply
24 private, and we can't thank you enough
25 for doing that in order to ensure that

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1 this City and the system see some
2 change.

3 So we're just really honored
4 to have you here, and everything that
5 we're going to do we'll be thinking
6 about both of you and many others,
7 young people like you, to make sure we
8 do the right thing moving forward.

9 I know that Councilmember
10 Thomas has his hand raised. So,
11 Councilmember Thomas.

12 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
13 you, Madam Chair. I just want to take
14 a moment to actually echo exactly what
15 you said. I listening to the
16 testimony was very emotional but more
17 than anything, I have a family filled
18 with folks who are foster children who
19 have been adopted. So on a certain
20 level I can relate to and understand
21 what you're saying.

22 But on another level, I don't
23 know if we have the heart I guess you
24 could say or the courage to put our
25 business out there on display for the

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1 world to judge with the intentions of
2 trying to improve a system for the
3 next person so they don't have to go
4 through what you went through. So I
5 appreciate this panel specifically,
6 because what they have communicated
7 today and what we are trying to do is
8 historic in nature and it's important
9 for the young people who often are put
10 in situations that they didn't ask
11 for, they didn't choose to be in, but
12 more or less is the hand that they've
13 been getting, that they've been dealt
14 based on the decisions of adults.

15 So thank you, Madam Chair.
16 And thank you more importantly to that
17 last panel because that was very
18 powerful.

19 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
20 so much, Vice-Chair Thomas.

21 Any other comments?

22 (No response.)

23 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
24 so much, Ian and Anahi, for all of
25 your work. And we'll keep in touch,

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1 so thank you.

2 Mr. Spiva, will you please
3 call the next panel.

4 MR. JACKSON: Hello?

5 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Hello.

6 MR. JACKSON: Hello?

7 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Is this
8 Mr. Jackson?

9 COUNCIL TECH SUPPORT: I'm
10 going to try to reconnect. It looks
11 like his connection --

12 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Okay.

13 COUNCIL TECH SUPPORT: Just
14 give me one second.

15 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
16 everybody for patience.

17 MR. JACKSON: Hello.

18 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Yes. Good
19 morning, Mr. Jackson. How are you?

20 MR. JACKSON: Good morning.
21 I'm great.

22 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
23 so much for joining our City Council
24 Committee on Children and Youth this
25 morning. If you could just please

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1 state your full name for the record
2 and then you may proceed with your
3 testimony.

4 MR. JACKSON: Vaughn Jackson.

5 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you.

6 You may proceed with your testimony,
7 Mr. Jackson.

8 MR. JACKSON: Yes. Hi. How
9 you doing. How's everybody doing this
10 morning. Yeah, well, you know, I was
11 concerned about the benefits. When I
12 first found out, I wasn't aware that
13 my kids was even eligible or, you
14 know, in any kind of way of the
15 Survivor's benefits. And the only way
16 that I found out is that they cut off
17 my EBT card and said that they're not
18 eligible for SNAP anymore.

19 So actually I had took Xavier
20 to a doctor appointment, I took him to
21 the doctor and I had a problem with
22 his card, so the doctor was concerned
23 about that. So that's how it all
24 started. And she had got me in
25 contact with a legal team, and they

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1 said that I was collecting benefits
2 from them and that's why they cut off
3 my SNAP. And I had no idea. I'm
4 like, benefits? I'm like, I'm not
5 collecting anything.

6 And I'm thinking that maybe
7 the biological mom had got this
8 information and maybe probably had did
9 something. I had no idea that this
10 was coming from the system itself,
11 that they was holding their money and
12 was -- this money wasn't hitting my
13 home to help me with my kids, and I
14 had no idea.

15 So I've struggled a lot with
16 Xavier for -- this kid had two major
17 surgeries on his head back and forth
18 to the doctor. I mean, like it was
19 like absolutely no help really. And
20 when I got the kids permanently, it
21 was like everybody said, okay, he did
22 his part, let's move on. I was like
23 shut out from everybody. That's what
24 it seemed like.

25 It seemed like I was getting

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1 more help when they were in the system
2 as far as like foster kids before I
3 adopted these kids. So it was kind of
4 hard on me, but I'm happy to be a part
5 of this and share my story. And do
6 anybody have any questions for me?

7 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: No.

8 Mr. Jackson, for people who are
9 watching, your story was featured in a
10 significant investigation into the use
11 of foster care Survivors benefits.
12 You have two sons; is that correct?

13 MR. JACKSON: Yes.

14 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Okay. And
15 how are they? I think they are
16 Zaveonte and Xavier.

17 MR. JACKSON: Well, Xavier is
18 14. Zaveonte just turned 18. He had
19 a birthday the other day, the 15th of
20 June.

21 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Wonderful.
22 And you were a foster father and then
23 you ended up adopting your children;
24 is that correct?

25 MR. JACKSON: Yes.

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1 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Okay. And
2 then you had been taking care of the
3 two boys for a number of months. Do
4 you know how long it was -- I mean,
5 technically when you adopted them, you
6 should have been immediately entitled
7 to the benefits. Do you know how long
8 you were caring for them before you
9 finally received the benefits that
10 were due to you?

11 MR. JACKSON: Five years. I
12 was caring for these boys for five
13 years before I had any clue. So when
14 I did find out, they did send me money
15 I believe it was for since I did my
16 adoption with them. But prior to
17 that, I don't know how it worked. But
18 I mean, they was in my care the whole
19 time. And that's what I was trying to
20 tell Ms. Clara how is that, I mean,
21 it's not my money, it's not for me.
22 So what happens to their money when I
23 was taking care of them the other
24 three years? Like, why they just
25 paying them when I adopted them?

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1 Like, they giving me money, it's not
2 for me. It's for the boys.

3 Just like Zaveonte, he's
4 finished school. He's going to MIAT,
5 College of Technicians in Michigan.
6 And I signed up for FAFSA. They
7 helped out, but I have to come out my
8 pocket with the rest of the money for
9 him to go to school and I need all the
10 help I can get. You know, I'm trying
11 to do the right thing. I'm doing my
12 part and I feel as though that the
13 system is mistreating these kids.
14 Because if I had that money, I will be
15 able to pay for his schooling and, you
16 know, get his education as far as I
17 can, you know.

18 And as far as Xavier, I mean,
19 he has a lot of needs. Xavier has a
20 lot of needs, so you know that's a
21 whole different with Xavier.

22 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And I
23 think your story underscores the
24 importance of the screening and the
25 notification more than anything else.

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1 Because I think if we had both
2 screened and notified, you would have
3 been immediately made aware and the
4 City would not have held on to
5 Survivors benefits long after we're
6 even legally entitled to.

7 So I think because of this
8 story, certainly returned the money,
9 but you highlighted the importance of
10 this work in terms of screening
11 notification and including as well as
12 the set-aside funds. Thank you so
13 much, Mr. Jackson, for speaking about
14 it, for being very clear about what
15 was needed and talking about how much
16 love you have for both your children.
17 Thank you for adopting them and loving
18 them. So thank you so much.

19 MR. JACKSON: My pleasure.
20 It was great. I'm proud of myself,
21 you know, right, that it's amazing
22 that, you know, what I did with these
23 kids. They love me. So thank you. I
24 appreciate it.

25 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you

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1 so much. And again, we're looking to
2 make change for not just our City, but
3 across the state. And I think that
4 there can be a move to see this change
5 we hope nationally, because it's all
6 of our children and we just want to
7 thank you so much.

8 Are there any last questions
9 for this panel from members of the
10 Committee?

11 MR. JACKSON: Well, I have a
12 lot to say. But I was hoping that,
13 you know, y'all had some questions for
14 me or something. But I don't want to
15 take up too much of your time. But I
16 think it's a great deal for somebody
17 to step up now and open up this can of
18 worms because it's just not right.
19 It's just not right. There's so many
20 kids that's not aware of what's going
21 on, and these orphans they deserve
22 everything in the world.

23 I mean, some of them, yes,
24 they are challenging, but they're just
25 kids and they just need structure. So

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1 this program, this is great. I hope
2 everything works out and I just pray
3 that it works out for the best for
4 these kids.

5 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
6 so much for all your advocacy,
7 Mr. Jackson, and especially for
8 showing what a wonderful father, a
9 loving father you've been to both your
10 boys and also just to continue to
11 exhort for change.

12 Councilmember Gauthier.

13 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: I
14 don't have a question. I just wanted
15 to thank Mr. Jackson for being willing
16 to share his story both with the media
17 and with this Committee today. I also
18 read that article and was just
19 horrified. And so, thank you so much
20 for just laying this all out for us,
21 and I definitely don't think we should
22 be making it harder for people like
23 you who are stepping up to take in
24 foster children to take care of those
25 children, and we shouldn't be making

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1 it harder for those children to have
2 stable futures. So again, thanks for
3 your advocacy because it's a large
4 part of the reason why we're here
5 today.

6 MR. JACKSON: Absolutely.
7 Thank you so much. It's my pleasure.
8 Anything I can do.

9 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
10 so much to this panel. Your words
11 have really touched us today and they
12 are why we are here, so thank you.

13 MR. JACKSON: Thank you for
14 having me.

15 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you,
16 Mr. Jackson.

17 Mr. Spiva, will you please
18 call the next panel to testify on this
19 bill.

20 THE CLERK: Yes. We have
21 Professor Dan Hatcher, Bridget Biddle
22 and Laurie Dow.

23 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Good
24 morning, everybody. Thank you so much
25 for joining us. Our time is a little

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1 bit tight, so if we can keep your
2 remarks relatively tight. We have all
3 of your testimony in front of us. So
4 thank you so much for joining us. And
5 if you could just state your name for
6 the record and proceed with your
7 testimony in the order in which you
8 were called.

9 PROFESSOR HATCHER: Thank
10 you, Madam Chair, members of the
11 Committee. My name is Daniel Hatcher.
12 I'm a Law Professor at the University
13 of Baltimore. My background is in my
14 written testimony. The best real
15 experts have already testified in the
16 last panel so I can keep this very
17 brief.

18 I do want to say I've worked
19 with a lot of legislative staff at the
20 federal, state and local level over
21 the years, and this has been some of
22 the most impressive staff that I've
23 worked with, so I thank them as well.
24 This bill will help children currently
25 to ensure the fiduciary obligation of

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1 discretion to make sure that funds are
2 available for specialized needs not
3 already met by the agency and also
4 conserve funds for the future
5 transition and struggle for
6 independence after leaving foster
7 care.

8 In my written testimony, I go
9 into detail about why this bill is not
10 just consistent with federal law, but
11 it helps bring the actions of the
12 child welfare agency into line with
13 federally required fiduciary
14 obligations as the guardian of
15 vulnerable children and as
16 representative payee.

17 In fact, Pennsylvania's
18 Supreme Court recognized that the
19 worst example of a breach of fiduciary
20 duty is a fiduciary taking assets from
21 child beneficiaries for themselves.
22 That's the Pennsylvania Supreme Court.
23 Briefly mentioning screening, I will
24 add that our child welfare agencies
25 across the country should already be

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1 screening for healthcare needs and
2 needs based on disabling conditions
3 under both the EPSDT under Medicaid
4 and the IDEA under educational needs,
5 for special educational needs.

6 Again, the entire reason that
7 our child welfare agencies exist is to
8 serve the best interests of children
9 in their care. Again, more detail is
10 in my written testimony so I submit
11 based upon that testimony. I fully
12 support this important bill and I urge
13 a positive vote from this Committee.
14 Thank you so much for the honor to
15 testify.

16 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
17 so much, Professor Hatcher.

18 MS. BIDDLE: (Inaudible).

19 THE CLERK: Ms. Biddle, I
20 don't think we can hear you. Council
21 Support typically recommends trying to
22 log out and log back in as the best
23 opportunity to get the mic working if
24 the unmute is not working.

25 And I think while we try to

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1 get Ms. Biddle's audio connected, we
2 will go to Laurie Dow.

3 MS. DOW: Good morning,
4 everyone. As was stated, I'm Laurie
5 Dow, Vulnerable Youth Policy Director
6 for Children First, an agency in
7 Philadelphia advocating for children
8 in the Philadelphia surrounding
9 region. As has been stated, the
10 Social Security benefits that are
11 being taken on behalf of children in
12 foster care amounts to about 5 million
13 in a five-year period that was
14 collected by the Department of Human
15 Services. That's a huge number when
16 to youth like Anahi and Ian who have
17 spoken.

18 It's actually over a five-
19 year period, a very small amount for
20 DHS. The impact that it would have on
21 children's lives to have those funds
22 available to them is priceless. And
23 as we see in terms of the impact that
24 children and youth have in this bill,
25 the first interaction for many

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1 children that they have with the legal
2 system is when they enter foster care,
3 and they learn about the rights and
4 how the law can protect them or it can
5 hurt them.

6 And having this money removed
7 and taken on behalf of DHS without
8 their notification to their families
9 or attorneys is a grave deprivation of
10 rights. So this bill would undo that,
11 protect these children, give them
12 knowledge, certainly where we saw with
13 the parent who spoke today, Anahi,
14 Ian, where at times they didn't even
15 know the money was available to them.
16 This will give them that option and
17 the ability to act.

18 Again, youth who age out
19 they're faced with homelessness. They
20 often don't have a high school degree.
21 They don't have -- they're
22 disconnected from family supports.
23 Having funds set aside for them for
24 their futures would give them a great
25 step up and help create a buffer in

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1 the financial pitfalls that happen as
2 youth age out.

3 So as a result, we for these
4 reasons at Children First are asking
5 City Council to support this bill and
6 to vote for it. And we thank all who
7 have co-signed and presented on this
8 bill. Thank you very much.

9 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you,
10 Ms. Dow.

11 Ms. Biddle, are you
12 connected?

13 MS. BIDDLE: Can you hear me
14 now?

15 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: (Nodded
16 affirmatively).

17 MS. BIDDLE: Great. Good
18 morning. My name is Bridget Biddle
19 and I'm a Social Worker with Community
20 Legal Services Youth Justice Project.
21 CLS enthusiastically supports Bill
22 No. 220239, the Stronger Futures for
23 Foster Youth Act as a crucial step in
24 supporting youth in the child welfare
25 system.

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1 Taking life-sustaining
2 benefits from youth in foster care is
3 a policy that's pennywise and pound
4 foolish. Governments like
5 Philadelphia don't recoup very much
6 money while that same small amount of
7 money in the hands of individual youth
8 can be transformative. Conserving
9 benefits for youth can mean the
10 difference between homelessness and
11 being able to pay a security deposit
12 or down payment on your first home.
13 This bill shifts the focus to make
14 sure that children and youth have the
15 financial resources they need to
16 thrive and ensures that their benefits
17 are being handled in accordance with
18 Social Security Administration
19 regulations.

20 Community legal services
21 Youth Justice Project provides
22 holistic community-based civil legal
23 services to youth 16 to 24. Through
24 our individual legal representation,
25 the leadership of our Youth Action

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1 Board and advocacy with our partners,
2 we have witnessed the devastating
3 effects of youth exiting the foster
4 care system with insufficient
5 resources to survive and thrive.

6 One way that we support youth
7 in Philadelphia is by helping them
8 access and maintain life-sustaining
9 Social Security benefits. Based on
10 our experience connecting you to these
11 vital benefits, we would like to
12 highlight three points: First, Social
13 Security benefits are an essential
14 resource for youth and preparing to
15 exit foster care. We know that many
16 youth leaving foster care face high
17 rates of homelessness, joblessness and
18 poverty. Nearly half of all children
19 in foster care have chronic medical
20 problems and up to 80 percent have
21 serious emotional problems, which
22 means many will need the support of
23 disability benefits at some point.

24 Social Security benefits can
25 open doors previously shut to young

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1 people. They can break down barriers
2 to housing and education access,
3 provide needed medical treatment and
4 accommodations for youth with
5 disabilities and save money to achieve
6 future goals.

7 Second, this bill would
8 improve outcomes for youth by spending
9 Social Security benefits on what
10 individual youth need instead of
11 uniformly paying for the routine costs
12 of foster care. Anyone who serves as
13 a representative payee, including an
14 organizational payee, must decide how
15 to use resources in the beneficiary's
16 best interest, which requires looking
17 at each individual's circumstances and
18 goals.

19 For our clients, the shift to
20 use their benefits for their own needs
21 rather than to cover their own foster
22 care bills would have opened doors to
23 stable housing, further education and
24 vocational training and the freedom to
25 choose where to live and who to live

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1 with.

2 Finally, this bill recognizes
3 that youth needs support if they are
4 going to successfully access and
5 maintain Social Security benefits. As
6 advocates to assist youth in
7 navigating bureaucratic systems, we
8 see our clients discouraged by
9 confusing Social Security letters and
10 rules are shut out from Social
11 Security's offices simply because the
12 phones don't work.

13 We know firsthand that having
14 an advocate can make the difference
15 between an approval or denial of
16 benefits. We appreciate the bill's
17 mandate for hands-on support for youth
18 in and exiting care, who otherwise
19 would navigate this complex system
20 alone. Rather than foot the bill for
21 their own foster care, youth should
22 have the opportunity to use their
23 benefits for the needs they identify,
24 because they are the experts in what
25 those needs are.

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1 Based on what I know about
2 the mission of the child welfare
3 system to set up youth to be as
4 successful as possible, returning
5 these benefits to youth is a low-cost
6 policy change that brings them closer
7 to achieving that goal and is a
8 win-win for everyone. Thank you to
9 the Committee for the opportunity to
10 speak and support of this important
11 bill.

12 THE CLERK: Thank you,
13 Ms. Biddle.

14 For our last testifier, we
15 have Frank Cervone. Please state your
16 name and proceed with your testimony.

17 MR. CERVONE: Do you have my
18 audio? Dan, do you have my audio?

19 PROFESSOR HATCHER: (Thumbs
20 up).

21 MR. CERVONE: Yes?

22 THE CLERK: Yes.

23 MR. CERVONE: Thank you.
24 Just looking for that answer. Sorry.
25 I'll be quick. First, I'm troubled to

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1 hear today that there are different
2 approaches being pursued for Survivor
3 and Disability benefits as the
4 Commissioner suggested. We urge
5 increased transparency and inclusion
6 of advocates for these important
7 decisions on the design of the program
8 and to right this historical
9 injustice.

10 Most importantly, under no
11 circumstances should the government be
12 taking money from kids. You've heard
13 over and over again you're not just
14 taking from their present when you
15 take that money. You're taking from
16 their future. The decision to apply
17 for these benefits, the decision to be
18 considered disabled for purposes of
19 federal law, the decision to receive
20 funds and ultimately the use of the
21 funds. These are decisions that
22 belong to the child and to the family,
23 not to government.

24 The PA ABLE Program is a
25 brilliant, wonderful program available

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1 to persons with disabilities,
2 obviously not all of the kids we're
3 talking about to make those funds
4 secure and not count against other
5 benefits, and we should explore how to
6 make PA ABLE accounts available to all
7 of our kids.

8 Finally, the scope of the
9 program in Philadelphia remains
10 unclear, in particular whether that
11 important trust has been violated in
12 the past. While we appreciate the
13 forward-looking perspective of the
14 current initiative, we also need to
15 understand what happened in the past.
16 Respectfully, we still need to know
17 the record of payments received on
18 behalf of children in past years based
19 on their survivorship or their
20 disability. Otherwise, we're all
21 complicit in essentially waiving the
22 rights of those children to whatever
23 benefits those rights might have
24 entitled them. I don't think any of
25 us have the authority to execute that

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1 waiver. Thank you, Councilwoman Gym,
2 and all of you for your leadership on
3 this important initiative.

4 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
5 so much, Mr. Cervone, for your work
6 too and your tremendous advocacy and
7 also keeping us very focused on what
8 we need to be doing through this
9 process. In part, we are taking the
10 summer to ensure that we can move
11 diligently and to cover all of our
12 bases before the bill gets passed.

13 We actually want something
14 that changes existing practices and
15 not just pass a law just to pass a
16 law. We need to see a dramatic shift
17 in behavior, outreach to young people
18 and families, and I think as you noted
19 a real change in assuming
20 responsibility for this work. So
21 thank you. Thank you for everybody's
22 advocacy for this panel.

23 Colleagues, is there anyone
24 who would like to ask any questions
25 for this panel currently?

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1 (No response.)

2 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
3 so much to this panel. Thank you for
4 all of your advocacy and work and for
5 helping guide us through this process.
6 We wouldn't be able to be here at this
7 stage without all of your passion and
8 insight and advice. Thank you
9 everybody.

10 Is there anyone else here to
11 testify on the bill whose name has not
12 yet been called?

13 (No response.)

14 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: There
15 being no further questions from
16 members of the Committee and no other
17 witnesses to testify, I want to thank
18 all the individuals and all of our
19 panels and witnesses for your
20 participation today. Your testimony
21 moves us to action and we deeply value
22 all of your work.

23 I now invite all panels and
24 witnesses to please disconnect before
25 we go into our public meeting. We

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1 will now pause proceedings briefly as
2 multiple participants leave the
3 hearing.

4 Great. So this concludes the
5 public hearing of the Committee.

6 We'll now go into a public meeting to
7 consider the action to be taken on the
8 bill.

9 Mr. Spiva, will you please
10 call the roll to take attendance.

11 THE CLERK: Councilmember
12 Brooks.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: I'm
14 present.

15 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you.

16 THE CLERK: Councilmember
17 Gauthier.

18 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:
19 Present.

20 THE CLERK: Councilmember
21 Johnson.

22 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Present.

23 THE CLERK: Vice-Chair
24 Thomas.

25 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Present.

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1 THE CLERK: Chairperson Gym.

2 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Present.

3 Thank you. We will now go into our
4 public meeting.

5 The Chair recognizes
6 Councilmember Thomas for a motion on
7 Bill No. 220239.

8 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
9 you, Madam Chair. Give me one second
10 to let this background noise -- okay,
11 thank you, Madam Chair. That's the
12 beauty of working in City Hall.

13 I offer an amendment to Bill
14 No. 220239. A copy of the amendment
15 has been circulated to all members of
16 the Committee. I move for the
17 adoption of the amendment.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Second.

19 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you.

20 The Chair notes for the record that
21 Councilmember Brooks seconds the
22 motion. It has been moved and
23 properly seconded that the amendment
24 to Bill No. 220322 be adopted.

25 All in favor will indicate by

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1 saying --

2 THE CLERK: Sorry.

3 Apologies, Councilmember. Just to
4 flag, the Bill No. is 220239. That
5 was my mistake there.

6 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: All right.

7 Thank you, Mr. Spiva.

8 It has been moved and
9 properly seconded that the amendment
10 to Bill No. 220239 be adopted.

11 All in favor indicate by
12 saying aye.

13 (Aye.)

14 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Any
15 opposed?

16 (No response.)

17 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: The ayes
18 have it and the bill has been amended.

19 The Chair now recognizes
20 Councilmember Thomas for a motion on
21 Bill No. 220239 as amended.

22 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
23 you, Madam Chair.

24 I move that Bill No. 220239
25 be reported from this Committee with a

6/21/2022

1 favorable recommendation and further
2 move that the rules of Council be
3 suspended to permit first reading of
4 this bill at the next Council session.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Second.

6 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
7 very much. The Chair notes for the
8 record that Councilmember Brooks
9 seconds the motion. It has been moved
10 and properly seconded.

11 All those in favor of the
12 motion will signify by saying aye.

13 (Aye.)

14 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Any
15 opposed?

16 (No response.)

17 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: The ayes
18 have it and the motion carries. I
19 just want to thank again all my
20 colleagues for your patience on this
21 hearing and thank you for just being
22 such incredible advocates for young
23 people and their families for being
24 such compassionate listeners on this
25 hearing as well. It's an honor to

6/21/2022

1 work with you.

2 This concludes the

3 business --

4 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Madam

5 Chair.

6 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Yes.

7 Councilmember Johnson.

8 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yeah.

9 Just real -- yeah, I just want to
10 commend you on your leadership in this
11 work. My grandmother, we used to
12 raise, I mean, we used to take care of
13 foster children in my household so
14 it's kind of (inaudible). Thank you
15 for your leadership.

16 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
17 so much, Councilmember Johnson. And
18 just to be clear --

19 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: I echo
20 Councilmember Johnson, Madam Chair. I
21 echo him. Thank you for your
22 leadership.

23 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
24 you, Madam Chair. Way to go.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Thank

6/21/2022

1 you. This is amazing.

2 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: This
3 concludes the business before the
4 Committee on Children and Youth for
5 today. Thank you everybody. Thank
6 you for your attendance and we look
7 forward to seeing you. Be safe.

8 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:
9 Bye-bye.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Have a
11 good night.

12 (Committee on Children and
13 Youth concluded at 10:56 a.m.)

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6/21/2022

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

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TANEHA CARROLL
Court Reporter - Notary Public

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

(The foregoing certification of
this transcript does not apply to any
reproduction of the same by any means, unless
under the direct control and/or supervision
of the certifying reporter.)

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